

**Submission
No 23**

**INQUIRY INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE NSW CHIEF
SCIENTIST'S INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF COAL SEAM
GAS ACTIVITIES IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Ms Bronwyn Vost
Date Received: 15 November 2019

Thank you for this opportunity to make a Submission to the Inquiry into the implementation of the recommendations contained in the NSW Chief Scientist's Independent Review of Coal Seam Gas Activities in New South Wales.

It is obvious from questions-on-notice to the Deputy Premier as answered according to the Hansard record of October 9th 2019, that there has been no implementation of Recommendations 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, or 13 of the Chief Scientist's Independent Review. Recommendation 9 deals with funds to cover damage from CSG mining activities. The Chief Scientist recommended a 3-tiered approach which consisted of 1) bonds from CSG companies, 2) insurance and 3) the establishment of a rehabilitation fund by the NSW state government. In the case of the Santos Narrabri Gas Project, Narrabri Shire Council is terribly worried about being left with damage which their ratepayers will have to cover if the Project goes ahead without this 3-tiered approach.

The Deputy Premier was unable to provide answers on notice about the status of The Whole-of-Environment Data Repository as envisaged by the Chief Scientist in Recommendation 10. Since recommendations 2, 8, 11, 12, and 13 are all dependent on the existence of this Data Repository, this is a critical omission.

Term of Reference (c) for this Inquiry asks “whether any other inquiry findings or other major reports relating to unconventional gas in Australia... published since the release of the Chief Scientists are relevant”. Since that time, there have been many reports relating to the negative health outcomes for unconventional gas in Australia. One such is the paper McCarron, G., 2018: Air Pollution and human health hazards: a compilation of air toxins acknowledged by the gas industry in Queensland’s Darling Downs, International Journal of Environmental Studies, DOI: 10.1080/00207233.2017.1413221. This peer-reviewed paper references many others in its bibliography. Since one of the Chief Scientist’s briefs was to “Identify and assess any gaps in the identification and management of risk arising from coal seam gas exploration, assessment and production, particularly as they relate to human health...”, these reports are particularly relevant to this Inquiry.

I ask that the assessment of the Narrabri Gas Project by the Department of Planning, Industry & Environment and the Independent Planning Commission be halted until such time as the Report is fully implemented. Since full implementation would be economically unworkable, this equates to my being in favour of a complete ban on CSG production in NSW.