

Coal seam gas and coal mining: Is integrated catchment management now a possibility in New South Wales?

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Speaking notes

1. From any understanding of how the Australian landscape functions it is possible to use principles of Integrated Catchment Management to create a mosaic of appropriate land uses given the underlying capacity of natural systems to support desired set of values.
2. It is possible and desirable to use our knowledge of landscape process to work out upfront where we can safely mine and where mining would compromise agriculture, other land uses and landscape environmental function. It is clear that mining for coal seam gas and coal has the potential to put at risk the function and value of key long term renewable natural resources assets and use such as:
 - i. Water resources and aquatic ecosystems
 - ii. Agricultural land use thus food and fibre production
 - iii. Biodiversity and landscape function via vegetation management
3. It is folly to secure one natural resource while putting at risk renewable long term resource use. The need is paramount for:
 - i. good long term regional land use planning to avoid such perverse outcomes
 - ii. Recognition of limitation of EIS approach...leads to death by 1000 cuts!
 - iii. Need non statutory regional and landscape planning to inform statutory planning
4. Good regional and catchment action planning (CAP) with appropriate spatial definition should be able to identify
 - i. *no go areas* for mining for gas and coal
 - ii. *go with care areas* in which mining can be conducted without unacceptable perverse outcomes within a regulation framework.
5. The mining Acts for coal and gas and in general need reform to bring them in line with ESD principles and the objectives of the Native Vegetation and Water Management Acts.

- Integrated Catchment Management is now possible in NSW and mining along with urban development and all land use should sit.
- It is about putting all development in line with maintain and improve principles directed towards State targets for Natural Resource assets of land, water and biodiversity.
- Impacts of coal and coal seam gas mining should be assessed up front and helped through Regional and CAP planning mechanisms to guide exploration away from areas of high risk to landscape function.
- Actual impacts and remediation need to be managed strategically to avoid large areas of partially remediated sites. It is better to transform some to new function and remediate others to high quality outcomes.