

PRESS RELEASE

Queensland's largest freshwater aquifer is at serious risk of being drained as a direct result of Coal Seam Gas production in the Great Artesian Basin, a new scientific study has found.

The Condamine Alluvium, which extends some 3600 square kms from Ellangowan in the south to Macalister north of Dalby is the primary source of freshwater for the townships of Dalby, Pittsworth, Millmerran & Macalister and an agricultural region that contributes hundreds of millions of dollars to Queensland's economy every year.

A new report by independent hydro-geologist John Hillier confirms that the Condamine Alluvium is hydraulically connected to the Walloon Coal Measures, which the Queensland Government is currently allowing to be dewatered for coal seam gas production.

The report was commissioned by industry-group 'Central Downs Irrigators Ltd'. Their members are concerned about the impacts of CSG dewatering activities in the Walloon Coal Measures in the absence of scientific information about possible impacts on the adjacent Condamine Alluvium.

Mr Hillier found that the Condamine Alluvium is incised into the Walloon Coal Measures and that water transfer is occurring between the two ground-water systems. He recommends that further studies be undertaken to determine impacts and that future decisions on CSG developments in the Condamine Alluvium area be dependent on the results of such studies.

"Because of the very real likelihood of movement of groundwater from the alluvium to the Coal Measures, more data is required to allow the calculation of the volumes that could be involved," one conclusion states.

Mr Hillier's study concludes that as water levels in the Walloon Coal Measures decline as a result of CSG production, a reverse gradient will be created that will cause the waters of the Condamine Alluvium to drain away into the Walloon Coal Measures.

The Central Downs Irrigators believe Mr Hillier's report provides conclusive proof that a moratorium is required on all further CSG development in the area of the alluvium until the full environmental impacts on ground-water systems and agricultural land are understood and addressed.

The Central Downs Irrigators are highly committed to ensuring the future sustainability of the Condamine Alluvium, demonstrated by their cooperation and support of the Queensland Government's groundwater planning process.

This process is likely to mean irrigators will have to surrender at least half of their existing water allocations from the alluvium with little chance of compensation... something irrigators have agreed to in the interest of protecting their precious water resource for the benefit of generations to come.

For further information or a copy of the full report visit: www.cdil.com.au/
Media-contact via info@cdil.com.au