

Submission to enquiry into the impacts of mining in the Murray Darling Basin

We are a family farming operation with 2 sons at home helping on the farm. My sons Dan and James have university degrees and are committed to a career in the family farming operation.

We are or will be affected by both coal seam gas (CSG) and open cut mining on our farms.

Open cut mining is proposed on our Jimbour property if the test drilling confirms the coal reserves are economically viable. The Jimbour plain contains some of the best farming soil in QLD. It is a deep self mulching (waco) clay soil with very high moisture capacity. It would be some of the most expensive land to buy in the Northern Downs Shire and have the highest rateable value . Losing this land to mining would have a big impact on food production in the area, it would also increase the risk of damaging the Condamine alluvium and pollute the Jimbour creek. We have already seen in QLD major disasters from mining activity when the heavy storms hit. We cannot let the environmental damage occur in this part of the MDB or elsewhere in QLD.

Anna Bligh QLD Premier has stated in the media that QLD has 300 years supply of known coal reserves prime farm land should not be mined. Poor quality land that is, less environmentally sensitive and not suitable for farming should be mined first.

Mining is a short term industry that leaves a trail of destruction that lasts forever, where as farms managed well will keep on producing food forever .

CSG is not such a destructive industry but it does have the potential to cause environmental.

Large quantities of water are produced in the gas recovery process. The water contains high levels of salt. Many millions of tonnes will be produced by CSG companies over the next 20 to 30 years, the salt would be a major environmental hazard and threat to water quality in the MDB if it is not managed correctly.

Thousands of bores will be drilled through the Condamine alluvium to access the gas, we have grave concerns that all the drilling activity will have the potential to drain or contaminate this very valuable aquifer. Losing access to the water would seriously impact on food production and the prosperity of the community.

The CSG industry must be managed much better by the State Government to ensure there no long term environmental disasters from salt of aquifer damage that could effect production from the MDB.

Many millions of megalitres of water will be produced by CSG companies over the next 20 to 30 years. The water should not be just evaporated away and wasted it should be treated through reverse osmosis and made available for beneficial use such as supplying water to local communities, business and farmers.

Summary

Premium agricultural land should not be mined unless it can be rehabilitated to natural and full production. CSG exploration must not impact on aquifers or leave massive amounts of salt in the environment.

Ian Hayllor