

A Submission to the Chief Scientist and Engineer from:

“STOP CSG SYDNEY WATER CATCHMENT”

The Oakdale, Nattai and surrounding areas are unique within the Sydney Basin, as it was here that coal was first discovered in Australia over 200 years ago.

The present community consists of third and fourth generation residents who have been stewards of this land for more than 150 years.

They have been directly involved in coal mining and agriculture, successfully carrying on both industries without any major issues.

The most significant change to the lifestyles in Oakdale and surrounds came with the completion of Warragamba Dam in 1960. Since that time there has been strict conditions of entry into lands that were originally available to these residents. These restrictions relate to access as well as controls over the types of agriculture able to be undertaken in the area. We cannot raise pigs in some areas and we are liable to fines of between 11 and \$44,000 for walking in some areas adjacent to our properties. We can't subdivide our lands and we have additional building restrictions.

As this water catchment area provides more than 80% of the residents of NSW with their daily water requirements, these restrictions were accepted, respected and in most cases even enforced by the residents.

HOWEVER THE CURRENT STATE GOVERNMENT IS ALLOWING CSG MINING IN DIRECT DRINKING WATER CATCHMENT AREAS WITHOUT ANY REAL RESTRICTIONS. THERE HAS BEEN NO BASE LINE STUDIES OF WATER OR AIR TO ESTABLISH THE CRITERIA FOR MONITORING ANY FUTURE CONTAMINATION OF EITHER.

The primary control of this area has always rested with the Sydney Water Catchment Authority. However the current state government has removed the health department representative from this authority and taken control of the appoints to the authority. It has also removed any control of CSG mining from the authorities' area of control.

There has been absolutely no consultation with any residents or local authorities with regard to the well drilled by Apex Energy in Oakdale. We only stumbled on its existence by accident. Apex is currently applying for further exploration licenses in PEL 454 which covers the majority of the Warragamba catchment.

Our primary concerns are for the possibility of contamination of the water catchment from any surface or aquifer contamination. There has been considerable debate over whether CSG mining in this area would endanger the water catchment. To understand our concerns we refer to the Crypto-Sporidium, Guardia contamination of Sydney's water supply in July-August 1988. This was traced back to badly controlled septic pump out systems in the small villages around the water catchment. This is irrefutable proof that any surface or subsurface contamination in our area will eventually contaminate the drinking water catchment.

As previously stated there have been no base line studies undertaken to establish the present condition of either the aquifers or the surrounding air quality. We can therefore have absolutely no reference point to establish any levels of future contamination.

We could refer to a myriad of anecdotal examples where CSG mining has been “identified” as the cause of a considerable number of environmental and personal health issues. The cause of these issues is the basis of considerable community concern and mistrust of the CSG mining industry and the government agencies governing it.

Our bottom line argument is a simple one. Until these base line studies are undertaken by a truly independent process and the proper safeguards put in place to govern this industry, **THERE SHOULD BE AN IMMEDIATE BAN PLACED ON CSG MINING IN ANY WATER CATCHMENT AREA.**

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