

Saturday, 15 November 2014

Submission to Senate Enquiry to investigate certain aspects of Queensland Government  
Administration related to Government Affairs  
G&P Bender

Dear Committee,

We are making this submission on behalf of our family living on a property at Hopeland in Chinchilla, where we have a successful piggery, cropping and cattle enterprise.

The government has provided the CSG Companies with all the power, leaving an individual farmer to protect himself against multinational companies. The decision whether or not to have CSG on our property should be a commercial decision; it should be the right of the farmer to choose what effects his business on a commercial basis.

This situation the government has created leaves the process open for bullying, and intimidation and potential corruption.

Just one example, our bores were included in the number of bores that were in the immediately affected area and on the "make good list" for Origin. Origin had previously approached us for access and an agreement for wells on our place. During the process of negotiating the make good agreement, Origin attempted to induce us to sign the Conduct and Compensation Agreement (CCA) in return for a better deal on the make good agreement.

Further to this point, the make good is under the water act and an act of direct compensation for damage. The CCA is unrelated. To attempt to induce a farmer to acquiesce to both must be at least unconscionable conduct, if not worse.

Included in this issue was that we were being pressured to sign the CCA with the make good inducements as they wanted to start drilling by end 2014. This is an example of sharp practices as these wells are not in their Plan of Operation current December 2014.

Another example is the sharp practices engaged in is the way in which a table discussion is undertaken in your with the CSG Companies regarding your expectations of the company and the agreement. Then upon receiving the agreement the document does not reflect any of the discussions, the document is signed by the proponent and when questioned as to the items discussed, the proponent say oh, sorry, I didn't read that, I just signed it.

Finally, after 18 months of negotiation and hours of discussion, we eventually reached an agreement (satisfactory or not) regarding the make good agreement for our bores. The next step was for Origin to send the cost of the legal fees to us so that we could pay legal fees by 11 September 2014. Origin failed to provide the above. We were left with a demand phone call from the solicitor. We contacted Origin to follow up. We received a letter on the 21<sup>st</sup> October advising that Origin would investigate and apologising.

We believe that these examples demonstrate the lack of regard and due consideration that the government has for agriculture in Queensland and in fact the government is sanctioning and supporting the erosion of our constitutional rights. The Government must review the CSG situation and support the farmers in their endeavours on their own properties.

Pam and George Bender  
Valencia  
Hopeland 4413

25 October 2014