

12 April 2013

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on  
Environment and Communications  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia



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**Re: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013  
[Provisions]**

As the peak conservation body for South Australia, the Conservation Council of South Australia (Conservation Council SA) welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013 [Provisions].

Conservation Council SA is an independent, non-profit and strictly non-party political organisation representing around 50 of South Australia's environment and conservation organisations and their supporters. Conservation Council SA has developed a comprehensive view of environment policy in "South Australia in a Changing Climate: A Blueprint for a Sustainable Future"<sup>1</sup> This document sets out, at a strategic level, policy positions in six key environmental areas, including biodiversity and water issues.

The Conservation Council of SA welcomes the introduction of a "water trigger" under the EPBC Act but we are disappointed by the scope of the trigger. Coal and Coal Seam Gas are only some of the industries within the same sector that impact on water.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.conservationsa.org.au/blueprint.html>

For this trigger to be truly comprehensive it is necessary for it to encompass all aspects of fossil fuel extraction impacting on water. These include and are not limited to:

- Shale gas
- Underground coal gasification
- Shale oil and petroleum operations
- All other forms of unconventional gas and oil extraction
- All forms of conventional gas oil and coal extraction that may impact on water resources

The exclusion of significant extractive activities from this trigger is short sighted and does not take into account the wider and growing cumulative impacts of this sector on water resources in Australia. The Committee should consider the transformational stepped increase of environmental impacts, given that the new approach is to have networks of hundreds and thousands of abstraction points, each chasing smaller pockets of reserve.

Furthermore given the rapid expansion of this industry over the past five years, there needs to be retrospective examination approved projects. The impact of the fossil fuel sector on water resources in Australia needs to have rigorous scrutiny to ensure this vital resource is not damaged. All major projects that have been approved should be reassessed with regards to the new trigger.

*I would also be happy to meet with you or your representatives to discuss these matters in more detail.*

Yours sincerely

Tim Kelly

Chief Executive