Committee Secretary,

Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport.

My wife and I own a 7000 acre cattle grazing property between Glenmorgan and Surat. The property was purchased in 1987.

In December 2010, after the best rains in years, we discovered parthenium plants at a dam in the centre of our property. On further investigation over a couple of months, we found a widespread infestation over 2000 acres, consisting of more than 50 sites of one plant to patches of plants. The plants were difficult to find with the heavy growth of grass and weeds.

It became obvious as we spent hours & hours finding, then pulling and burning the flowering plants and spraying the remainder, that the parthenium was situated on seismic lines and tracks.

We make the point that this was a 3D seismic exploration, very invasive with seismic tracks every 300 metres running in two different directions, interconnecting tracks, and tracks around all obstacles such as dams, fences etc. According to the operators, there was in excess of 120 kilometres of tracks across open country, through heavily timbered country, up & down ridges, in & out of gullies and gorges. Nothing got in their way. In addition, we had their camp & base 400m from our house - in excess of fifty workers and fifty plus vehicles and machines. Contractors were not only coming and going from neighbouring properties, but from all over Queensland and Australia. To monitor movement of vehicles and machinery was physically and logistically impossible. These seismic lines and tracks were constructed in October 2003 by sub contractors working for the holders of the lease at the time Samson Int (Aust), Sunshine Gas and others. As far as we can ascertain,

Samson (a branch of USA company no longer exists) and Sunshine Gas was taken over by the present holders of the lease, QGC.

Following the discovery of parthenium, contact was made with local government and biosecurity with both giving similar advice regarding control of the infestation. Biosecurity gave mixed signals regarding our obligations, one saying we were obliged to clean up the infestation seeing it was a declared/noxious weed, the other saying government could not force us to do so. However one biosecurity officer did come and inspect the infestation gratuitously advising that we had the infestation for good and that we could approach the present owners of the lease, but that we would probably be wasting our time. His position was that it was an issue between us (the landholder) and the operator of the mining lease.

As far as our business is concerned, we have not bought in cattle (other than bulls) since 1988 and any earthmoving work is done by our own machine.

Our points of concern are:-

1) this is a small watershed on the southern side of the Balonne River consisting of 3 properties and it was a parthenium free area

2) spread of the weed down the watershed & neighbouring properties into the Murray Darling system

3) decrease in value of property

4) management of the property - to stop spread to other paddocks, cattle movement, machinery movement, spelling of paddocks, water supply to paddocks, spraying of paddocks

5) economics - a) we don't have surplus income b) cost of controlling the weed - time & chemical c) what happens to other work on the property? In other words, our business has been sabotaged

6) we comply with the legislation, we don't issue the permit, we didn't create the problem and we don't get royalties or financial return for what is under the ground.

7) health risks of dealing with parthenium, and the mental, physical & emotional effects of dealing with the problem

8) the amount of time that has elapsed since the exploration and the problems this creates, namely statute of limitation if we

considered court action.

9) what is Government's responsibility?

10) what is Oil & Gas industry's responsibilty to cover incidents like this? Are there funds put aside to accommodate problems such as ours which arise?

Through no fault of our own, we now have a property infested with parthenium which is, and will continue to, adversely affect our livelihood and personal life. We appreciate the opportunity to make this submission.

Thankyou,

Denis & Anthea Itzstein