



4 April 2013

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## **Submission on Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013 [Provisions]**

The Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition Inc. (CVCC), a Grafton-based community group, is very concerned about the long-term impacts that the coal seam gas (CSG) and coal mining industries will have on communities throughout NSW and the nation as a whole.

We have had first-hand experience of CSG in our immediate area recently with the drilling of a test well by Metgasco at Glenugie near Grafton. Many people in the local community, like other communities in the NSW Northern Rivers, are very concerned about CSG activity. As the blockade of the Glenugie site was widely reported in the media, the Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications should be well aware of the strength of local concerns about coal seam gas mining.

The CVCC is very worried about the inadequate regulation of these industries by government and what we see as a blind acceptance by governments of the claims of the economic value of these industries. These claims fail to take into account the actual and potential damage these industries do, or are very likely to do, to rural industries, to human health, to communities in general and to the natural environment – damage which will either be very expensive or impossible to repair.

**The CVCC therefore welcomes the Federal Government's move to become involved in the regulation of these industries and strongly supports the Bill.**

As we do not want to see loopholes and exemptions in the Bill, we urge that projects such as the Arrow coal seam gas project in Queensland and Camden in western Sydney are effectively covered by the Bill. Therefore we urge that s22 2b) and d) be removed from the Bill.

We also believe that there is a need for further changes to the Bill in line with those recommended by Lock the Gate. Namely:

- Amending the Bill to cover all unconventional gas mining, including shale gas and tight gas, and unconventional coal mining
- Strengthening the role of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee
- Defining significant impacts on water resources
- Introducing a set of requirements for the Minister to consider when making decisions on water resource impacts
- Including a requirement for bioregional assessments prior to approval

Leonie Blain  
Hon Secretary