

13 July 2011

Dear Senate Inquiry Team,

Would you please accept my following submission as input to your enquiry. The issues in my mind are not complex and are fundamental:

- We have a moral responsibility to hand over our farming land to the generations that follow us in a state that is better than we received it.
- This means that if there is any activity that risks the productive future of the land in any way, then we err on the side of caution, and take a "hold" position until all stakeholders accept the same scientific proof of no adverse impacts. CSG under farming land as it stands does not meet these criteria, and so it should not be progressing.
- Why would we risk the productive capacity of future food production for a "once off" benefit of selling some gas to China? We risk "killing the golden goose". If we find in 75 years time that the CSG extraction we did in 2010 - 2030 was worse than letting the cane toad into the sugar plantations, then our great great grandchildren will be asking "why were our ancestors so stupid?"
- The current deal with CSG miners defies our free enterprise system, as the miners take all the money, and the farmers take all the business risk. This is not commercially sound. If the miners tell us there will be no impact, then they should be happy to sign off on full acceptance of all the commercial risk to farming productivity that is associated with the once off gas extraction. This responsibility would need to be accepted for at least 100 years. Farmers do not even have the right to say "no" to all this business risk they are being exposed to - this is undemocratic, immoral and outrageous - how can we call ourselves a free enterprise system?
- We should not be selling off our farmland to foreigners. I accept that this risks short term impacts on our GDP growth through the use of overseas equity versus the use of debt, however that is a small price to pay. The most important resource in a 100 years time is not going to be old fashioned coal, or gas (lets hope we have finally really allowed green alternatives to be the prime energy production systems by then). The most important resource with our growing global population is going to be food - clean healthy food. So if we are supposedly a resource-economy lets

position for that and retain our farming land in Australian hands. New Zealand has this policy - we should too.

- Another point on not allowing any more of our farming land to be sold to foreigners - we risk our children's children watching our quality produce being shipped overseas when they need it for themselves. Of course we will be all dead and gone by then, however our responsibilities extend well beyond our own very short lives.

Humans need to eat - this is fundamental. Food is much more important than gas, coal, iron ore, or anything else you can dig up or extract once. Our generation needs to eat. The next generation needs to eat. The generation after that will need to eat. And so on - generation after generation will need to eat. And here, this short minded generation is allowing the selling of farms to overseas interests, and allowing mining companies to undertake risky activities putting all this future production at risk.

- We just do not know what CSG and the associated fracking will do to our water tables. We just do not know. It will all be too late if we have to find out the hard way, and no money paid by anyone could bring it back.

So in summary the issue of protecting our farming land for future generations is one of the most important issues that we face today as a nation. We should not allow short term gains made by a few expose future generations forever, so I strongly encourage the following actions are taken:

- We emulate New Zealand and do not sell our farmland to foreigners
- We cease all CSG mining under farmland, or anywhere near our water tables. And we do not allow it until the two following conditions are met:
  - Scientific proof that such mining will have no effect on the very long term productive capability of the land
  - Farmers have a right of veto
  - Miners take the long term business risk of any adverse impact

Thankyou for extending the opportunity to input into this hearing (I was not aware of it until very recently). My sincere best wishes to you in doing what has to be done for our great nation, and protect our farming land and control of its produce for many Australian generations to come after we are gone.

James Murphy