

18th April 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

**Re: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment
(Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal
Mining Development) Bill 2012**

I am writing in support of the abovementioned Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2012. Communities do not want projects that harm water resources. Communities need confidence that coal seam gas and coal mining projects are subject to rigorous and objective scientific assessment. Communities in sensitive areas like the Liverpool Plains are disillusioned by the current government assessment process. The people of the Liverpool Plains will welcome any legislation that protects their valuable ground and surface water.

This Bill will go a long way in achieving Community confidence providing:

- The States commit fully to the national partnership program and are locked in and not able to withdraw at any time and at their own discretion
- The definition of “large coal mining development” as per 10 Section 528 means “any coal mining activity that has, or is likely to have, a significant impact on water resources” applies. For the protection of water resources it is imperative this definition is applied and that significant impact includes any project that may potentially impact water resources to ensure future sustainable management of this valuable resource
- The Scientific Committee provides the Environment Minister with clear standards & guidelines to ensure there is no risk of the Minister disregarding significant projects, the Minister is bound to refer any project that falls within these guidelines and that the Minister is bound to act on the advice provided by the Scientific committee

Prue Green