

4 April 2013

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute into the Senate Committee Enquiry

I support the bill and would like to see it passed quickly through the Senate. I am pleased that the bilateral approval provisions of the EPBC Act cannot apply to coal and coal seam gas developments that impact on water resources & that there have been some improvements to the exemptions.

However I wish to ensure that the exemptions contained in the Bill are minimised, and that key projects, such as the Arrow Coal Seam Gas project in Queensland , Camden in western Sydney are not exempt from it. I also am deeply concerned at the unique geological formations in the Hunter Valley which require further clarification in respect to potential earthquake to ensure hydrological protection. I strongly feel that increased legislation be applied to necessitate multiple hydrological assessments for Gloucester area.

Therefore I would still like to see minor amendments to remove s22 2b) and d). I recognise that there are other amendments that would substantially improve the Bill, that may be required in the future,

such as:

Amending the Bill to cover all unconventional gas mining, including shale gas and tight gas, and unconventional coal mining.

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Defining significant impacts on water resources, so that they include routine independent baseline data collation. Terrestrial, aquatic & marine species listings of all Flora & Fauna must be included in all mining proponent applications. Biodiversity includes what is in the water. Failing to acknowledge the presence of these complex ecosystems & symbiotic relationship of species has indeed set a dangerous precedent.

I would like to also have the Committee note that many small soaks, springs, creeks & wetlands provide precious survival habitat locations for rare endangered & migratory species. The value of these small but vital connections should not be underestimated.

I would also ask that introducing a set of requirements for the Minister to consider when making decisions on water resource impacts to be part of any application.

This must include a requirement for bioregional assessments prior to any application for approval