

**Federal Government Senate Inquiry: Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation
Amendment Bill 2013**

Dear Chairperson

Please accept my submission to the above. I have been campaigning against the expansion of Coal Seam Gas(CSG) mining in NSW for over two years and as a result of tremendous community action and pressure on the NSW Liberal/National Party Government, Premier O'Farrell has made some significant changes to the operation of CSG in NSW, but, more is needed. I am in the process of making a detailed submission to two separate Inquiries to the NSW Government (one due 12/4/13 and the other due 26/4/13).

CSG mining must not be allowed to proceed in regional Australia on any agricultural and horticultural land because both industries rely heavily on a clean water supply and the CSG industry cannot provide a 100% guarantee that their operations will not impact on either the surface or underground water systems. The Precautionary Principle must always be adhered to when dealing with this issue and to date, the CSG mining industry has not followed Precautionary Principle guidelines. Their Environmental Impact Statements are always very wordy, but, no real scientific data available to say there will be no impact. Indeed, Professor Gavin Mudd from Monash University says the lack of proper baseline studies data is no justification for saying there will be either no impact or minimal impact.

Only now have true, independent, scientific studies commenced and I take Professor Gavin Mudd's research and the NSW Southern Cross University's recent research as examples. Therefore, I would like to see the role of the Federal Government's Independent Expert Scientific Committee strengthened and ensure the Committee is **TRUELY** an Independent Expert Scientific Committee and by that I mean, it does not comprise anyone who had major past ties or present ties to the CSG mining industry because the public will not have confidence with the findings of the Committee if it is not **TRUELY** an Independent Expert Scientific Committee.

Clean water is the key to a thriving agricultural and horticultural industry and must be protected at all costs. People employed in the agricultural & horticultural industries and the other associated industries in rural Australia far outweigh the people employed in the CSG mining industry and therefore, the protection of those industries must be paramount.

I am pleased the Federal Government has now taken an interest in the CSG mining industry because the impact of the CSG mining industry affects directly all people living in rural Australia and also people living in our cities, due to their water supply from the water catchment areas within the CSG mining area.

Therefore, I support the Bill as long as the above is taken into consideration.

John Heaton