

A plea – prioritise our health and wellbeing

Significant concerns with Coal Seam Gas mining, and unconventional gas mining, are the potential impacts that this industry will have on **water security, environment, health, food production and livelihood**. Consider some recent statements and the call for substantial independent monitoring and reporting; stay informed and contact your politicians if you are concerned about the impacts. [Contact Details of Members and Senators](#)

In a [Media Release](#) 28 May 2013, Toowoomba's **Bishop Robert McGuckin** said "Economic benefits to the area from mining must not be at the sake of the community's health and wellbeing – particularly of local children."

Bishop McGuckin said a number of Tara residents believe multiple medical conditions are the result of chemical exposure caused by adjacent coal seam gas mining activities.

"Any exploration or extraction activities should only take place in the area if the long term safety and well-being of the residents can be guaranteed."

[Statement](#) by **Debbi Orr**, resident Tara rural residential estates Queensland, 27th May 2013, included: *We now have 28 families involved with the support group-including my own, who are also experiencing symptoms such as headaches, skin rashes, nose - bleeds, ear bleeds, tingling and numbness, tightening of the chest, respiratory problems etc. Depression and suicide is becoming quite a concern as these families become more and more stressed.*

On 23 May 2013, the **Australian Medical Association (AMA) Federal Council** passed a [policy resolution](#) calling on all Australian governments to ensure that all coal seam gas (CSG) mining proposals in Australia are subject to **rigorous and independent health risk assessments** before they are allowed to proceed. *"There is a lack of information on the chemicals used and wastes produced, insufficient data on cumulative health impacts, and a lack of comprehensive environmental monitoring and health impact assessments,"* said AMA President, Dr Steve Hambleton.

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) released [The Health Factor](#) report, 21 May 2013, about the **potential health effects on communities** across Australia from coal and coal seam gas projects.

Dr. Geralyn McCarron conducted an independent health survey in the Tara rural residential estates and environs (Qld) February - March 2013. Excerpts from the study [Symptomatology of a gas field](#) report:

The population of the rural residential estates on the Western Downs near Tara is among the most densely settled cohort in Australia to have, so far, lived in close proximity to intensive unconventional gas development.

No baseline air or water monitoring or baseline health studies were done prior to the Queensland Government permitting the widespread development of the CSG industry in close proximity to family homes. No ongoing health study or surveillance and no ongoing testing to monitor chronic exposure levels is in place. This is clearly unacceptable.

Dr. McCarron surveyed 113 people:

58% were certain their health was being impacted by CSG.

23% felt sure that their health had not been impacted and 19% were uncertain.

17% reporting skin irritation before CSG and 72% complaining of skin irritation after CSG.

7% reporting eye irritation before and 60% after CSG.

Queensland continues to issue permits for rapid CSG expansion. Approximately 40,000 coal seam gas wells are planned across Queensland. More than 80% of Queensland is under exploration licences.

It is not the gas that is for the export market which poses a health hazard for the people of the residential estates. It is the mixture of chemicals which are rejected and contaminate the local atmosphere, the soil or water during the process of extraction, cleaning and drying as well as those fugitive emissions which are inadvertently released which are of concern and warrant discussion. So too does the possible mobilisation of microbes in the coal seams.

Further Information

A wealth of information and insights from people directly impacted are contained in the [Submissions](#) to the Senate Committee *Inquiry into the impacts of mining in the Murray Darling Basin*

Catholic Religious Australia: [Stop Until It's Safe](#) ; [CSG mining, the human & environmental impacts](#)

ABC, [Four Corners](#)

[National Harmonised Regulatory Framework on Natural Gas from Coal Seams](#)

[Lock the Gate Alliance](#): The mission is to protect Australia's natural, environmental, cultural and agricultural resources from inappropriate mining; to educate and empower all Australians to demand sustainable solutions to food and energy production.