

**Submission to Senate Inquiry
The Federal Government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity
Conservation Amendment Bill 2013 to provide Federal oversight of the
impacts of coal and coal seam gas mining on water resources**

1. The Bill is strongly supported by local residents in many parts of rural and regional NSW in particular due to awareness of potentially catastrophic impacts on the water table as shown in QLD on the 4 Corners programme and impacts on aquifers and the Great Artesian Basin, and we would like to see it passed quickly through the Senate.
2. There needs to be a price on such water use in a dry and drying country like Australia particularly with a changing climate and more unreliable rainfall.
3. Baseline studies need to be included in any EIS and one of the conditions of consent should be that adequate and proper monitoring for the next 10 years of surface and groundwater be provided.
4. Cumulative impacts of many CSG wells and coal mines in a biophysical region need to be assessed in terms of impact on surface and groundwater.
5. I am very pleased that the bilateral approval provisions of the EPBC Act cannot apply to coal and coal seam gas developments that impact on water resources, and that there have been some improvements to the exemptions.
4. I want to ensure that the exemptions contained in the Bill are minimised, and that key projects, such as the Arrow Coal Seam Gas project in Qld and Camden in western Sydney, are not exempt from it. Therefore, I would still like to see minor amendments to remove s22 2 b) and d) if possible.
5. I recognise that there are other amendments that would substantially improve the Bill, that may be required in the future, such as:
 - 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