

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Unconventional Gas Mining
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
gasmining.sen@aph.gov.au

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Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this Senate Inquiry into Unconventional Gas Mining.

The fast track rollout of coal seam gas (CSG) across Queensland continues to wreck lives, industrialise farmlands & forests, kill biodiversity, pollute waterways & air, worsen droughts, present high fire hazard, and damage our iconic Great Barrier Reef marine park. In collusion with multinational mining companies, governments seem bent on the destruction of our life support systems.

I have met many gas field families whose health is severely impacted and property values have plummeted. Anyone visiting the Western Downs gasfields region is confronted by the bleak realisation that waterways, agriculture, biodiversity and human communities are being steadily ravaged; industrialised by this toxic fossil fuel industry. Hopeland farmer George Bender's recent tragic suicide is testimony to the fact that 'co-existence' is nothing but a hollow myth.

City dwellers' health is also at risk from contaminated water coming through the foodchain; increasingly, urban dwellers are checking that their food isn't sourced from certain areas of the Darling Downs. This government-endorsed industry fails on precautionary principle and duty of care, and fails the common sense test.

Implementation of Queensland Health Department's own Recommendations in their 2013 Report (Section 7) appears scant to the point of negligence and denial of the human right to clean air & water. Especially in relation to monitoring of air and emissions from coal seam gas operations (Recommendation 7(d)) and its impact on gasfield residents and communities.

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/csg/documents/report.pdf>

Brisbane GP Dr Geralyn McCarron's report was a hardhitting wake up call:
SYMPTOMATOLOGY OF A GASFIELD - AN INDEPENDENT HEALTH SURVEY IN THE TARA RURAL RESIDENTIAL ESTATES AND ENVIRONS April 2013 Geralyn McCarron
http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/lockthegate/pages/49/attachments/original/1367333672/2013-04-symptomatology_of_a_gas_field_Geralyn_McCarron.pdf?1367333672

IndependentAustralia also demonstrates that in terms of toxic emissions and widespread contamination 'CSG IS DESTROYING THE ICONIC DARLING DOWNS ALONG WITH RESIDENTS' HEALTH' in this June 5 2015 article
<https://independentaustralia.net/life/life-display/csg-is-destroying-the-iconic-darling-downs-along-with-residents-health,7792#.VXDYDsXYZrQ.facebook>

I ask the Select Committee to take note of this revealing testimony of a gas worker: 'I contacted the Gasfield Community Support group after hearing Laurence Springborg saying on the radio that no workers in the CSG industry had become sick, and the air and water tests were good quality.....' (TESTIMONY OF A CSG WORKER published April 23 2014, written April 22 2013 <http://coalseamgasnews.org/news/world/testimony-of-a-csg-worker-auspol/>)

A steady stream of evidence from around the world (European Union, UK and US) corroborates the serious health risks and impacts from this intrinsically toxic industry. Aquifers, livestock, farmland, wildlife, oceans and human communities; all our life support systems are under attack.

'...A major study (pdf) finds that chemicals from fracking sites have the potential to cause significant pollution while posing risks to human health and wildlife. ...' 'We know from experience in the USA that fracking wells can leak and accidents can happen.' (CommonDreams 22 June 2015: CITING HUMAN HEALTH RISKS, REPORT CALLS FOR EU MORATORIUM ON FRACKING [http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/06/22/citing-human-health-risks-report-calls-eu-moratorium-fracking?](http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/06/22/citing-human-health-risks-report-calls-eu-moratorium-fracking?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=facebook&utm_source=socialnetwork)

[utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=facebook&utm_source=socialnetwork](http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/06/22/citing-human-health-risks-report-calls-eu-moratorium-fracking?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=facebook&utm_source=socialnetwork)

This Chem Trust (UK) briefing warns 'FRACKING POLLUTION: HOW TOXIC CHEMICALS FROM FRACKING COULD AFFECT WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE IN THE UK AND EU' June 2015 <http://www.chemtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/chemtrust-fracking-briefing-june2015.pdf>

Whistleblower Simone Marsh's expose shines a glaring light on the absence of regulatory rigor from the start of the reckless roll out of coal seam gas across Queensland. ('GAS LEAK!' Abc 4 Corners 1st April 2013 <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2013/04/01/3725150.htm> and IndependentAustralia article 'WHISTLEBLOWER SIMONE MARSH'S NEW EXPOSE: THE CORRUPT BIRTH OF THE QUEENSLAND GAS INDUSTRY' 7th Jan 2016 <https://independentaustralia.net/politics/politics-display/whistle-blower-simone-marshs-new-expos-the-corrupt-birth-of-the-queensland-gas-industry,8547>)

Simone Marsh: '...Within days of Fletcher's email (and presumably after QGC's presentation to the *LNG Committee*), I was instructed to finalise sections of the Coordinator-General's report for the Santos and QGC projects. I was not permitted to speak with the Coordinator-General, and draft text was altered and deleted without consultation. The Coordinator-General's final conditions enabled gas field information to be submitted prior to construction, i.e. after the

legislated assessment process. The rule of law had been thrown out on George Street....'

Queenslanders require assurance that fiduciary duty of care and precautionary principle is enshrined in Governments' policies regarding the coal seam gas industries. Concern that due diligence is being totally ignored is also expressed in this IndependentAustralia article ('QLD CSG EMISSIONS DAMAGE BILL TO COST AN EYEWATERING \$23b A YEAR' IndependentAustralia 7 November 2015 <https://independentaustralia.net/environment/environment-display/qld-csg-emissions-damage-bill-to-cost-an-eyewatering-23-billion-a-year,8353>)

In times of crippling drought, why have the risks of dewatering and polluting the Great Artesian Basin been flagrantly ignored by this government-sanctioned heavy water user, the CSG industry?

'...“Removal of this pressure through water abstraction associated particularly with CSG, risks removing the driving force of many of the free-flowing artesian bores and springs.”

Mr Banks, an adjunct research fellow with Queensland University, said CSG mining required holes to be drilled hundreds of metres to reduce pressure in the seam and allow methane gas to be extracted.

He said that in a worst case scenario the loss of pressure could be enough to stop bores flowing throughout the basin, which is the sole water source for towns and farms across 22 per cent of Australia. Equipping the bores with pumps would cost billions, he said.

His report says 79 per cent of the basin's most critical recharging area is covered by gas, petroleum or CSG leases....'

(The Australian 7 Nov 2014: GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN COAL SEAM GAS RISK

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/great-artesian-basin-coalseam-gas-risk/news-story/f8427162b1a2027b963b05d70997c231>)

With prolonged drought exacerbated by water guzzling fossil fuel industries, what are the contingency plans for fire outbreak amidst the Western Downs coal seam gasfields? Why is there one rule i.e. total fire ban, for ordinary Queensland residents in times of high fire risk? Yet there is another rule for coal seam gas companies whose continuous flaring is an extraordinary danger to farmland, wildlife and human communities.

IndependentAustralia asks 'Did you know that Santos and all gas companies are not only allowed to flare CSG wells during total fire bans - but that they actually do flare them at these hazardous times, putting whole communities at risk.' (IA 8 December 2015: 'SANTOS CSG FLARING ON THE PILLIGA MAKES A MOCKERY OF TOTAL FIRE BAN' <https://independentaustralia.net/environment/environment-display/santos-csg-flaring-on-the-pilliga-makes-a-mockery-of-total-fire-ban,8468#.VmaVmbjJqdk.facebook>)

I ask the Select Committee to read Gladstone Conservation Council's (GCC) detailed and informed response (Jan 2015) to the Dept of Environment and Heritage Protection regarding the appalling impacts upon the Gladstone community of Queensland Curtis Liquefied Natural Gas (QCLNG) recurrent toxic

flare emissions from the Curtis Island facility. When you read GCC's grim conclusions on pages 5 and 6, please consider the close proximity of our already fragile World Heritage Great Barrier Reef marine waters and marine life:
<http://gladstoneconservationcouncil.com.au/web/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GCC-response-to-Jon-Black-CTS31275-14-.pdf>

Finally I ask what are we leaving future generations? Australians are demanding that our governments quit subsidising jobs-poor, dying, dirty fossil fuel industries. Investment in a well thought out transition to jobs-rich renewable energy sources is long overdue.

Jenny Chester, concerned grandmother.