

Special Interest Articles:

- CSG Information Forums
- BSA behind the scenes
- On the political landscape
- Landholder assistance contacts
- Touring the region

BSA: sustainability the key message

Welcome to the Basin Sustainability Alliance's first official newsletter.

This is something we have been working on developing for some time in a bid to keep our members, supporters and those interested in our cause, up to date with our actions. There is certainly a lot to discuss in this first edition and we will endeavour to keep you up to date on a more regular basis.

It has been a very busy time for the Basin Sustainability Alliance; I don't think anyone on the committee ever envisaged the task we had ahead however

we remain committed to the job at hand.

The coal seam gas industry has been steaming ahead yet questions are finally being asked of the companies, the industry and the government authorities. This is certainly bringing accountability to play and finally we are seeing some of our questions being answered.

The Basin Sustainability Alliance's role is to work with government and industry to achieve a coal seam gas industry that will have minimal environmental, economic and social

impacts, while preserving groundwater resources for future generations.

We still believe that a moratorium on any further development should be in place until science can prove that our water and land will be safe for years to come.

We have had good access to government departments and believe we are assisting them with taking the steps required to provide further assurance to landholders and communities. There is a very long way to go although there seems to be plenty happening behind the scenes.

Government hosts CSG information forums

The Basin Sustainability Alliance wrote to the Minister for Natural Resources the Hon. Stephen Robertson back in May urging him to consider hosting community consultative meetings in key towns throughout the Surat Basin.

It was suggested that the meetings provide an opportunity for concerned community members to talk directly with government departments about the cumulative impact of the proposed CSG developments and how they would handle the environmental and social impacts.

The BSA was very pleased to hear that the Government had adopted

this proposal with CSG forums having commenced last week.

The BSA urges anyone with questions to attend these forums believing that education and information is the key. Please encourage others to also attend.

Meeting Dates:

- **Dalby RSL** on **Tuesday 31 August** from 10.30am to 2pm.
- **Miles RSL** on **Wednesday 1 September** from 10.30am to 2pm; and
- **Toowoomba All Seasons Function Centre** on **Thursday 2 September** also from 10.30am to 2pm.

Constructive discussion with politicians

Since its inception back in March the Basin Sustainability Alliance has been fortunate to meet with members of all political parties, at all levels of government, in a bid to highlight the group's general concerns focusing on water, land access and environment.

These meetings have been extremely productive, allowing BSA to provide first hand information to those in attendance. BSA has been upfront in outlining its genuine concerns while also providing recommendations and suggestions for their consideration.

From the outset BSA has been in regular contact with Minister Stephen Robertson and has worked constructively with the Director Generals and members of his departments. BSA has been extremely grateful for this opportunity and believes it has opened a constructive line of communication.

The LNP has been equally supportive in its bid to learn as much as possible about the concerns of the BSA.

To its credit the LNP has launched some extremely good policies in regards to further protecting the environment and landholders' rights. Just this week BSA welcomed LNP members, and local landholders, from northern New South Wales to Dalby who were keen to gain a greater understanding of the CSG and UCG industries. With exploration underway in their area, they are attempting to get a handle of what lies ahead.

In early July, BSA and other concerned landholders met with Greens leader, Senator Bob Brown and explained their firsthand experiences and concerns about the uncontrolled development of CSG. It was at this meeting he announced he would be calling on a moratorium on coal seam gas mining and exploration until adequate environmental protections are in place.

BSA remains committed to working with all political parties in a bid to achieve its goal of ensuring a sustainable future for all.

Key developments:

- Meeting held between BSA committee and representatives from Origin, Santos, QGC and Arrow at Roma on 25 July.
- BSA committee meeting with Hon. Stephen Robertson in Dalby on 21 July.
- Deputations with Ministers at the Government's Community Cabinet at Roma on 25 July.
- Hosted groundwater seminar in Dalby on 20 June with respected water expert Col Hazel.
- Meeting with LNP delegates at their annual state conference.

Addressing the real issues....

BSA's Chairman, Ian Hayllor has been asked to speak at numerous events including the Land Access for Mining and Petroleum forum held on 16/17 August in Brisbane, and also at the annual National Water Commission conference in Townsville on 20 July.

At the National Water Commission conference he relayed BSA's concerns over water extraction and the possible implications it will have on the Great Artesian Basin and other surrounding aquifers, such as the Condamine Alluvium.

He was pleased to hear that the National Water Commission are pushing to bring water use

associated to mining activity under the same legislative framework ensuring the industry, like every other, is accountable for its use.

The Land Access forum, which included industry and government representatives, was a terrific opportunity for Ian to relay the general concerns of landholders affected by CSG. His presentation was well received with many very interested to speak with him further.

The conference organiser said that she would be very keen to get more landholders to attend, and address, at next year's event believing it provided valuable information to industry officials.

Environmentalists tour region

Drew Hutton, together with Friends of the Earth, organised a bus tour in late June giving interested metropolitan residents an opportunity to visit the region and gain a better understanding of CSG development.

On behalf of BSA, Ian and Deb Hayllor hosted a lunch for the crew at their home with Ian and committee members on site to discuss the issues in greater depth individually.

Drew reported that it had been a very successful trip, which included visiting Dave and Ruth Armstrong's property and the Acland coal mine, giving attendees a very real look at what was going on.

Drew remains committed to highlighting the issue on a national level and has been supporting a number of local landholder groups throughout the region.

Community cabinet provides excellent opportunity

The Government's Community Cabinet Meeting held in Roma on the 26 July provided an excellent platform for members across the region to outline any concerns they had about the CSG industry.

The BSA took up the opportunity to meet with a number of Ministers through the deputation process. They included Premier Anna Bligh, Treasurer and Minister for Employment and Economic Development Andrew Fraser, Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy Stephen Robertson, Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland Tim Mulherin and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Stirling Hinchliffe.

The key issues for the BSA focused again on environmental management, long term impacts on land and groundwater, land access, and discussion on industry legislation.

The group asked the Premier to engage a panel of independent scientists and groundwater hydrologists to review the recent conditionally-approved LNG projects and coal seam gas projects currently before the Coordinator-General, to ensure they are environmentally sustainable. This proposal was considered not necessary.

The BSA extended an invitation to the Premier to visit the Darling Downs region and welcomed her intention to do so. They have since been in contact with her office and hope to have this meeting in the very near future.

An invitation has also been extended to the BSA for a member to step up to an advisory group being proposed by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI).

Providing landholders with assistance

There are plenty of people working within the Government based in Brisbane, and also within the Surat Basin, that are able to provide landholders with further assistance and advice regarding coal seam gas development. They include:

- DEEDI's Director of Coal Seam Gas Engagement, Bill Date. Bill can be contacted on mobile 0408 018 500 or via email on bill.date@deedi.qld.gov.au
- Mining registrar, Todd Ellis is based in Dalby and can be contacted on 4669 0829 or 0457 521 084 or email todd.ellis@deedi.gov.au
- Andrew Brier Regional Manager – GABSI & Major Projects (Roma). Phone 4624 1513 or 0408 612 819 or email andrew.brier@derm.qld.gov.au
- Janet Hogarth, Acting Deputy Mining Registrar Mines/Energy (DEEDI) at Roma. Phone 4624 1512 or email janet.hogarth@dme.qld.gov.au
- Mark Kelly, Regional Director Southern Region Mines (DEEDI). Phone 07 3238 3711 or 0407 654 773 or email Mark.Kelly@deedi.qld.gov.au
- Legal Aid solicitor Glen Martin is based in Toowoomba and can be contacted on **1300 651 188**.

Origin Energy sits down to talk

BSA committee members Ian Hayllor, Jeff Bidstrup, Wayne Newton and Geoff Hewitt recently met with representatives from Origin Energy to hear more about the company's position on water monitoring and fracking.

The company was pleased to provide an outline of their developments and able to show their current modelling relating to groundwater impacts as well as conduct a fracking demonstration with the chemicals they use.

They also discussed the monitoring systems they have in place, as well as the processes they use in the drilling and decommissioning of wells.

BSA highlighted its position on water reinjection believing it should be the preferred option for all companies.

Origin confirmed that it is currently undertaking a reinjection trial project at their Spring Gully operation and will look further into this process.

The opportunity allowed for BSA to ask questions frankly and all were satisfied with the research work Origin is putting into their development.

For further information or to become a member please visit:

www.basinsustainabilityalliance.org