

Judith Deucker

Queensland
August 1 2011

Chairman Senator Heffernan and Committee
Senate Inquiry into Coal Seam Gas
Parliament House
Canberra ACT



Dear Senators,
since purchasing our property twenty five years ago not a year has gone by that we have not had to fight for what we hold dear – there is always someone wanting to cut down or dig or construct or take over our quiet and carefully tended little valley in the name of economic benefit, and government has so far been happy to sell us out to any bidder. Now we are facing up to the biggest challenge of all; the Queensland government has sold us all to a mob of ravening drillers for a considerable sum of money.

While the Queensland government appears oblivious to the results of its actions, we hope your inquiry realises what has been loosed on the land. We landholders can protect nothing we own or value or aspire to on our own places from a gaggle of trumped up companies over which there are no controls, and whose damaging activities cannot be repaired, all for a resource that is not even proven. That's right, CSG is a speculation.

You may or may not choose to believe climate science, but so far the data shows that the models are a very conservative estimate of the results of burning fossil fuels. Gas is also a fossil fuel, and it too will spew CO₂ into the atmosphere at three times its original volume when it is burnt. But there is another string to its bow – leakage. An alarming number of wells leak *and cannot be sealed*. It is proposed to release untold millions of tonnes of CSG into the air; it is proposed to have clouds of methane lying about at ground level for thirty years. Has anyone considered the twin dangers here? This stuff is the very firedamp that is such a danger in mines. It is explosively flammable and also toxic to inhale. Consider what this means for bushfire and for passersby.

The cry is to preserve prime farmland, and I support that of course. But what about pasture and forest; what about long established country areas and towns, are they to be thrown to the dogs? They may not be on rich soil, but they are a functioning part of our society and a *proven* asset. Each property is as much of an investment to its owners as a mining company's assets are to it. Where is the justice in forcing us to hand over our land to multi national companies to be ruined for profit that will largely go overseas?

The performance of government when it comes to environmental protection has long been a complete joke; “if someone is making a quid the environment can get fucked”, to quote Russell Hinze, the colossus of roads. Russell would be proud of the results of his policy on the Gold Coast. The question is, once aquifers have been contaminated or cracked and drained, how are these companies or indeed governments, going to restore them? We don't even really know broadly how they work; theories abound, engineering solutions are offered, but guarantees are rare as hens' teeth.

The crux is food. Only this week Treasury put our 2050 population at 36 million. This will be a lot of mouths to feed, and we must feed escalating numbers until then and continue after that date. Do you know that the one artificial food is diet coke? That any food item is largely water? That soil loss is in the millions of tonnes per annum? And silly governments are proposing to make the job of

feeding even harder by wrecking water supplies and ruining farm land of all kinds.

There are foolish decision makers who say "no worries, we will buy food from overseas". Such touching faith! We would have no choice but to buy whatever others deigned to sell at whatever price they demanded, assuming that what we needed was even available. How stupid would that be? Half our farming troubles come from allowing imports that drive down local prices and bring in problems that were once quarantined out. If you want to see the potential look at the large seed companies that own one end of agriculture and the giant food companies that own the other. Farmers are in a vice that continually tightens. And now a thoughtless government decision has brought a new dimension of squeeze, our land is to be whipped out from under us. When primary well sites, access roads, ponding, yards and camps, and pipe and power easements are taken into account the CSG industry is perpetrating a land grab not seen in 150 years; but this time it's us, folks; and terra nullius is being applied again, but underground instead. The social and economic results are the same, however.

The Queensland government has done the unforgivable, it has attacked the homes and livelihoods of its constituents. The truly horrifying fact is the the LNP is even worse in its attitude of support for CSG and open cut coal companies.

Coal, gas, oil, in all its forms *is* sequestered carbon. The atmosphere and ocean *are* suffering change that is not to our long term benefit. And if ever there was a religion it is economics. Thirty five years ago politicians were informed on global warming. Powerful industry lobbyists dissuaded them from taking action and sundry self appointed experts sowed doubt about the science. If governments had stood up to them then, the task of cushioning climate change would be less overwhelming than it is today. This CSG bonanza is for a crew of self interested opportunists who care not what havoc they leave behind.

Please stop them, please stop CSG.

Yours faithfully,

Judith Deucker