Sir,
firstly my apologies for late lodgement of this submission - however we have only just become aware of the opportunity to lodge our complete and utter opposition to CSG Mining in sensitive areas of NSW and Australia - particularly areas of heritage value such as the Tweed region of Northern NSW and ***all*** agricultural land across Australia.

We operate a small, but highly successful tourist accommodation operation in the Tweed Valley, which is part of the Mt Warning Caldera – in the top FIVE areas in Australia listed as an iconic destinations for both international and domestic tourism. This puts our region alongside Kakadu, Ayers Rock and the Great Barrier Reef in terms of international and domestic importance. Referring specifically to the granting of PEL445 and application PELA134, that CSG exploration should even be considered – as in a licence be applied for, much less GRANTED, in an area of such beauty, bio-diversity and ecological sensitivity is quite simply *outrageous*. The method by which these licences were obtained/granted is similarly so … how can it be legal to even consider the ruination of an area of world heritage significance (and surrounds) without, in the very least, some kind of community consultation **prior** to exploration licence application? How can it be that one has to alert the community prior to getting married – but not if you're planning to rip up their land, poison their water, release toxic chemicals into their air and ruin their way of life? How can this be right?

If CSG comes to Northern NSW, you can kiss goodbye to the tourism industry in the region. Even if you managed to "hide" the ugly exploration fields, disguise the pipeline, somehow muffle the noise of the pumping stations – you won't be able to reduce the massive number of large truck movements required for day-to-day operation (so roads are constantly under repair and the ambience of driving in the countryside is destroyed for both locals and tourists alike); you won't be able to hide the fact that the water table is dropping, as CSG companies have been measured using ***twenty-two times more water*** than they claim they do (so the rainforests will die first), the remaining water is being poisoned (so the wildlife will go next), and the air is becoming toxic (I guess that makes us, the human inhabitants on the extinction list as well).

The gas companies will maintain that this is a highly safe activity. I don't know if you've seen the movie "i[i]Gasland", a documentary made about the CSG industry in the U.S., or the ii[ii]4 Corners documentary made on the same industry in S.E. Queensland and how it is affecting the Great Artesian Basin ground-water supply. If not, I urge that you see both. Please do not be lulled into a false sense of security by soothing words from gas company officials as they wave $$$ signs in front of you. Money is short-term gain, this poison is forever!

Whilst the mining companies in Australia have stated that they don't use the same chemicals as in the U.S. they don't satisfactorily reveal which chemicals they DO use. As is clearly shown in the 4 Corners documentary, they are using chemicals they claim they are not! If the chemical they use are so safe how is it that the QLD Govt. has closed down a site in the South Burnett region after an investigation found it posed an unacceptable risk to the underground water i.e. cancer-causing chemicals have been found in water bores in the area - chemical the mining companies claim they are not using! They have no response to over-use and poisoning of the water table, no satisfactory response to questions about safety levels for waste disposal and no response to the question of trespass on private property where land-holders do not want their livelihoods and lifestyles destroyed for generations to come.

The so-called "moratorium" on CSG licence granting in NSW until July 19th is a joke. The gas companies sent out notice of intention to enter private property to farmers in the Bellata area, near Moree in north-west NSW nearly two weeks ago .. shows how seriously they're taking the "moratorium" and government "investigations".

We are fully cognisant of the fact that more/cheap energy is needed to sustain our lifestyles and standards of living. However the citizens of Australia are becoming more and more aware of the long-term ramifications of short term solutions and we're not happy about it. This is not just a matter for the “greenies” – we are all concerned with the future of our water, our land and our health. What is good for the environment will usually be good for us in the long term – and all indications are that CSG extraction is not good for the environment.

To (on the one hand) spout platitudes about a carbon tax and saving the planet, whilst quietly and with no community consultation, preparing to turn the Australian water supply into a toxic waste dump with an industry that produces more carbon waste that a city full of vehicles, and the Australian "food bowl" agricultural regions into mining wastelands, is not only insulting to the intelligence of the average “man in the street”, it’s short-sighted and stupid.

I urge that you:

ensure that a full and TRANSPARENT investigation into this industry takes place during a **fully policed and enforced** moratorium on all further activity - this means no trespass on private property, no sending out letters to land-holders .. in fact cessation of ALL further operations;

ensurethat full disclosure of intention and community consultation becomes part of the licence ***application*** process so that local communities can decide if they want to welcome this industry to their area rather than having to fight against it being forced on them;

ensure that regions of national importance such as world heritage areas and agricultural regions are protected by a TOTAL mining ban for perpetuity;

ensure that individuals and communities have the right to say NO to mining companies, and anyone else for that matter, entering their properties if they so desire;

that you consider safer and cleaner alternatives to this diabolical murder of Australia’s future existence as we know it.

best regards
Tracy (and Clive) Parker
Hillcrest Mountain View Retreat

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i[i] *Gasland trailer: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZe1AeH0Qz8*

ii[ii] *4 Corners: http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/special_eds/20110221/gas*