

I strongly support the Bill and would like to see it passed quickly through the Senate.

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.

I urge that the exemptions contained in the Bill are minimised, 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).

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

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