

COMBINED TWEED RURAL INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

Hon. Brad Hazzard,
Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

168 Brooks Rd
Murwillumbah 2484
27th April 2011

Dear Minister,

The Combined Tweed Rural Industries Association (CTRIA) is an agricultural lobby group representing some 1100 farmers and their families in the Tweed Shire Local Government area.

The CTRIA is very concerned at the present proliferation of coal seam gas bores that have sprung up across large areas of rural Australia, many being situated on prime agricultural land.

Our understanding is that part of the Tweed Shire has already been approved for exploration, originally in 2004 and renewed in November 2010. This is known as PEL 445.

Macquarie energy has an application for exploration of more Tweed Shire land (PELA 134) yet to be approved.

The "4 Corners" programme on the problems being encountered in Queensland with drilling for coal seam gas should have rung alarm bells with all rural landowners.

Even if only a small fraction of the concerns raised in this programme are legitimate then there are still very serious and potentially serious issues that need to be investigated before any more drilling is approved.

The CTRIA concerns are:

- 1) The assurances that all is safe and well with no long term environmental impacts seem to be coming only from people associated with the drilling companies.
- 2) It appears that consultation with landowners has been inadequate and in some cases misleading.
- 3) The rights of the mining companies appear to override the rights of landowners.
- 4) There is a lack of recognition of the impact that this industry is having on the ability of landowners to carry out their normal operational procedures.
- 5) Landowners do not appear to be adequately compensated for this intrusion on their land when compared to the enormous profits these drilling companies stand to make.

The CTRIA believes that there should be an immediate moratorium put in place on any more coal seam gas drilling approvals until such time as there has been rigorous and thorough independent studies carried out to ascertain that this industry is not going to cause long term damage to our agricultural industries particularly in relation to damaged and polluted aquifers and physical intrusions impacting upon the efficient production of food and fibre.

Until such time as all the concerns raised in this submission have been adequately addressed landowners in the Tweed Shire will oppose coal seam gas drilling.

C.R.Brooks
President CTRIA

