

As a member of a farming family that has lived, married, brought up family, farmed, paid rates and taxes continuously since the 1860's in the same area of north west NSW around Wee Waa. I would like to submit to the Inquiry our deepest fears for the continued practises of our lives and livelihood as outlined above, if Coal Seam Gas, exploration and extraction is allowed on our landholdings in the district.

We are dryland farmers, that means, we rely only on rainfall to grow our crops. The crops our family grow at the present time are wheat (Prime Hard) chickpeas, sorghum, all in a rotational manner which benefits these pristine black soil coolabah plains. We have a small commercial herd of Hereford cattle about 200 cows on our grazing country.

Can I state that there is, in the whole of Australia, not many areas of Coolabah tree black soil plains. It has been conserved for future generations by previous generations and our generation, with a love and respect that is inherent in most of the people of the North West of NSW.

Our family has been able to survive the harsh droughts and flooding rains purely by management principles of care for the country, care for the stock, endless work, and I really mean endless. My husband, son and daughters are what you and I would call living treasures, but you have never heard their names, they are part of this country, that have always done the work with little recognition. No entering of competitions for accolades, no Orders of Australia for them, just the chance to work their land and be a part of a very large agricultural sector that works for their families, their communities and this great nation.

I want you to treasure them, the way I do. If you state "but we do", show them, by allowing them to continue their work, unhindered by the endless threat of Coal Seam Gas, approaching us for access, using subtle threats cloaked in niceness, as to the fact that they, the Coal Seam Gas company, has the "right" to come onto our land and infringe our right to farm effectively for ourselves and ultimately this country.

Legislated property rights for farmers, to refuse mining companies taking over our land, is the only democratic answer.

Please do not sell or allow our and the future generations ability to provide clean healthy food to this country and for export go down the drain. You cannot eat GAS.

Thankyou,  
Victoria Hamilton