

Our concern is the impact that coal seam gas recovery & coal mining in general will have on our waterways and artesian water supplies. As we are all aware potable water is becoming increasingly scarce worldwide and with climate change this shortage will possibly get even worse as weather changes occur.

Has anyone considered that the export of clean water from Australia to other parts of the world could be even more lucrative than the short term gain achieved by selling coal seam gas?

After some research it has also come to our notice that there is an ample supply still of natural gas which can be recovered with less environmental impact. Why would this resource not be exploited before coal seam gas extraction and it's yet unproven safety to our regional areas?

We would ask that further investigation be carried out before any more coal seam gas exploration or recovery be carried out. We would also ask that results of that testing be made more accessible to the general public as it is only now through various groups such as Manning Alliance and Lock the Gate that we have been made aware of the potential problems associated with coal seam gas extraction. Prior to the activity of these groups information was much more difficult to come by. Further to that we ask that some or all exploration or extraction licences be suspended or cancelled pending the results of further investigation.

Please ensure that in the future all levels of the community, as well as local government are given equal rights in terms of access of information and consultation before further exploration or recovery of coal seam gas is attempted. If the community had been given the opportunity to have some input in the initial stages of the licencing procedure there may have been the possibility of some compromise instead of the anger and frustration which exists today from both sides.

As this situation is an issue that affects all Australians it seems the right time for the Federal Government to ensure a unified legislation is enacted. This legislation could include minimum distances from townships and other areas of habitation as well as environmentally sensitive areas such as National Parks. It should also secure our supplies of water and other basic necessities without which we would not survive. If this legislation were to apply retrospectively and override previous State legislation it could go some way to rectifying a difficult situation.

Please consider our submission as you debate this matter.

Alan & Ruth Genders