



That the Synod:

Request the Moderator to write to the Queensland State Premier requesting that the government establish continuous and comprehensive real-time monitoring in all areas where CSG operations are taking place within two (2) kilometres of people's homes with appropriate follow up and reporting back to the community by the Department of Health and Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.

Request for comprehensive testing in CSG areas

The scope of a Proposal

Request the Moderator to write to the Queensland State Premier requesting that, following on from Recommendation 7(d) in the report on "Coal seam gas in the Tara Region: Summary risk assessment of health complaints and environmental monitoring data" (March 2013), the government establish continuous and comprehensive real-time monitoring in all areas where CSG operations are taking place within two (2) kilometres of people's homes with appropriate follow up and reporting back to the community by the Department of Health and Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. That such monitoring should be permanent, comprehensive, readily available and include measurements of noise and vibration, air, soil and water, and be conducted independently of Government Departments and Mining companies.

Rationale

The coal seam gas (CSG) industry has developed significantly in the Tara region over recent years. Its development has coincided with complaints from some residents alleging impacts on the health of themselves and family members. (Introduction p-4 "Coal seam gas in the Tara Region: Summary risk assessment of health complaints and environmental monitoring data" - March 2013)

As a result of these complaints, a study was undertaken by the Queensland Department of Health, and whilst the report, which was released in March 2013, concluded that, “a clear link cannot be drawn between the health complaints by some residents in the Tara region and impacts of the local CSG industry on air, water or soil ...” (ibid Conclusions p-18), the report did recommend that a strategic program of monitoring as per the recommendation above be established. Three years later, no such monitoring is taking place and reports of ill health continue to rise.

The constant monitoring of air, soil and water is necessary due to the fact that residents regularly report the presence of particular odours prior to falling ill and private testing have identified high levels of volatile organic compounds in the air, and high levels of lead, radioactivity, hydrocarbons, volatile and microbiological elements in dam and tank water in and around residents' homes. In many instances, residents are unable to use their own tank water for either bathing or drinking.

Independent and permanent testing is necessary because the monitoring mentioned in the Department of Health Report was of a short term nature, and undertaken by Mining Companies. Subsequent to this adhoc and incomplete testing which occurred in 2012 there has been massive expansion of the industry. By the report's own admission, the monitoring that did take place was insufficient for any significant conclusions to be drawn either way (ibid).

A reference to a critique of the report by the National Toxic Network is <http://www.ntn.org.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Critique-of-CSG-Health-Study-april20131.pdf>

Monitoring, as per 7(d) of the report is urgently required, and although the issue of Solastalgia (stress caused by rapid environmental change) has been raised as a possible cause for resident's health complaints. Soastalgia, for instance, does not cause nose bleeds, a common complaint of people living in the gas fields, and it seems inconceivable that this has not been investigated further. Furthermore, no satisfactory explanations have been provided for the presence of pollutants in the air (including noise), soil and water inside and around residents' homes.

Proposers

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