

Submissions to Senate Inquiry into the federal Government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013 [Provisions]

1. The Bill is strongly supported and we would like to see it passed quickly through the Senate.
2. We are 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. We 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, we would still like to see minor amendments to remove s22 2b) and d).
4. We 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

In short, I want to let you know of my abhorrence of the environmental damage that is being caused by Coal Seam Gas exploration and extraction. That I and many others around Australia see this as an extremely serious issue and certainly as an election issue. We are extremely concerned about what is happening and want to ensure that the water table and land are not damaged beyond repair for hundreds if not thousands of years to come.

There are certainly many questions around how such known dangerous methods of coal extraction have been allowed in this country – considering we were all forewarned about this by the US and from mass media – and it begs questions about incompetence and corruption. I hope that you will take a stand for our country, for our children and for our future and ensure strong controls are in place to stop this happening.