

The decision by the Minister for Environment, The Hon Tony Burke, to approve up to 40000 bores for Coal Seam Gas in Southern Downs of Queensland is a disgrace. The advice of Geoscience Australia was not adequately assessed by the Minister. Doubts remain as to the connectivity of the aquifers being interfered with by the CSG bores and the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) The Precautionary Principle has not been applied.

The integrity of the GAB is threatened by these bores in south-western Queensland and also by the bores in the Pilliga Forest which Santos has taken over, and which it wants to drill. The Pilliga is a major recharge area for the southern section of the GAB. The industry still likes to pretend they can "make good" any problems. Nobody has ever demonstrated how they can make good a damaged aquifer, and they have a terrible track record of spills in the Pilliga. Contaminated ponds, dead patches of forest.

Please declare these drills in the area covering the Great Artesian Basin to be a threat to Australia's agricultural water security and please request the Minister for Environment to revoke his original approval, on the basis of inadequate understanding originally of the connectivity of shallow aquifers and deeper aquifers.

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