

Parliament of Australia  
Senate Committee Submissions

**To The Inquiry: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation  
Amendment Bill 2013 [Provisions].**

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit my views regarding the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013 [Provisions].

I have very great concerns regarding the impact of coal seam gas mining and other unconventional gas mining, including shale gas and tight gas, upon our environment and most particularly, our water. To that end I was very pleased to hear of the Federal Government's decision to have the final say on any mining projects which may affect our water.

I would like to see this Bill strongly supported and passed with haste to ensure its benefits are realised quickly.

I am 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.

It is of crucial importance that exemptions contained in the Bill are minimised, and that EXISTING key projects, such as the Arrow Coal Seam Gas project in Queensland and Camden in Western Sydney, are NOT EXEMPT from it. Therefore, I would like to see minor amendments to remove s22 2b) and d).

Further amendments I would like to see include:

- 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

The great apprehension held by many people within Australian communities with regards to the potential hazards caused by unconventional mining upon our water, our environment and ultimately, our futures has been clearly demonstrated over

recent times. I therefore congratulate the Federal Government in listening to these concerns and on the creation of this Bill. I hope that it is robust and well supported to ensure its effectiveness in protecting our water.