

## Conclusion

- 4.1 The Bill under inquiry seeks to increase the oversight of mining operations through making the Australian Government the default consent authority, depending on an operation's potential impact on water resources.
- 4.2 In addition, coal seam gas exploration and extraction have caused considerable concern in the community, particularly in New South Wales and Queensland. The Committee is aware of strong opinions both for and against the coal seam gas industry in the Australian Community.
- 4.3 Numerous policy developments have occurred since the Bill was introduced. These include:
- an agreement to develop a national harmonised regulatory framework for the CSG industry; and
  - the Government undertaking to create and support an independent scientific committee to provide science on which to base approvals.
- 4.4 The Committee supports both these major policy developments, and looks forward to seeing these agreements being enacted. However, the Committee also notes that there is limited detail about how the national framework would be implemented and adhered to. In particular, it is currently unclear how stringent the Framework would be, and the extent to which jurisdictions would be bound to remedy the gaps in existing arrangements.
- 4.5 If both of the above noted policy developments were to be implemented as planned over the course of the coming year, the policy context in which the Bill was drafted will be profoundly changed. In the Committee's view the Bill would therefore be unnecessary.

- 4.6 However, the Committee also notes that considerable outstanding work is still to be done in 2012 to complete this program. Therefore, the Committee will monitor the matters discussed in this report.
- 4.7 For the reasons outlined above, the Committee is of the view that the Bill should not be passed at this time.

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**Recommendation 1**

**The Committee recommends that the Bill not be passed at this time.**

**Hon Dick Adams MP  
Committee Chair  
15 February 2012**