

From: [Russell Bennie](#)
To: [Agriculture Resources and Environment Committee](#)
Cc: [Lyn Bennie](#)
Subject: Mineral and Resources Act 2014 Submission.
Date: Thursday, 3 July 2014 2:07:22 PM

To whom it may concern,

The issues are two fold:

1. Compulsory access to farms to deal with "legacy bores" is inappropriate.

There is no adequate description as to what constitutes a legacy bore - is it an old exploration bore placed and irresponsibly left by the mining industry, or a old or current use water bore used by farmers? Either way, there would be no problem posed by these holes if not for the action of the Coal Seam Gas (CSG) miners de-pressuring the targeted coal seam aquifers.

Additionally, in all the community consultation meetings held by [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED] hall for the past few years, the impact of these bores and the resultant interconnectivity between the aquifers were denied in full. If this is accurate as per the CSG industries stance, then there is no requirement for this provision in the act as there will be no environmental impact as a result of gas migrating into non-targeted aquifers or the surface of the ground.

The ability for an organisation to access and impact our land and business at their will and desire under any pretence is simply not right. This will not be tolerated - particularly as assurances were given by the CSG industry that this migration of escaped gas was not going to occur and are not detailed as a impact to the environment in any Environmental Impact Statements (EIS).

The only sure way in dealing with this issue is to stop the CSG industry from dewatering aquifers as a result of the poor management of the mining industry by previous State Governments. Only a small percentage of old exploration bores will be found.

2. Opt out option is completely inappropriate.

As farmers who have already been impacted by CSG activities, we have found that the CSG companies are deceptive, difficult and deliberately vague in offering alternate, more appropriate ways of conducting operations.

We have had to research in very lengthy terms, alternate forms of land access that CSG companies would not offer. We have successfully negotiated a land entry via a waiver for preliminary activities to address our operational concerns. However, we would never under any circumstances use this for advanced activities.

Our farms would be happy to work with and accommodate future environmental inspections and remediation once the CSG companies acknowledge their impacts to our business and general future including personal health, however they refuse to work in an open and transparent manner. As a result state government departments have found us to be "unreasonable" and directed [REDACTED] that they do not have to make good on all the impacts to our business, after alleviating [REDACTED] of obligations that should have halted the approvals for the future [REDACTED] gasfield.

Given the way the State Government and the CSG industry operate, both do not require any more powers to further increase the already steep imbalance that exists when land holders that have valid concerns for their future and environment are forced to deal with aggressive, well funded CSG companies.

It is easily apparent that CSG companies will offer the " opt out option" as another way to deceive and confuse landholders who lack the same working knowledge as the aggressive representatives that represent CSG companies.

One last comment - if CSG companies are unable to negotiate an agreement with a landholder, then the CSG companies are at fault!, as any competent person could convince a business of an activity that is beneficial to the landholder, environment and future of the community. A forced mediation, as well as land court serves only as a threat to landholders who are unconvinced by a CSG industry that now openly acknowledges interconnectivity and adverse environmental impacts as a result of their activities (forcing compulsory access via this legislation is an open acknowledgement of CSG impacts on the environment and interconnectivity between aquifers that will result in contamination of drinking water supplies). The threat of court or mediation is real because of the lack of understanding outsiders have when it comes to the farming business - we have neighbours that farm in the same industry, however I would never presume to understand their business or decision making process, let alone farmers in different areas or climatic conditions, so likewise, no-one could understand ours.

Given that my previous submissions relating to the EIS dealt with some of these issues and was ignored, I don't expect that this will have any effect.

Yours sincerely,

Russell Bennie,

[REDACTED]

Lyn Bennie,

[REDACTED]

Doug Bennie,

[REDACTED]