

1. The Bill is strongly supported and I would like to see it passed quickly through the Senate.
2. I am pleased that the bilateral approval provisions of the EPBC Act cannot apply to coal and coal seam gas developments that impact on water resources, and that there have been some improvements to the exemptions.
3. I want to ensure that the exemptions contained in the Bill are eliminated, and that key projects, such as the Arrow Coal Seam Gas project in Queensland and Camden in Western Sydney, are not exempt from it. Therefore, I would still like to see minor amendments to remove s22 2b) and d).
4. I recognise that there are other amendments that would substantially improve the Bill, that may be required in the future, such as:
 - Amending the Bill to cover all unconventional gas mining, including shale gas and tight gas, and unconventional coal mining, antimony; and, other extractive industrial processes that could impact on water quality or quantity above and/or below the ground
 - Strengthening the role of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee
 - Defining significant impacts on water resources
 - Introducing a set of requirements for the Minister to consider when making decisions on water resource impacts

Including a requirement for bioregional assessments prior to approval

Moreover, that as well as the necessary stringent regulations listed above, any company wishing to explore for and extract gas or minerals or both using any method be required to insure against damage to water quality or quantity with an enduring public liability policy for an amount no less than 1 billion dollars or equivalent to the 2013 value of the currency, indexed to inflation.

That mechanisms for an independent auditor and inspection organisation that is responsible for monitoring water quality and quantity be funded directly by any company carrying out coal seam methane or coal mining or any other mining that risks the quality and quantity of a natural above or below ground water supply. The auditor/inspection instrument would necessarily report to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities directly on a regular basis.