

RE: Senate Inquiry into the Environment Protection and Biodiversity
Conservation Amendment Bill 2013 [Provisions]

I strongly support the introduction of new laws that take into account the water impacts of coal seam gas and large coal mining projects when such projects are assessed for approval. However, it seems only logical that these laws should be extended to apply to all coal mines, no matter how large or small, and also to all other areas of mining that have the potential to damage river systems and aquifers. Smaller mines have the potential to significantly impact on water systems depending on their location within the system. In addition, a concentration of smaller mines within one area can also critically affect water systems over a large area - but this cumulative impact would not be taken into account in laws that are only applied to 'large' mines. Many other types of mining can also have significant impacts on water systems and cause irreversible and significant damage, for example, gold mining poses numerous hazards due to the specific nature of the extraction and processing techniques that it requires. The new laws should be extended to include all forms of mining so that, at the very least, their impacts on hydrology can be assessed in any approval process.

In addition, I believe that all coal mining and CSG mining projects that have been approved since Minister Bourke became Environment Minister should have their water impacts assessed so that information is available on likely consequences and how to mitigate any negative impacts that have not, as yet, been taken into account.

Finally, I believe that additional laws should be introduced to give landholders and communities the right to say 'no' to mining projects that will cause significant negative impacts on their water resources, agricultural land or quality of life.

Australia's water systems and agricultural land are fundamental to the long term sustainability of our population and must be comprehensively protected by government at all levels.

Yours Sincerely