

I am a grandmother deeply concerned about threats to future generations' supply of clean water and an uncontaminated food chain.

It is essential that these proposed new laws (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013 [Provisions]) will require the Environment Minister to take into account the water impacts of coal seam gas and large coal mining when assessing those projects for approval, something which has been lacking to date with shocking environmental/health consequences.

This will enable the Minister to exercise the precautionary principle/duty of care in the future to avoid a widespread public health disaster along with an impossible health budget blowout.

It is common knowledge that families living amidst the Tara/Chinchilla toxic coal seam gasfields are already very sick from fugitive methane and contaminated bores:

<http://www.news.com.au/national/testing-times-ahead-for-residents-of-tara-after-boy-found-with-hippuric-acid-in-system/story-fndo4ckr-1226548149258>

Geralyn McCarron, a suburban Brisbane General Practitioner, has been to the Tara/Chinchilla estate on many Bridging the Divide coal seam gasfields bus tours over the past year, and is helping document the ongoing string of grim health problems. Her telling report is a wake up call:

""The Australian Gasfields; Personal insights into the impacts and limitations of regulation by Dr Geralyn McCarron Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery, Bachelor of the Art of Obstetrics, Fellow of the Australian College of General Practitioners, Member of the National Toxics Networks, Member of Doctors for the Environment Australia""

http://www.frackaware.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/The-Australian-gas-fields_-personal-insights-into-the-health-impacts-and-limitations-of-regulation.pdf

There is mounting evidence ("Gaslands""The Sky is Pink" - Josh Fox U-tubes on the US situation) that impacting underground aquifers with toxic chemicals via fracking/csg mining has horrifying and irreversible public health consequences.

Doctors for the Environment Australia support this contention in a comprehensive, well researched, peer reviewed document:

"releasing the gas, coal seams are depressurised and underground water in the coal seams is released to the surface as a by-product of the extraction process. This can potentially affect interconnected aquifers above or below the coal seam. An aquifer is a seam of permeable rock such as sandstone that holds water. Much of CSG development activity is above the Great Artesian Basin (GAB), one of the largest underground water reservoirs in the world, covering about 22% of Australia's land mass. This Basin is potentially a source of potable water for generations to come, but studies of its sustainability suggest that its renewal is limited, perhaps non-existent.."

http://dea.org.au/images/general/viewpoint_issue_8_CSG.pdf

I urge you to do the right thing for the greater good - this serious responsibility is in your hands. How will you answer your grandkids when they ask you how you allowed this dangerous, potentially catastrophic coal seam gas/coal mining rush to happen on your watch?

Sincerely, Jenny Chester.