



The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for the Environment



MC14-008982

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

15 APR 2014

Dear Dr Jensen

I refer to your letter of 27 March 2014 concerning a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions opposing coal seam gas mining in Australia.

Australia's national environment law, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), was amended in June 2013 to provide that water resources are a matter of national environmental significance, in relation to coal seam gas and large coal mining developments.

This means that proposed coal seam gas and large coal mining developments that are likely to significantly impact upon water resources need to be referred and undertake a thorough environmental assessment. The Independent Scientific Expert Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development (IESC) provides robust advice during the assessment process and this advice is taken into consideration when making a final decision. Appropriate conditions are set as part of a project approval to ensure any significant impacts on a water resource are acceptable.

The amendments to the EPBC Act build on the objectives of the *National Partnership Agreement on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining* (NPA), noting that coal seam gas projects make up the bulk of unconventional gas proposals that may impact upon water resources.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Greg Hunt