



GrainGrowers Policy Position- Mining & Coal Seam Gas

There must be clear protections put in place to ensure agricultural production is not unnecessarily impacted by mining and coal seam gas activities

Background

Agriculture and mining have co-existed in Australia since colonial settlement. However, in recent years tensions have flared between farmers and the mining sector over the expansion of mining into more agricultural areas and the rapid development of the coal seam gas industry.

Legitimate questions have been asked about the impact of mining on agricultural productivity, the impact on underground and above ground water resources, potential damage to soils and the permanent loss of agricultural resources.

Recent changes to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) have empowered the Australia Government to examine the impacts of 'large coal mining' and 'coal seam gas projects' on 'water resources' under the EPBC Act and with advice from an Independent Expert Scientific Committee (whether the usual EPBC Act triggers of National Environmental Significance apply or not).

The States have also introduced a myriad of policies, rules and guidelines (of varying degrees of consistency and effectiveness across state boundaries) covering protection of agricultural land, land access agreements, rehabilitation measures and protection of water resources.

Our Position

GrainGrowers recognises that mineral and petroleum industries have a right under State and Territory legislation to explore and mine across the landscape. However, we believe that there needs to be a rigorous and consistent regulatory framework across all states to ensure that the rights of both resource companies and landholders are better understood. There should also be mechanisms put in place to ensure agricultural land is protected where science has indicated that resource development would have a lasting impact on the productivity of that land.

Water Use - Mineral and Petroleum industries must show no net decline in water quality and no net decline in water quantity against benchmark conditions. All mineral and petroleum industries practice must be consistent with the National Water Initiative provisions.

Land Access agreements – GrainGrowers acknowledge that Land Access agreements allow the grower to positively influence the process and receive protection and assurances from mineral and petroleum industries.

Use of Chemicals – GrainGrowers believes the Australian Government needs to regulate chemical use by mining and coal seam gas industries. Safety of Australian food and agricultural resources needs to be balanced in respect of the rights of the mining industries.

As an overriding principle, GrainGrowers will not accept any negative impact on the property rights of growers. Any lasting negative impact, intended or unintended, must be compensated by the mining industry and guaranteed by the government.