

I write to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Federal Government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013.

I, Julia Hall, support the passage of the Bill through the Senate as quickly as possible.

I stand with those members of the Lock the Gate Alliance in seeking to make the following points, regarding the above-mentioned Bill:

1. The Bill is strongly supported and I would like to see it passed quickly through the Senate.
2. 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.
3. 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 Queensland and Camden in western Sydney, are not exempt from it. Therefore, I would still like to see minor amendments to remove s22 2b) and d).
4. 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.

Furthermore, I wish to state that I cannot accept the arguments of certain leaders and politicians who assert that without Coal Seam Gas mining, Australia's economy and future prosperity is threatened. I think this is utterly absurd - and is short-sighted reasoning, based on fear and blind conjecture.

On the other hand, I firmly believe that Australia's future economy, welfare and well-being is absolutely at risk, if we decide to pursue coal seam gas mining as a source of power and energy. Australia's greatest assets are those areas of its natural environment that remain in a healthy condition - an increasingly rare and extremely precious commodity both nationally and internationally. We should be doing all we can to protect our environment for future generations of both residents and visitors.

The land when respected and used correctly can sustain us for many, many more generations to come. If we abuse and neglect it - we will be regretting our actions for a lot longer.

Yours faithfully,

Julia Hall