

Narrabri Gas Project

Submission Form

DO NOT PUBLISH MY NAME IN THE LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

DO NOT PUBLISH MY LOCATION IN THE LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

First Name *

PAULINE

Last Name *

MEERS

Email Address *

l.meersandcompany@bigpond.com

Organisation/Company (if applicable)

L.J. Meers & Co.

Address

"WOOLINGAR" COONAMBLE

State

NSW

Postcode

2824

Please select the reason for your submission *

Comment

Objection

Support

Submission

Attached Document

Please continue on back side.

To:

The Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW
Level 3, 201 Elizabeth St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir or Madam:

My family own and farm the property "Woolingar" situated north of Coonamble NSW. It sits upon The Great Artesian Basin and is totally reliant on artesian water to function. The deep rich black soil there cannot capture or hold any rain/surface water, but that type of soil is what makes it very productive broad acre farmland in a time when expanding populations and food security has never been more important.

Our underground water supply is vital for the survival of our inland communities and the rural industry, and CSG Fracking and Mining present clear and irreversible risks to the integrity of both.

Fracking has already caused environmental damage in the Pilliga Forest where an operation has resulted in a contamination issue, leaving the community to live with the aftermath when the corporates have long gone and where an apology and a small fine is enough for the government to absolve them of their failures and allow them to expand mining operations against the wishes of the vast majority (98%) of those who reside and have their livelihoods here.

CSG is a short-term fiscal and employment solution for a Government but for rural communities it is a gamble that could have a devastating affect on us when their royalties and the jobs are long gone.

The threat of CSG affects the mental health of the people in our communities. Living in rural Australia we have more than enough challenges with droughts, floods and isolation, but we accept all that and get on with our way of life because that is nature's natural cycle, but there is nothing natural about CSG! It is a decision inflicted upon us in favor of large mining companies with deep pockets and powerful lobbyists influencing politicians when the only currency we have with which to be heard are our collective voices, our local knowledge and the will to keep fighting for the sake of the basin and our future.

Our communities are now showing signs of a renewal after many years of population decrease and Government neglect. With new technologies, broadband, better transport options and a desire for a healthy tree change, a younger demographic are beginning to live and work here again, their new businesses breathing life back into our towns and our schools, and creating more local jobs. They are here for the clean green life we have to offer, and CSG cannot promise them that.

Please consider the impact it will have on cultural sites and the lives of the Aboriginal families and their communities who live here, and the wildlife that depends upon it, especially the koalas who cannot just up and leave as the kangaroos and emus can in the event of an industrial accidents that have been documented world wide and has shown us how easily they can easily occur.

In 1999 The Department of Land and Water Resources were so concerned about the fragility of the Great Artesian Basin the Federal and NSW Governments combined to advise and encourage land holders with artesian bores to invest in a 40%-60% subsidy incentive to Cap and Pipe them to preserve this precious resource. The water in our bore is 670 metres/2200 feet below the surface and the department informed us the water is a million years old when it comes to the surface, that extraction

was lowering the pressure faster than it could recharge and that the basin was at risk, a valuable resource to be preserved at all costs.

We agreed whole-heartedly, it cost our business over \$200,000.00 and since then the pressure has been increased.

Now, 21 years later, the NSW Government is prepared to grant mining companies billions of litres of this precious resource, allowing them to infuse it with a poisonous mix of toxic chemicals and allowing salt to come to the surface, when as land holders/farmers we are considered by the government to be environmental vandals if our farming practices bring any salt or chemicals to the surface, and rightly so, thus proving corporate money speaks louder than any of their previous environmental concerns for our precious commodity.

Artesian water opened up the inland farming communities and is the lifeblood of Outback Australia. If it is damaged and our water is no longer potable only those towns and communities situated on a river will survive but they will again struggle in a drought, which in Outback Australia is a regular occurrence and as the past four years without rain has taught us, they can last at least that long and for some it is still ongoing.

I believe this is one of the most crucial and onerous decisions your planning committee will be required to make, as there will be no turning back once approval is given. All Australians will be affected by the unintended consequence of an accident or result of corporate neglect. There will be no second chances, there is no Plan B.

No community has worked harder to protect their water than the Great Australian Basin Protection Group Inc (GAB) If CSG is allowed to flourish it will proliferate and become a parasite on the entire basin, wherever there is gas.

We are all tired of the rhetoric and broken promises, of not being listened too and taken for granted over something we hold so dear. This issue has been a dark cloud hanging over the future of the basin for many years and its uncertainty is affecting mental health in our communities, and of particular concern are our rural men who have a higher rate of suicide.

The scientists and hydrologists still disagree on the possible ramifications of CSG Fracking in the Great Artesian Basin. Would you be prepared to risk your **only reliable** water supply knowing that?

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I am 68 years old and I have been living on the land and dependent on artesian water all my life.

Pauline Meers.
0429151593

Dated: