

Select Committee Inquiry Submission

Bruce Uebergang

Submission is specific to the adequacy of Commonwealth oversight of the approval of coal seam gas projects in Queensland

My submission is based on personal experience and offers only a small insight to the problems hasty approvals given by the Qld Government have caused.

Your Committee has a huge challenge to get to the hub of the issues behind so many words and submissions – to understand the pain caused to people when Governments behave badly.

There has been something deeply wrong with the behaviour of successive Queensland Government relating to the csg industry.

No other industry has ever been given such a Pandora's Box of unfettered access to Queensland resources at the expensive of the local citizen.

In a desperate bid to get money at any cost – Queensland Governments have allowed massive extraction of underground water and compromised the rights of landholders.

You will be aware of the successful campaign in NSW against csg – run as a result of seeing very poor Company behaviour, distressed landholders and questionable environmental standards.

The Commonwealth must NOT delegate its approval powers to the Qld Government in the future. History shows that "red neck" or inexperienced Governments make hasty decisions in an effort to balance budgets at all costs.

Because Qld Governments have been desperate to get resource money they have traded of many rights – examples below

1 There is a huge imbalance in the rights of the individual verses large International Corporate. The Qld Government has left landholders exposed to a David v Goliath legal system.

Personal experience of challenging a Company knowing they have unlimited budgets and large in-house legal teams v a farmer faced with unaffordable legal bills to engage in a dispute.

2 One csg Company (QGC) openly states that they do not and will not pay farmers for time spent in necessary consultation with them. This is entirely demeaning and reflects the power imbalance and arrogance created by sloppy Qld Govt regulation

3 Commonwealth oversight is needed as the Qld Govt has traded off quality of life and amenity by poorly regulating the effect of boom & bust development cycles

4 Lack of legislation to monitor Company behaviour. Csg has caused massive use of regional roads. People have had to resort to direct action to get dust suppression and road repair. The Government Departments seem powerless to enforce regulations, especially the EIS which are often quoted and mainly ignored.

In summary the Queensland Government needs oversight from the Federal Minister in any matters relating to csg. The myriad of problems both environmental and personal that have been caused by a "red neck" government cannot be allowed to be repeated in the future