

Water Trigger Submission

Dear Madam/Sir,

It is well-established in Australia that water management is a matter of national concern, and that water resources like the Murray Darling Basin, the Lake Eyre Basin and the Great Artesian Basin are of fundamental importance to the continent, its people and natural landscapes.

Right now the Water trigger, is all we have in terms of ANY legislation that is protecting us from this onslaught of the unconventional gas industry... particularly in regards to threats to water, however, Santos seems to have been let through, as they seem to have bypassed the trigger to be eligible to proceed under the premise that they are doing sets of wells incrementally rather than "all at once" however this does not change the cumulative impact on the water resources and all the other threats it poses.

There should be a tightening of the policy, as the trigger has failed in this instance, because it is not protecting the water resource, especially when the water table has already been found to be contaminated, so it is compromising the integrity of the sensitive resource of the Great Artesian Basin, these projects should be found to be non-eligible and rejected.

State Governments' assessment and approval regimes are not fit for the purpose of assessing the risks and damage to water resources posed by coal and unconventional gas mining.

There should be clear boundaries and thresholds, such as exclusion zones for important water resources like the GAB and drinking water catchments, as well as mandatory standards for matters like set-backs, monitoring, water quality and access to cultural water.

I request that the IESC be tasked with reviewing state and territory legislation and statutory arrangements for the management of water volumes and quality and assessment and prevention of mining impacts and whether those measures are fit for the purpose.

I plead that all unconventional gas mining, shale and tight sand gas, as well as CSG, be covered by the water trigger, along with any other related fossil fuel developments, such as shale oil and underground coal gasification.

The water trigger must be applied to related water developments for coal mining and unconventional gas, triggering the law. If a borefield, dam or water pipeline are proposed in order to feed a coal mine with water, or a water treatment facility proposed for a CSG operation, they are water resources being impacted by those activities and it should be triggered.

Unfortunately, in my experience IESC advice is often ignored. It should be given more weight and the

IESC should have power to create binding guidelines, and require standards – such as enforcing ANZECC water quality guidelines for creek discharges.

Give the IESC the power to set mandatory standards for all coal and gas and related industries. Standards the Minister must abide by.

The scope and focus of the legislation is Not appropriate to the problem being addressed. The scope must be expanded to all forms of gas extraction ONSHORE, not just CSG.

There should be a reassessment done of the Santos Narrabri Gas Project and Leewood Wastewater Processing Facility to review its eligibility with this policy. Also a "tightening" of this policy, so other companies like Santos, and their very large gasfield, with major threats to both water useage and contamination of water table, cannot be allowed to ever threaten the G.A.B. again.

In the meantime, that project should be halted, until this is re-asseessment is done, due to it being a threat to the Great Artesian Basin.

yours sincerely

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