

13th July, 2011.

Committee Secretary,
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
P O Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Re: Senate Inquiry into the Management of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Dear Sir,

I would like to submit the following to the Senate Inquiry into the Management of the Murray-Darling Basin as I am aware of the threats inherent in the mining of coal seam gas in several places in northern New South Wales and the threats it represents to the Murray-Darling Basin.

The proposed scale of this industry across NSW and Queensland means that the cumulative impacts on rural landscapes, water resources, communities and the environment will be severe.

In the Namoi Catchment in NSW the coal seam gas industry is poised to impact not only on the best farmland but also the best bushland and it looks set to simultaneously degrade both our productive base and our ecological base.

I think the time has come, because of climate change and the projected population rises around the world, that prime agricultural land needs to be protected right across Australia because it is in short supply. It will be needed in the future for vital food production. As well, because Australia has the worst record in the world for its wildlife extinctions, and our wildlife is unique, bushland habitat also needs to be protected, not just in a few places for rare and endangered species, but in enough areas large enough for living and breeding spaces for building up their populations again.

Apart from these vital points I would also like to point out that coal seam gas mining has specific threats such as:

1. Saline water spillage leading to tree deaths, salt scalds and contaminated soils,
2. The overflow of drill ponds leading to contamination of creeks.
3. The potential de-watering and cross-contamination of aquifers, including the Great Artesian Basin.
4. The discharge of treated water changing the ecology of local creek systems and reducing water quality.
5. The use of large volumes of water for drilling and fracking, leading to increased pressure on the water resources.

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6. The construction of major toxic water storage impoundments and associated environmental impacts such as during heavy rain and floods causing spillage.
7. Toxic water storages are left open to our unique wildlife, leading to animal deaths.
8. The clearing and fragmentation of high conservation value vegetation that is already a major cause of wildlife extinctions.
9. The destruction of large areas of wildlife habitat for threatened species.
10. The threats to important groundwater dependent ecosystems and wetlands.
11. The serious threats to water resources, including the Great Artesian Basin.

I believe that due to these serious risks, coal seam gas extraction should be banned in the Murray Darling Basin. It should be prohibited on prime farmland, bushland and anywhere associated with important aquifers. Landholders should have the right to veto coal seam gas exploration and extraction on their land.

Coal seam gas represents a major threat to the Murray Darling Basin and should not occur.

Yours sincerely,

L. K. Wray.

13/7/2011