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IPC determination on Narrabri Coal Seam Gas Project

Dear Commissioners

I wish to register my strong opposition to any extension of coal seam gas extraction in the Pilliga.

Our son is a geotechnical engineer with 19 years wide experience including in two African countries, England, New Caledonia and Australia. This submission includes his advice.

Drilling goes down through one or more sub-artesian aquifers, and the artesian aquifer. Downward leakage occurs outside the bore casing, and down the inside too when it rusts. Steel casing lasts around 50 years. When the gas is exhausted, the company moves away. It may even be taken over by some foreign company, or even disappear. The supposed restitution will not occur.

If the pressure in the artesian aquifers is sufficiently strong, that water will come up and pollute the sub-artesian aquifers.

The Burren and Pilliga bores are not a problem. The local councils own them and we assume they will maintain them.

Experience in the Dalby region of Queensland shows sub-artesian water levels and volumes have diminished. Farmers are paid well to have the bores on their farms, but their presence markedly reduces the value of the property. The current owners may not care about the future, but their descendants do.

Sub-artesian aquifers are finite. I worked in the Sind Province of Pakistan in 1981. A few years earlier, UNICEF had sunk hundreds of wells and established villages around them. When our team got there, the wells were all dry and the villages had been abandoned. Our hydro-geologist said the water comes from the Himalayas and is 1,000 years old when it gets to Sind.

I am of the pre-World War II generation and concerned that we are leaving the planet and Australia in worse shape than it was when we got it. Reckless extraction of fossil fuels is a major part of the problem.

Yours faithfully

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