

Submission regarding **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013 [Provisions]**.

By: Mr J Richardson, Clunes, NSW

As a landholder, currently managing a small native rainforest timber plantation in Northern NSW, and as a concerned citizen with qualifications in environmental science and education, I strongly support the Bill and request the committee to ensure that:

1. The exemptions contained in the Bill are minimised, and that 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 minor amendments, to remove s22 2b) and d).
2. The Bill is passed quickly, without delay, to minimise uncertainty within business and the community.

I ask the committee to note that there is widespread support in my community for the Bill.

I also 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
- Strengthening the role of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee
- Defining what constitutes significant impacts on water resources
- Introducing a set of requirements for the Minister to consider when making decisions on water resource impacts, and
- Including a requirement for bioregional assessments prior to approval.

I request that the committee note these suggested additional improvements to the Act, and make recommendations towards implementing them as soon as practicable, without jeopardising the immediate passage of the current Bill.

I thank the committee for its work in protecting our natural resources, particularly underground water, not only for ourselves, but for future generations, and trust that members will encourage this and future governments to foster the rapid development of alternative, renewable energy sources, so that the threats posed by fossil fuel mining techniques to our environment become a thing of the past.

Your sincerely

Jim Richardson, B. Sc. Dip. Ed.