

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport
PARLIAMENT house
CANBERRA. 2600.
6th July 2011

Submission

**Re Economic, Social and environmental Impacts of Mining Coal
Seam Gas - As Part of Murray- Darling Basin Enquiry.**

Thank you for your extension of time for a submission, as per your email of today.

It was with great horror and anger that the people discovered that thousands of gas mines were about to be built across this nation, without the knowledge or approval of the public. Even though I watch the news daily and listen intently to the radio for current affairs, it was only through the SBS "Cutting Edge" Report on 1st May 2011 and the "ABC 7.30 Report" on 10th June that I became aware of what the state governments had done in allowing so many mining leases across the country.

If you have not seen it, I suggest you watch "Gasland" the movie

<http://gaslandthemovie.com>

or

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZe1AeHOQz8>

The National Toxic Network exposed the truth about chemicals that were being used to extract the gas from the coal seams, which was not known to anyone before this. Most of us thought that it was a simple process of drilling down and getting gas out of the ground, as we were told that gas is far superior to coal for the environment. These Premiers and State Ministers who signed up with the Mining Corporations, should have done their own investigations of exactly what was involved, before approving such mining exploits. Was the Environmental Protection Authority involved in approving these permits? If so, what was their procedure and accountability?

To think that we, the people have to go through hell to get approval for even building a shelter or a cubby house on our land, and here we have foreign companies moving in, raping the land and possibly leaving the environment in a denuded and useless state, and yet these mining leases have been approved.

The fact that our politicians had signed up to this without doing proper research of the serious affects on the environment is unbelievable. These people, who are supposed to be working for the good of the country, get good money to do their jobs and anyone who allows mining into an area should be well aware that serious damage could be done to the land and the ground water. The fact that high yielding food producing areas are going to be mined, has been the most disturbing factor in the whole saga.

It has been shown in South Africa that the mining conglomerates move in, rip whatever they can out of the ground, make their money and move out. Then

the people find that their water has been contaminated, their land made useless for growing of crops and they have no possibility of getting justice for the damage that has been done. Most times the companies have moved on to another country and in this case it is Australia.

Anyone who has visited a mining town can see what happens. Cobar NSW still has a quarry in the main street, which has been there since for around 50 years. The town grows and decreases according to the market price of their minerals. I went for a tour of the copper mines and was informed that all mines were foreign owned. I asked "where are the workers?". They were all underground living just like ants in an ant nest. I was horrified.

The health impacts of the coal seam gas mining and the chemicals used has obviously not been thoroughly researched and going by reports from overseas where these gas mines have operated, this does not give a good picture for the health of nearby residents or the environment.

The value of properties will decrease dramatically, or they will become unsaleable, once a gas mine is established in any area. Who would want to live with a gas mine nearby and the risk that the ground water and fresh air will be contaminated or polluted.

If mining is allowed in the upper reaches of the Clarence River in NSW, it could cause the collapse of many towns which rely on the river for Tourism, employment and the fishing industry.

If this gas mining continues and expands, the result will be a land full of quarries, with no viable food producing land, contaminated water and starving Australians, totally dependent on imported food and hand-outs (if we are lucky).

All the foreigner owners will be gone and enjoying life in another paradise they are about to destroy in the quest for the mighty dollar.

Yours sincerely,

Bev L. Pattenden.