
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

**Advisory Report on the Environment
Protection and Biodiversity Conservation
Amendment (Mining, Petroleum and Water
Resources) Bill 2011**

House of Representatives

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry

February 2012
Canberra

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ISBN 978-0-642-79631-8 (Printed version)

ISBN 978-0-642-79632-5 (HTML version)

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Foreword

This inquiry has come at a time when Australian governments and parliaments are dealing with the implications of the growing coal seam gas (CSG) sector. As noted in this report, the exploration for and extraction of CSG has increased greatly in recent years. Accompanying this increase has been considerable community concern about the impact that CSG operations might have on land and water resources.

Whilst this Bill is not explicitly drafted to single-out CSG, it is nevertheless clearly designed to increase the regulation of CSG operations around Australia. As discussed by the report, this would be achieved by making the Australian Government the 'consent authority' for some mining operations, many CSG projects included.

CSG operations have clearly aroused some valid concerns in the community, and governments around Australia are currently working together to improve the quality and uniformity of CSG regulation between different jurisdictions. The context in which the Bill was originally drafted has changed, and the regulation of CSG is, in some ways, in a state of flux. On this basis, the Committee has not made a final judgment on the Bill.

I look forward to seeing the results of current work being undertaken by Australian governments regarding CSG regulation, and the Committee will keep a 'watching brief' on this issue, and may report back to the Parliament in future.

Hon Dick Adams MP
Chair



Membership of the Committee

Chair Hon Dick Adams MP

Deputy Chair Mr Alby Schultz MP

Members Mr Darren Cheeseman MP

Mr George Christensen MP

Mr Tony Crook MP

Mr Geoff Lyons MP

Hon Ian Macfarlane MP*

Mr Rob Mitchell MP

Mr Dan Tehan MP

* Denotes supplementary member, appointed to the Committee for this inquiry only.

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Terms of reference

On 15 September 2011 the Selection Committee referred the following bill to the Committee for inquiry and report:

- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Mining, Petroleum and Water Resources) Bill 2011

The Terms of Reference were the text of the Bill.

Under Standing Order 222(e), the House is taken to have adopted Selection Committee reports when they are presented



List of abbreviations

COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSG	Coal seam gas
EPBC	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
MRRT	Mineral Resources Rent Tax
RET	Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism



List of recommendations

Recommendation 1

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

