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Inquiry into the Management of the Murray Darling Basin- impact of Coal Seam Gas

As a member of a family farming enterprise on the Liverpool Plains, NSW I am extremely concerned as to the potential impacts of mining and coal seam methane gas extraction on prime agricultural land.

The Liverpool Plains is an exceptional prime agricultural farming region growing a diverse range of crops with yields **40%** above the national average.
The Liverpool Plains contributes **\$332 million to the GDP annually**.

The single key for the continued viability of our farming enterprise is **WATER** and the sound management of our water supplies.

We also have exceptional soil structure but to continue growing crops for domestic and export markets we are reliant on **WATER**.

In a world predicting a population of 9 billion by 2050 it will become essential to safeguard and protect our food resources.

Surely it would be prudent and wise to restrict any industry such as mining and coal seam methane gas that would jeopardise the essentials of life on this planet, our **food** and our **water**.

Coal seam methane gas exploration is being carried out in the Liverpool Plains region at present, despite the fact that a water study commissioned by the State Government has not as yet commenced, no results documented or reviewed.

Is this a wise decision? I think not.

Until we know the science of our underground water aquifers surely all exploratory coal seam methane gas work should cease.

Our food producing capabilities in an environment of climate change should be every countries **top priority**.

Coal seam methane gas extraction is a relatively new industry in Australia where we do not have the benefit of hindsight or scientific research results over a period of years, when considering and planning a way forward.

What we do know however, is alarming, and should heighten our concerns. We must take all measures to ensure no permanent irreparable damage is done.

Despite what the coal seam methane gas companies would like us to believe their treatment of the large amounts of water extracted are extremely worrying as the long term effects to the soils and water need to be comprehensively studied **before** proceeding with exploration.

2.

The present practise of storing vast volumes of saline water in waste ponds is particularly alarming as the productivity of the Plains will be put at severe risk. The Qld Govt has expressed their concerns and have already employed standards regarding the use of evaporation ponds as the primary means of disposing of the CSM water.

In 2009 we recorded record summer temperatures with no less than 4 dust storms on the Liverpool Plains.

Imagine the scenario if these evaporation ponds holding highly toxic salt was blown by these winds onto adjoining farmland.

The predicted climate extremes of the future and the likelihood of this becoming a reality, cannot be understated.

These exceptional soils, water and food supplies are not worth risking for some promise of a “green energy” alternative which is basically untried and untested. Local, State and Federal Governments, farmers and miners have a duty to protect this land and we will be judged by future generations on the decisions made that will determine our children’s future.

We will not have a second chance to get this right.

Submitted by:

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