

The Country is Calling:

How Are Our Federal Politicians Responding?



A Review of the Coal and Unconventional Gas Policies of Australian Political Parties

August, 2013

In the lead-up to the Federal election, the Australian people need to know where political parties stand with regard to the protection of our land, water and health from reckless coal and gas mining.

Lock The Gate Alliance has analysed the policies of eight parties fielding candidates this Federal election against our national reform agenda. The review covered all parties that appear to have specific policies on coal and gas mining.¹

For each reform that Lock The Gate Alliance is seeking, we rated the policy of each party as to whether it was poor, poor to moderate, moderate or positive. The overall ratings for each party are provided in the table below.

Party	Number of Policies in Each Rating Class			
	Poor	Poor to moderate	Moderate	Positive
Liberal Party	8	2		
Australian Labor Party	5	3	2	
National Party	8	2		
Australian Greens			3	7
Katter's Australia Party	3	1	3	3
Stop CSG Party	1		5	4
Democratic Labor Party	4		4	2
Socialist Alliance	2		1	7

Overall, the analysis has led to the following findings:

- The parties most likely to form government, the Coalition and ALP, have the worst policies.
- These parties have failed in their duty to protect Australians from the risks involved with the rapid expansion of coal and unconventional gas mining.

¹ Whilst we note that Clive Palmer has made [media statements](#) relating to concerns about coal seam gas mining, we cannot find any actual Palmer United Australia policies on the matter, so that party has not been included in this review.

- The Coalition parties have made statements regarding protecting agricultural land and the rights of landholders that have not been backed up by any real action.
- The National Party scores incredibly poorly on matters of crucial importance to country people. They do not seem prepared to place any limits on coal and unconventional gas mining in rural Australia.
- The threat of Federal decision-making powers on environment being handed back to the states, supported by the Coalition and threatened by the ALP, represents a grave risk to the future of our water resources and natural areas.
- The Australian Greens, Katter's Australia Party, the Socialist Alliance, the Stop CSG Party, and the Democratic Labor Party to a somewhat lesser extent, had many policies that addressed our key concerns.
- These parties have been vital to expressing widespread community concern about coal and gas mining in the national political sphere, and without their work the debate would be even more biased towards the vested interests of multi-national mining corporations and their overseas shareholders.

As a result of this analysis, in the lead-up to the election on 7th September, we are calling on the Coalition and ALP to address their policy failures on coal and gas mining and to announce some concrete solutions to protect our food, water and livelihoods from reckless mining expansions.

Lock The Gate Alliance and member groups will be sending questionnaires to candidates in key seats seeking specific commitments from them in relation to our national ['Call to Country'](#) reforms, and publicising the results later in the election campaign.

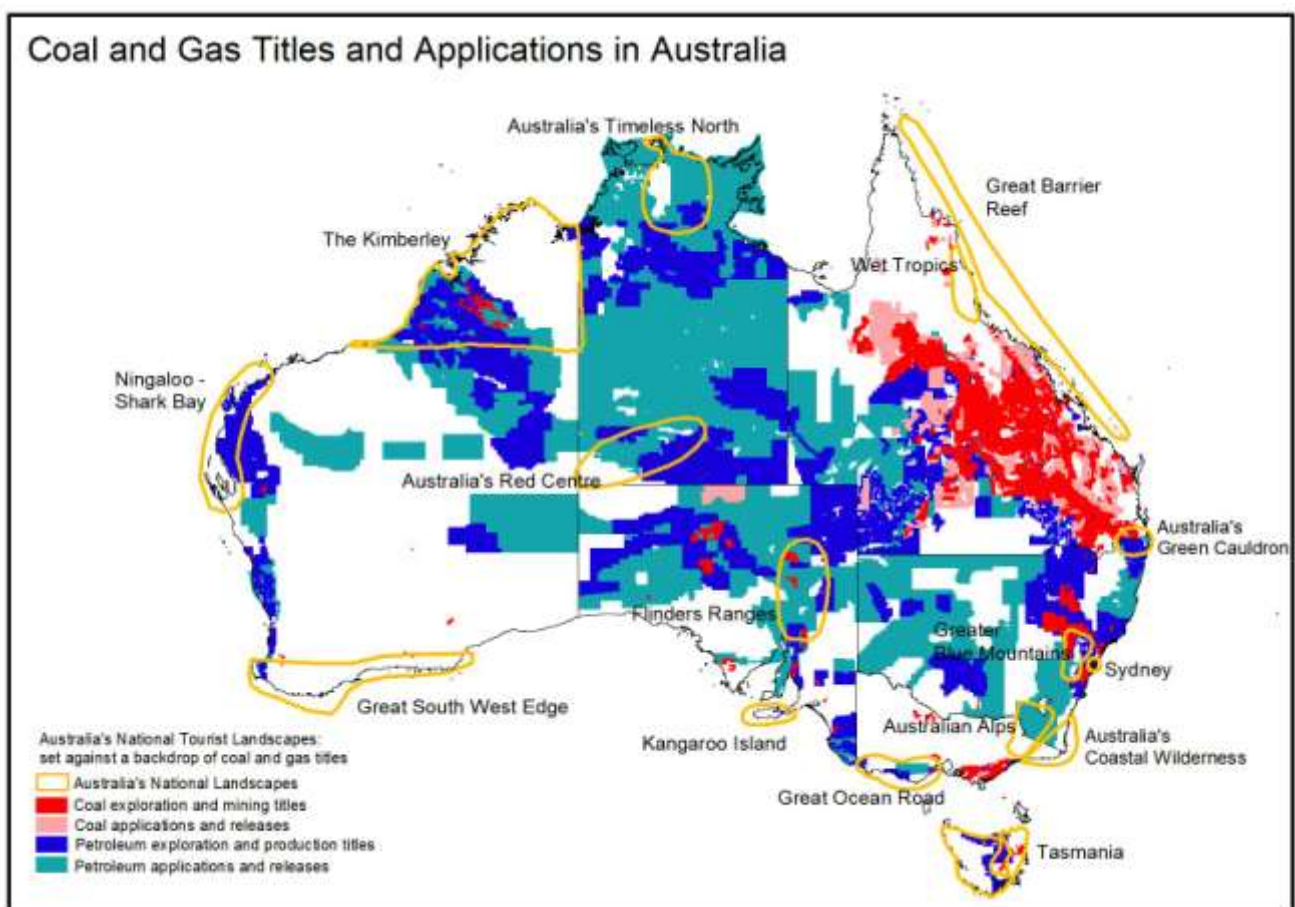


Introduction

The 2013 Federal election comes at a defining moment in our history. Earlier this year Lock The Gate Alliance launched our national campaign, ['Call to Country'](#), which arose in response to new mapping which showed that more than half of Australia is covered by coal and unconventional gas licences or applications.

We have rarely, as a nation, faced such enormous risks to our food, water and livelihoods. The scale and pace of coal and gas developments, and the corruption and misconduct scandals that have erupted around them in both NSW and Queensland, have raised alarm bells across the country.

Communities across Australia have responded strongly to this direct threat to their way of life with a powerful assertion of unity and purpose. New alliances have been formed between farmers, environmentalists and Traditional Owners, between country folk and urban dwellers, and amongst people with diverse and disparate political affiliations.



This diverse movement of concerned citizens has united around the 'Call to Country' [campaign](#), which seeks to:

- ⤴ Protect our natural resources, including our food-producing lands, water resources, sensitive environments, and cultural sites
- ⤴ Protect Australian industries that are negatively impacted by coal and gas mining, particularly agriculture and tourism;
- ⤴ Safeguard the health of communities at risk from particulate pollution and toxic chemicals and give landholders rights to say 'no' to mining;
- ⤴ Ensure that coal and gas companies pay their way and that their pollution is properly accounted for;
- ⤴ Instigate a substantive inquiry into governance of coal and gas industries in Australia

But many of our political parties have been very slow to respond to this escalating unrest. The Federal Parliament has wide constitutional powers to make laws relating to corporations, trade and commerce, and environmental protection. They can act nationally to better protect Australians from reckless coal and gas expansions - the only thing missing is the political will to do so. Our Call to Country includes an eight point plan for national law reform on coal and unconventional gas mining (see Attachment 2). It is a detailed legislative agenda that, if implemented, will restore the balance and protect land, water and people.

It calls for Federal action to:

1. Put in place an urgent moratorium on coal seam gas and other unconventional gas mining.²
2. Create no-go zones to protect productive agricultural land, national tourism icons and all residential dwellings from coal and gas mining, and provide a right of free and informed consent for landholders.
3. Strengthen the Federal environment laws to exclude coal and gas mining from important water sources, cultural heritage sites and sensitive environment areas.
4. Put in place national standards on coal and gas pollution and enforce compliance.
5. Stop using taxpayers' money to provide handouts to big coal and gas corporations and make the miners pay their fair share in taxes.
6. Reject current development proposals for coal ports, mega-mines, dams and unconventional gas wells in significant areas.
7. Conduct research into greenhouse gas emissions from mining and make sure they are properly accounted and fully paid for.
8. Hold a Royal Commission to investigate the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments.

² Unconventional gas includes coal seam gas, shale gas and tight gas. They all require unconventional methods to extract methane.

Analysis of Federal Party Coal and Gas Policy Platforms

In the lead-up to the Federal election, the Australian people need to know where political parties stand with regard to the protection of our land, water and health. To that end, Lock the Gate Alliance has reviewed the policies of eight parties fielding candidates this Federal election against our national reform agenda. The review covered all parties that appear to have specific policies on coal and gas mining.³

Lock The Gate Alliance is a national coalition of over 160 member groups and thousands of supporters, with active groups located in every state in Australia. We have undertaken this analysis to provide information for our network and supporters, as well as the wider public. We don't offer specific recommendations on who to vote for. Where specific policies at the Federal level have not been found, the recent actions of governments, at both a state and federal level, have been taken into account.

Lock the Gate members will be also be sending questionnaires to candidates in key seats across the country seeking specific commitments from them in relation to our Call to Country reforms, in the hope that they will take action to address the policy failures of their federal parties, or strengthen their agenda to protect our country from inappropriate coal and gas mining.



³ Whilst we note that Clive Palmer has made [media statements](#) relating to concerns about coal seam gas mining, we cannot find any actual Palmer United Australia policies on the matter, so that party has not been included in this review.



Summary of findings

Attachment 1 provides a detailed review, with references, of each party's policy platform against the Call to Country reform plan. Overall, the results show that:

- The parties most likely to form government after the election - the Liberal/National parties and the Australian Labor Party - had the worst policies of those reviewed. They all fell drastically short of decent regulation of damaging coal and gas developments.
- The Australian Labor Party has slightly better policies relating to air pollution, assessment of chemical use in fracking, restricting subsidies and substantially better policies for accounting for greenhouse gas emissions than the Liberal/National parties.
- The Coalition parties have made statements regarding protecting agricultural land and the rights of landholders that have not been backed up with any real action. In fact, statements of this kind made one day are usually reversed soon afterwards and voting patterns in Parliament have not matched with statements made outside.
- The Liberal and National parties both propose devolving decision-making for matters of national environmental significance to state Governments, and the Labor Party continues to flip-flop on the issue. This is a matter of significant concern for internationally significant areas like the Great Barrier Reef, and national and intrastate matters like the protection of water resources.
- The poor scoring of the National Party on matters of crucial importance to country people is particularly disappointing. There doesn't seem to be any acknowledgement that there should be limits to coal and gas mining in rural Australia, and recent moves to better assess water impacts from coal and CSG activities at the Federal level would be severely compromised by the Coalition's proposal to devolve environmental approval powers back to the states.

- In general, 'minor' parties have scored far better in our analysis than major parties: of the minor parties we reviewed, the Australian Greens, Katters Australia Party, the Socialist Alliance and the Stop CSG Party, and the Democratic Labor Party to a lesser extent, had many policies that address the key concerns of the Lock the Gate Alliance, though there are still areas that need work.
- All of the five minor parties reviewed have policies to implement a moratorium on coal seam gas mining, whilst none of the major parties reviewed support a moratorium.
- Most parties have some policy or approach that addresses the threat to water resources from coal and gas extraction, and all current parliamentarians supported recent amendments to the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* to make water resources a protected matter when it comes to coal mining and coal seam gas extraction.
- There is a worrying degree of inconsistency on some matters, and all parties need to clarify their intentions on elements of Lock The Gate's agenda. Of particular concern is the fact that for most parties, specific policies developed for CSG mining are not being applied to other forms of unconventional gas - shale gas and tight gas - despite very similar environmental and social impacts. This is creating a worrying deficit of policy relating to shale gas and tight gas, which saw them excluded from the operation of the new 'water trigger'. Only the Australian Greens, Stop CSG Party and Socialist Alliance have policies relating to all forms of unconventional gas mining.
- Only the Australian Labor Party and Katters Australia Party have specific policies to address chemical use in fracking. The ALP has a national assessment of risks from fracking chemicals underway and a review into options to reform the NICNAS scheme, but scores lower than KAP on this measure due to the ALP's failure to support a moratorium on the use of this technology while research into these chemicals is conducted.
- No parties have policies that adequately address air quality in coal and gas-affected communities, though the Australian Greens and the ALP have both made some efforts in this area that would benefit from further commitment and elaboration.
- Of the eleven national landscapes under threat from coal and gas mining and export, only the Great Barrier Reef and the Kimberly have received attention from most parties, though the Greens have specific positions on Kangaroo Island and Tasmania's natural heritage as well. Only the Australian Greens have policy backed by action to protect the Great Barrier Reef, though we note that Katters Australia Party is opposed to dumping of dredge spoil in the GBR WHA, and that ALP Senators voted with a motion in the Senate calling to prevent offshore dumping, too.

- The general opposition to any new coal and unconventional gas developments by the Australian Greens and the Socialist Alliance would address many of the specific concerns of Lock the Gate members, but it is noted that such a policy is broader than the LTGA platform and such policies need to be backed up by credible and well-resourced transition plans for affected communities.
- Katters Australia Party, the Stop CSG Party and the Democratic Labor Party all have welcome policies to address and prevent the impacts of CSG developments but are apparently lacking in policies to address the impacts of coal mining.

Attachment 1: Analysis of the Coal and Gas Platform of Federal Political Parties

Liberal Party of Australia		
Lock the Gate priority	Relevant policy/statement	Score/evaluation
Exclude coal and gas mining from important water sources	<p>We will deliver a State-based one-stop shop for environmental approvals.⁴</p> <p>Water trigger voting: voted for the trigger, but against an amendment to have it applied to other unconventional gas mining (shale gas and tight gas)</p> <p>We will... manage our precious water resources to help our agriculture sector become the 'Food Bowl of Asia' and achieve 'food security'</p>	<p>Moderate: Support for the Federal water trigger was a good sign, as is the acknowledgement that managing water resources is essential for food security.</p> <p>Poor Commitment to devolve Federal environmental power to the States however may undermine the water trigger, as Liberal-led state Governments in Qld and NSW have not delivered on promises to protect aquifers from coal mining and CSG.</p>
<p>Exclude coal and gas mining from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural heritage sites • sensitive environmental areas • productive agricultural land • residential areas 	<p>"We will deliver a State-based one-stop shop for environmental approvals"</p> <p>Cultural heritage: no stated policy found</p> <p>Sensitive environmental areas: no stated policy found</p> <p>Productive agricultural land: No clear stated policy found Federally. Some statements about the necessity of protection (eg, "In terms of prime agricultural</p>	<p>Poor Commitment to devolve Federal environmental power to the States is a concern for matters of national environmental significance as State Governments have not proved staunch protectors of sensitive environmental areas.</p> <p>Poor: No commitments at all at a federal</p>

⁴

All quotations and policies for this party are taken from the *Real Solutions* outline of September 2012, unless otherwise specified.

	<p>land, the very best land in Australia, there needs to be a clear exemption of that land from mining.”⁵) The NSW Coalition Governments' Strategic Regional Land Use Planning policy reneged on pre-election promises to create no-go zones for agricultural land, and now the state has proposed more retrograde changes to the State Environmental Planning Policy on mining to ensure that the value of the coal resource over-rides other land-uses⁶. Commitments to protect vineyards and horsebreeding industry clusters from CSG in the Hunter Valley are a step forward, if they are ever interested. In Qld, the Strategic Cropping Land Act has been weakened by the LNP state Government.</p> <p>Residential: No stated Federal policy, but NSW Govt has promised and Qld Govts has enacted a ban on CSG extraction within 2km of residential areas, not coal.</p>	<p>level to exclusion zones for important resources.</p> <p>Moderate General recognition of need to protect agricultural lands is welcome, but clear and consistent policy that delivers 'real action' is needed.</p> <p>Moderate: NSW Liberal policy excluding CSG development near residential areas and key industries should be expanded to coal and applied to all rural residential dwellings as well, and then taken up by the Party across the board.</p>
Landholder’s right to say no	<p>Voted against Water Bill amendment that would confer this right, and earlier <i>Landholders' Right to Refuse (Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2011</i>.</p> <p>Tony Abbott stated on radio in May 2013 that “<i>Miners should not go onto farms, if they’re not wanted. It’s very wrong and they shouldn’t be going onto land where the relevant land owners don’t want them. And it is as simple as that.</i>” However, he later back-flipped and tried to pass the issue off to the states, suggesting that it was not a Federal issue.</p>	<p>Poor The party has been very inconsistent in its position on this crucial question.</p> <p>Landholders need clarity and 'real action' on this area of policy.</p>

⁵ Ian MacFarlane, Coalition Energy and Resources spokesperson, quoted in *The Australian* 15 August 2011. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/greens-dig-a-hole-for-tony-abbott-on-farmers-rights/story-fn59niix-1226115073087>

⁶ <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/nsw-govt-caving-in-to-mine-industry-oppn-20130729-2quji.html>

<p>Protect Australia’s national tourism landscapes.</p>	<p>Great Barrier Reef “a Reef 2050 plan to ensure the long term management and protection of the Reef.” Matters to be addressed by the plan do not include port development, and support is expressed for the Newman Government’s approach.⁷</p> <p>Kimberley: Supported Browse Basin gas hub at James Price Point, no stated policy apart from that. LNP Govt in WA has pushed through an agreement with gas companies for a pipeline from the Kimberley to the Pilbara.</p> <p>Green Cauldron: State counterpart committed to protect the Scenic Rim from CSG and coal, but that promise is yet to be implemented.⁸</p> <p>All other national landscapes threatened by coal and gas: No stated policy.</p>	<p>Poor For most of the national landscapes, there is no stated policy of protection, which leaves the door open to development.</p> <p>The LNP Government in Qld has failed to protect the Reef from coal and gas development. Inclusion of this in the Federal Liberal Reef Plan would correct this damaging approach.</p>
<p>Moratorium on unconventional gas mining until a rigorous research program is completed</p>	<p>No stated policy.</p>	<p>Poor Victoria is the only state with a current moratorium on fracking. On the record of NSW and Queensland counterparts, there is no intention to enact a genuine moratorium. This puts communities, their health and water at risk.</p>
<p>Stronger regulation of fracking chemicals under the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme</p>	<p>No stated policy</p>	<p>Poor Full disclosure and adequate controls on fracking chemicals are crucial to protecting water resources and communities</p>
<p>National enforced standards on air pollution from coal and gas</p>	<p>No stated policy</p>	<p>Poor Air quality in coal and gas-affected communities needs to be addressed. It is not acceptable to have no policy in this area.</p>

⁷ Media Release 19 June 2013. “UNESCO decision on Great Barrier Reef Welcomed” <http://www.liberal.org.au/latest-news/2013/06/19/unesco-decision-great-barrier-reef-welcomed>

⁸ LNP 2012 Election promise: <https://lnp.org.au/state-election-2012/grow-a-four-pillar-economy/protecting-the-scenic-rim/>

<p>Stop taxpayer handouts to coal and gas corporations, and make miners pay their share in tax.</p>	<p>Did not oppose Government removal of accelerated depreciation and exploration tax concessions</p> <p>Plans to “scrap a mining tax that discourages investment by imposing very high effective tax rates on risky projects” and remove the carbon price, which covers the fugitive emissions of CSG and coal mining.</p>	<p>Poor Removing the mining tax and the carbon price will take Australia backwards in getting a fair share from mining companies.</p>
<p>Ensure that coal and gas corporations pay for fugitive emissions and downstream impacts, to limit climate change contributions.</p>	<p>“Asia’s growth offers Australia tremendous potential to significantly increase our coal exports by utilising our competitive advantages as a nation.” Gives demand estimates that suggest Oz would “almost double our net energy exports over the next 20 years” as an example.⁹</p> <p>5% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020, paid for by a \$3 billion Emissions Reduction Fund: “Reducing carbon emissions inside Australia, not overseas”¹⁰</p> <p>Repeal of carbon price will mean that corporations are not required to pay for pollution caused by fugitive emissions from coal and gas mining</p>	<p>Poor Stated policy will remove requirements for coal and gas corporations to pay for fugitive emissions</p>
<p>Hold a Royal Commission to investigate the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments</p>	<p>No stated policy. State counterparts have failed to conduct proper inquiries into corruption scandals engulfing the coal and gas industries – in NSW, there has been a manifestly inadequate response to the ICAC investigation into corruption surrounding two coal mines, and in Qld there has still been no decision from the Crime and Misconduct Commission as to whether it will investigate irregularities in approval processes for CSG projects.</p>	<p>Poor</p>

⁹ From *Real Solutions*, September 2012.

¹⁰ Note that in the 2010 election policy document, this fund was proposed to be a \$10 billion fund to 2020. It is not clear if this is still the case.

<http://www.liberal.org.au/sites/default/files/ccd/Environment%20Policy.pdf>

Australian Labor Party

Lock the Gate priority	Relevant policy/statement	Score/evaluation
Exclude coal and gas mining from important water sources	<p>Introduced a water trigger on large coal and CSG projects into <i>Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> for the first time.</p> <p>Voted against an amendment to have the water trigger applied to other unconventional gas mining – shale gas and tight gas.</p> <p>Prior to the water trigger being passed, gave Federal approval to coal and CSG projects with major impacts on water resources.</p> <p>Decisions on how the trigger will be applied to projects that are already in the assessment system are due by the 20th August.</p>	<p>Moderate: Now that the water trigger has been passed, how it is implemented will be a crucial test of the party's commitment on this question - particularly for projects already in the system.</p> <p>However, the party record of approving every coal and gas mine that came before it over the last term, regardless of impacts on matters of national significance, does not bode well for strong implementation of the water trigger.</p>
<p>Exclude coal and gas mining from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural heritage sites • sensitive environmental areas • productive agricultural land • residential areas 	<p>The current ALP Government has wavered over this term between keeping Federal powers under the EPBC Act 1999 and devolving them to the States. Most recently, PM Kevin Rudd has re-opened the debate by foreshadowing fast-tracking of major CSG developments and handing powers back to States¹¹ though this has reportedly since been ruled out.¹²</p> <p>Cultural heritage: Approval given during this term of Govt to coal and CSG projects that impact cultural heritage.</p> <p>Sensitive environmental areas: Approval given during this term of Govt</p>	<p>Poor: Maintenance of Federal environment powers is crucial to protect water and matters of national environmental significance.</p> <p>The current Government's record of approvals has not made good use of their environmental powers and indicates poor commitment to these exclusions.</p>

¹¹ http://www.afr.com/p/national/rudd_plan_targets_power_prices_CxfT2zO0JufHK5gJ2fnmCP

¹² *The Australian*. 17 July 2013. "Kevin Rudd to keep 'green tape' power" <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/climate/rudd-to-keep-green-tape-power/story-e6frg6xf-1226680406535>

	<p>to coal and CSG projects in high conservation value areas.</p> <p>Productive agricultural land: Approval given during this term of Govt to coal and CSG projects on agricultural land</p> <p>Residential areas: Approvals given during this term of Govt to coal and CSG projects that impact towns and residential areas.</p>	
Landholder's right to say no	Voted against Water Bill amendment that would confer this right, and earlier <i>Landholders' Right to Refuse (Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2011</i> .	Poor
Protect Australia's national tourism landscapes.	<p>Great Barrier Reef: approval of LNG terminals and coal terminals in GBR WHA.</p> <p>Kimberley: Supported Browse Basin hub at James Price Point, no stated commitment to protect the Kimberley.</p> <p>All other national landscapes threatened by coal and gas: No stated policy.</p>	<p>Poor: No action so far to prevent coal and gas developments in the GBR WHA or the Kimberley.</p> <p>No acknowledgement that Australia's national tourism landscapes should be protected coal and gas development.</p>
Moratorium on unconventional gas mining until a rigorous research program is completed	No moratorium.	Poor: Approvals are being given despite the uncertainty of impacts, and no moratorium has been imposed.
Stronger regulation of fracking chemicals under the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS)	Stated policy on chemicals "Labor will work to ensure that the regulation of all chemicals in Australia is consistent, and reflects world best practice, in order to provide the highest level of protection to the community, workers, and the environment". ¹³	Poor - Moderate: A national assessment of risks from fracking chemicals is underway, plus a review into options to reform the NICNAS scheme.

¹³ ALP National Platform. Paragraph 85. See COAG Standing Council on Environment and Water's recent Regulation Impact Statement on different options for managing chemical environmental risks for early steps towards chemical reform. The extent to which this will address problems in the CSG industry is not clear. <http://www.scew.gov.au/consultation/management-chemical-environmental-risks-consultation-regulation-impact-statement>

	<p>Current ALP Government has commenced a review into options to reform the NICNAS scheme,¹⁴ although the options proposed to date are generally weak.</p> <p>Current ALP Government has commissioned a national assessment by NICNAS into the “<i>human health and environmental risks from chemicals used in drilling and hydraulic fracturing for coal seam gas extraction in Australia.</i>”¹⁵ However, this assessment will be limited to meet the 2014 completion date, and it will not deliver the comprehensive hazard assessment of all chemicals that is needed.</p>	<p>Stronger reforms needed of NICNAS, plus proper comprehensive hazard assessments of all fracking and drilling chemicals. In the mean time, bans should be imposed on the use of BTEX, persistent bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals, carcinogens, endocrine disruptors and VOCs.</p>
<p>National enforced standards on air pollution from coal and gas</p>	<p>Development of National Plan for Clear Air through COAG by 2014 prioritises particulate pollution, but no action taken or commitment made regarding particulate pollution from coal mines, transport and burning.</p> <p>Action on a national standard for PM_{2.5} has not begun and other fine particle standards do not match standards set by the World Health Organisation.</p> <p>No national controls or standards on air pollution from CSG and other forms of unconventional gas.</p>	<p>Poor - Moderate: Need public commitment that the National Plan for Clear Air will tackle particulates in coal-affected communities, and that World Health Organisation standards will be adopted. Action needed to set standards on air pollution from CSG and other forms of unconventional gas mining.</p>
<p>Stop taxpayer handouts to coal and gas, and make miners pay their share in tax.</p>	<p>Some action in this area by removal of accelerated depreciation write-offs and reduction in tax breaks for exploration.</p> <p>No reform of the Fuel Tax Credit subsidy for coal and gas corporations.</p> <p>The scope and design of the Mineral Resources Rent Tax was so</p>	<p>Poor - Moderate</p>

¹⁴ <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-nicnas-draft-regulation-impact-statement.htm>

¹⁵ <http://www.nicnas.gov.au/issues-and-consultations/issues/fracking-hydraulic-fracturing-coal-seam-gas-extraction>

	<p>compromised by this Government that instead of returning a forecast \$2 billion in first year revenue, it has only returned \$126 million in its first six months.</p>	
<p>Ensure that coal and gas corporations pay for fugitive emissions and downstream impacts, to limit climate change contributions.</p>	<p>Coverage of fugitive emissions under the <i>Clean Energy Act 2011</i> ensures coal and gas miners pay for their reported domestic emissions. However, reporting requirements for fugitive emissions from unconventional gas mining under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Scheme are inadequate.</p> <p>No action on limiting fossil fuels. Stated policy is “To maximise the minerals, resources and energy industries’ social, environmental and economic contribution to Australia, Labor will continue to encourage, in conjunction with the states, an intensified national minerals, oil and gas exploration effort.”¹⁶</p>	<p>Moderate</p>
<p>Hold a Royal Commission to investigate the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments .</p>	<p>No stated policy. State counterparts have been embroiled in corruption scandals surrounding the coal and gas industries – which has led to an ICAC investigation into two coal mine approvals in NSW and irregularities in approval processes for CSG being referred to the Qld Crime and Misconduct Commission.</p>	<p>Poor: Given the size of the scandals that have engulfed their State counterparts in NSW and Qld, it is disappointing that the ALP nationally has not called for a Royal Commission or proposed reforms to prevent such problems occurring again the future.</p>

¹⁶

ALP National Platform. Paragraph 227.

National Party

Lock the Gate priority	Relevant policy/statement	Score/evaluation
Exclude coal and gas mining from important water sources	<p>We will deliver a State-based one-stop shop for environmental approvals.¹⁷</p> <p>Voted for the water trigger. Voted against amendments to have it applied to other unconventional gas mining – shale and tight gas.</p> <p>Senator John Williams “If we rush this and we destroy our environment for future generations, they will look back at us and say, 'Why did you pollute our underground water? Why did you bring all that salt out and why is it being washed around the place now?’”¹⁸</p>	<p>Moderate: Support for the Federal water trigger was a good sign, as is the acknowledgement that managing water resources is essential for food security.</p> <p>Poor: Commitment to devolve Federal environmental power to the States, however, may undermine the water trigger, as Liberal-led state Governments in Qld and NSW have not delivered on promises to protect aquifers from coal mining and CSG.</p>
<p>Exclude coal and gas mining from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural heritage sites • sensitive environmental areas • productive agricultural land • residential areas 	<p>We will deliver a State-based one-stop shop for environmental approvals.</p> <p>Cultural heritage sites: No stated policy.</p> <p>Sensitive environmental areas: No stated policy.</p> <p>Productive agricultural land: Stated positions appear to entrust this matter to State Governments. Unclear whether the policy is for more compensation or outright protection. Senator Barnaby Joyce: “Prime agricultural land must be protected. Tony Abbott has stated that, and I am happy he has done so. I would say that the people east of the Condamine are precisely on prime</p>	<p>Poor Commitment to devolve Federal environmental power to the States is a concern for matters of national environmental significance as State Governments have not proved staunch protectors of sensitive environmental areas.</p> <p>Moderate General recognition of need to protect agricultural lands is welcome, but clear</p>

¹⁷ From *Real Solutions*, September 2012.

¹⁸ Senate second reading debate *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development) Bill 2012*. 10 September 2012.

	<p>agricultural land. ... We do not want people's quiet enjoyment being disturbed by the intrusion into their lives of a problem that they did not buy when they bought their house. That issue has to be addressed. If you tick the boxes—not destroying the aquifers, not destroying prime agricultural land, not destroying the quiet enjoyment of a residential estate—then there must be a proper pecuniary return delivered to the farmer. Currently they are getting less than 75c for every \$1,000 that is earned by the miner.”¹⁹</p> <p>Residential areas: No stated Federal policy, but NSW Govt has promised and Qld Govt has enacted a ban on CSG extraction within 2km of residential areas, not coal.</p>	and consistent policy is needed.
Landholder’s right to say no	Voted against Water Bill amendment that would confer this right, and earlier <i>Landholders' Right to Refuse (Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2011</i>	Poor
Protect Australia’s national tourism landscapes.	<p>Great Barrier Reef Coalition partners have referred to “a Reef 2050 plan to ensure the long term management and protection of the Reef.” Matters to be addressed by the plan do not include port development, and support is expressed for the Newman Government’s approach.²⁰</p> <p>Kimberley: Supported Browse Basin gas hub at James Price Point, no stated policy apart from that. LNP Govt in WA has pushed through an agreement with gas companies for a pipeline from the Kimberley to the Pilbara.</p> <p>Green Cauldron: State counterpart committed to protect the Scenic Rim from CSG and coal, but that promise is yet to be implemented.²¹</p> <p>All other national landscapes threatened by coal and gas: No stated policy.</p>	<p>Poor For most of the national tourism landscapes, there is no stated policy of protection, which leaves the door open to development.</p> <p>The LNP Government in Qld has failed to protect the Reef from coal and gas development. Inclusion of this in the Federal Liberal Reef Plan would correct this damaging approach.</p>

¹⁹ Senate debate on *Landholders' Right to Refuse (Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2011*. 22 September 2011.

²⁰ Media Release 19 June 2013. “UNESCO decision on Great Barrier Reef Welcomed” <http://www.liberal.org.au/latest-news/2013/06/19/unesco-decision-great-barrier-reef-welcomed>

²¹ LNP 2012 Election promise: <https://lnp.org.au/state-election-2012/grow-a-four-pillar-economy/protecting-the-scenic-rim/>

A moratorium on unconventional gas mining until a robust research program is complete	<p>“Some people will say they want a moratorium. ... That’s absurd”²²</p> <p>No stated policies on chemicals and other health issues.</p>	Poor On the record of NSW and Queensland counterparts, there is no intention to enact a moratorium. This puts communities, their health and water at risk.
Stronger regulation of fracking chemicals under the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme	No stated policy	Poor Full disclosure and adequate controls on fracking chemicals are crucial to protecting water resources and communities
National enforced standards on air pollution from coal and gas	No stated policy	Poor Air quality in coal and gas-affected communities needs to be addressed. It is not acceptable to have no policy in this area.
Stop taxpayer handouts to coal and gas, and make miners pay their share.	Plans to “scrap a mining tax that discourages investment by imposing very high effective tax rates on risky projects” and remove the carbon price, which covers the fugitive emissions of CSG and coal mining.	Poor Removing the mining tax and the carbon price will take Australia backwards in getting a fair share from mining companies.
Ensure that coal and gas corporations pay for fugitive emissions and downstream impacts, to limit climate change contributions.	Propose repeal of carbon price on fugitive emissions from coal and gas mining.	Poor There doesn’t seem to be any acknowledgement that there should be limits to fossil fuel extraction.
Hold a Royal Commission to investigate the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments.	No stated policy.	Poor

²² Senator Barnaby Joyce. Interview with Peter van Onselen. February 2013. <http://www.nationals.org.au/News/Transcripts/tabid/97/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/8193/Senator-Barnaby-Joyce-Sky-Showdown.aspx>

The Australian Greens

Lock the Gate priority	Relevant policy/statement	Score/evaluation
Exclude coal and gas mining from important water sources	<p>Oppose all coal and gas development.</p> <p>Policy calls for “protection of our precious water resources including the Murray-Darling and Great Artesian Basin from overuse or contamination by coal and coal seam gas mining.”²³</p>	<p>Positive: We note that this policy is broader than the Lock The Gate Alliance reform plan. It is vital that any policy opposing new coal and gas development is accompanied by a transition plan for affected communities, which we are happy to see is also reflected in Greens policy.²⁴</p>
<p>Exclude coal and gas mining from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural heritage sites • sensitive environmental areas • productive agricultural land • residential areas 	<p>Oppose all coal and gas development.</p> <p>Cultural heritage: Support laws that ensure protection and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control of decision making for cultural heritage.²⁵ Also propose a requirement that all mining activity be consistent with the rights, desires and needs of affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.²⁶</p> <p>Sensitive environmental areas, Productive agricultural land and residential areas: Prohibition of mineral exploration and mining including the extraction of petroleum and gas, in residential areas, good quality agricultural land and terrestrial and marine nature conservation reserves, national parks, wilderness areas and other areas of high nature conservation value.²⁷</p>	<p>Positive: Specific policies relating to cultural heritage, agricultural land, sensitive environmental areas and residential areas by default.</p> <p>The interaction between a blanket refusal of all coal and gas development and proposed rights of ATSI people could be clarified.</p>

²³ http://larissa-waters.greensmps.org.au/sites/default/files/protect_farmland_and_water_-_no_new_coal_or_coal_seam_gas.pdf

²⁴ <http://greens.org.au/policies/climate-change-energy>

²⁵ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy: <http://greens.org.au/policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-peoples>

²⁶ Natural Resources policy: <http://greens.org.au/policies/natural-resources-forests-mining-fisheries>

²⁷ Natural Resources policy: <http://greens.org.au/policies/natural-resources-forests-mining-fisheries>

Landholder's right to say no	Have put forward federal and state legislation to achieve this.	Positive
Protect Australia's national tourism icons.	<p>Great Barrier Reef: Specified as needing protection from port development in 2013 election platform. Bill put forward to implement UNESCO recommendations</p> <p>Tasmania's Island Heritage: Specified as needing protection from mining in 2013 election platform.</p> <p>The Kimberley: Specified as needing protection from industrialisation in 2013 election platform.</p> <p>Kangaroo Island: Specified as needing protection from oil exploration in 2013 election platform.</p> <p>All other national tourism landscapes: No stated policy, but general opposition to fossil fuel developments implies protection.</p>	Positive: Clear priority to protect some of the iconic national landscapes at risk and general opposition to coal and gas development implies protection of the remainder.
A moratorium on unconventional gas mining until a robust research program is complete	<p>Propose to "reject all new coal-seam gas, shale and other unconventional gas projects and new and expanding coal mines."²⁸</p> <p>Moved in federal parliament for a five year moratorium on CSG.</p>	Positive: We note blanket opposition is broader than the LTG reform platform. Again, a detailed transition plan is very important as an adjunct to such a policy.
Stronger regulation of fracking chemicals under the National Industrial	Amendments moved in Parliament to empower the Independent Expert Scientific Panel to advise on the health risks of coal and coal seam gas ²⁹ .	Moderate: The general rejection of unconventional gas projects will

²⁸ 2013 Election platform

²⁹ <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22legislation%2Fbillhome%2Fr4778%22>

Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme	Questions asked in Senate Estimates to uncover the extent of fracking chemicals without adequate assessment ³⁰ .	inherently limit use of fracking chemicals, but this policy could do with some fleshing out in the absence of such a ban.
National enforced standards on air pollution from coal and gas	Promise to “better regulate coal dust in the atmosphere” and established a Senate inquiry into the health impacts of air pollution. No specific regulation or standard specified in available policy.	Moderate: Action so far on this issue is moving in the right direction. Clear policy outlining the proposed standards and enforcement regime would be welcome.
Stop taxpayer handouts to coal and gas, and make miners pay their share.	Propose to withdraw Fuel Tax Credits from the mining industry. ³¹ Proposal to “fix the mining tax will raise an additional \$21.8 billion over three years” ³²	Positive
Ensure that coal and gas corporations pay for fugitive emissions and downstream impacts, to limit climate change contributions.	Policy calls for 'independent measurement of methane emissions from CSG so we can understand how polluting CSG is' ³³ . Supported <i>Clean Energy Bill 2011</i> , which includes fugitive emissions from coal and gas in the carbon price scheme.	Positive:
Hold a Royal Commission into the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments.	The Greens have called for high level inquiries into coal and gas mining approvals and processes in NSW ³⁴ and have led the campaign for reform of political donations rules around the country.	Moderate

³⁰ http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/estimate/9d49ebf7-596d-4c10-aebb-5482ec1a344f/toc_pdf/Community%20Affairs%20Legislation%20Committee_2012_05_30_1125_Official.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22committees/estimate/9d49ebf7-596d-4c10-aebb-5482ec1a344f/0000%22

³¹ See http://www.greens.org.au/sites/greens.org.au/files/ending_fossil_fuel_subsidies.pdf

³² Australian Greens. *2013 Federal Election Platform*

³³ http://larissa-waters.greensmps.org.au/sites/default/files/protect_farmland_and_water_-_no_new_coal_or_coal_seam_gas.pdf

³⁴ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-02/mine-update-for-gloucester-community/4664576>

Katter's Australia Party

Lock the Gate priority	Relevant policy/statement	Score/evaluation
<p>Exclude coal and gas mining from important water sources</p>	<p>In 2013, introduced the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Moratorium on Aquifer Drilling Connected with Coal Seam Gas Extraction) Bill 2013</i> to place a two-year moratorium on aquifer drilling for coal seam gas extraction. The Bill did not pass.</p> <p>Voted in support of the Federal water trigger.</p> <p>Current policies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⤴ Prohibition on all drilling through the Great Artesian Basin. ⤴ Prohibition on hydraulic fracturing (fracking) within three kilometres in any direction from any aquifer, groundwater source or groundwater supply point. ⤴ Proposal for study of aquifers subject to mining impacts, to investigate, identify and determine interconnectivity and evaluate aquifer impacts, including drawdown levels, including cumulative impact to determine acceptable drawdown levels which must be subject to ratification by the community. ⤴ Caps on daily water extraction by CSG, ratified by the community. 	<p>Moderate: These proposals foreground the importance of measures to exclude gas mining from important water resources and community involvement in decision making is positive. There is no policy on coal mining.</p>
<p>Exclude coal and gas mining from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural heritage sites • sensitive environmental areas • productive agricultural land 	<p>Cultural heritage sites: no stated policy</p> <p>Sensitive environmental areas: no stated policy</p> <p>Productive agricultural land: Proposes "Provision for farms and regions to be declared 'Strategic Production Land' and exempt from</p>	<p>Moderate: Exclusions for farmland are welcome. Clarification needed as to whether the proposed exclusion also applies to coal mining.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> residential areas 	<p>mining activities.”</p>	<p>Poor: Policy on sensitive environmental areas, cultural heritage and residential areas are needed.</p>
<p>Landholder’s right to say no</p>	<p>“No exploration or mining activity will be permitted on landholder’s property without the landholder’s consent.”³⁵</p> <p>Extends this proposal to the community level: “exploration and mining applicants must maintain a register of consent agreements and these details are to be publicly available. The community must be collectively informed and landholder agreements collectively negotiated to ensure the best operable outcome for all parties.”³⁶</p>	<p>Positive</p>
<p>Protect Australia’s national tourism icons.</p>	<p>Great Barrier Reef: Public commitment to oppose the dumping of dredge spoil in the GBR WHA.³⁷</p> <p>Green Cauldron: KAP member of Qld parliament has introduced legislation to prevent CSG in the Darling Downs.</p> <p>All other national tourism landscapes: No stated policy.</p>	<p>Moderate: Opposition to dumping in the GBR WHA is welcome. Position on other Reef developments are needed.</p>
<p>A moratorium on unconventional gas mining until a robust research program is completed</p>	<p>In 2013, introduced the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Moratorium on Aquifer Drilling Connected with Coal Seam Gas Extraction) Bill 2013</i> to place a two-year moratorium on aquifer drilling for coal seam gas extraction. The Bill did not pass.</p> <p>Current policy proposes a 12 month moratorium, and a review of</p>	<p>Positive</p>

³⁵ KAP CSG Policy. Available here: <http://www.ausparty.org.au/issues/natural-resources-and-food-security/coal-seam-gas-policy.html>

³⁶ KAP CSG Policy. Available here: <http://www.ausparty.org.au/issues/natural-resources-and-food-security/coal-seam-gas-policy.html>

³⁷ Former National Director, Aidan McLindon, quoted 2 March 2012. <http://www.mysunshinecoast.com.au/articles/article-display/katters-australian-party-says-no-dumping-in-reef,24967>

	projects already underway. ³⁸	
Stronger regulation of fracking chemicals under the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme	Prohibition on use of benzene, toluene, ethyl-benzene and xylene (BTEX) in hydraulic fracturing. Prohibited on use of known carcinogens in fracking and all chemical information and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) to be publicly available.	Positive
National enforced standards on air pollution from coal and gas	No stated policy.	Poor Air quality in coal and gas-affected communities needs to be addressed. A policy in this area would be welcome.
Stop taxpayer handouts to coal and gas, and make miners pay their fair share in tax.	Proposes “make good” bond for mining companies and “Royalties for Regions” program whereby 20 per cent of mining royalties earned from a region must be returned to the region in the form of social and capital infrastructure, including provision of affordable housing and associated services for miners and their families. Supports tax incentives for development.	Moderate: “Make good” bonds would provide better certainty for communities, but tax-incentives for coal and gas developments are not a good use of public money.
Ensure that coal and gas corporations pay for fugitive emissions and downstream impacts, to limit climate change contributions.	Proposes to repeal the carbon price, which covers fugitive emissions from coal and gas.	Poor
Hold a Royal Commission to investigate the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments.	No stated policy	Poor

³⁸

KAP CSG Policy. Available here: <http://www.ausparty.org.au/issues/natural-resources-and-food-security/coal-seam-gas-policy.html>

Democratic Labour Party

Lock the Gate priority	Relevant policy/statement	Score/evaluation
Exclude coal and gas mining from important water sources	<p>“The DLP believes that there should be an immediate moratorium on all Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining until independent scientific research, overseen by federal government representatives, can irrefutably prove it is entirely safe and harmless to the human population, concludes that there is no risk of contamination to our ground water aquifers and is entirely safe for the land and environment.”³⁹</p> <p>“The CSG industry and all those associated would be required to act within all governing water acts and be responsible for applying for such necessary licences the same as any other water user. There would be no grounds for exemption in any circumstance”.</p>	Moderate: No policy on coal mining evident, and gas policy doesn't currently cover other forms of unconventional gas (shale gas and tight gas)
Exclude coal and gas mining from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural heritage sites • sensitive environmental areas • productive agricultural land • residential areas 	No stated policy.	Moderate: The CSG moratorium policy will provide considerable default protection for these areas, but it doesn't cover coal or other forms of unconventional gas.
Landholder’s right to say no	No stated policy.	Poor
No-go zones to protect Australia’s national tourism icons.	No stated policy.	Moderate: The CSG moratorium policy will provide considerable default protection for these areas, but it doesn't cover coal or other forms of

³⁹

DLP CSG policy available here: <http://www.dlp.org.au/policies/energy/coal-seam-gas-mining/>

		unconventional gas.
A moratorium on coal seam gas and other unconventional gas mining until a robust research program is complete	“The DLP believes that there should be an immediate moratorium on all Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining until independent scientific research, overseen by federal government representatives, can irrefutably prove it is entirely safe and harmless to the human population, concludes that there is no risk of contamination to our ground water aquifers and is entirely safe for the land and environment”.	Positive: Would like to see this policy extended to other forms of unconventional gas (shale gas and tight gas).
Stronger regulation of fracking chemicals under the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme	“...all processes, material inputs and chemicals used in association with any form of CSG mining will be declared, itemised and will need to seek approval by the necessary regulatory bodies before permission for use would be granted”.	Positive
National enforced standards on air pollution from coal and gas	No stated policy.	Poor
Stop taxpayer handouts to coal and gas corporations, and make miners pay their share in tax.	The DLP is opposed to the mining tax, ⁴⁰ and does not appear to have a stated policy on subsidies to the mining industry.	Poor
Ensure that coal and gas corporations pay for fugitive emissions and downstream impacts, to limit climate change contributions.	The DLP have indicated that they would vote to abolish the price on carbon, which covers fugitive emissions from coal and gas mining. ⁴¹	Poor
Hold a Royal Commission to investigate the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments.	“We will not be simply taking a passive stand and making a statement, we WILL act in response to what has taken place to date and demand answers of an industry that so far appears to have been given a free ride in all its endeavours”.	Moderate: foreshadows some greater inquiry into the CSG industry, which is welcome

⁴⁰ <http://www.dlpnsw.org.au/finance-trade/finance-trade>

⁴¹ <http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/numbers-shaping-up-for-carbon-tax-repeal-20130503-2ixcd.html>

Stop CSG

Lock the Gate priority	Relevant policy/statement	Score/evaluation
Exclude coal and gas mining from important water sources	“We oppose the coal seam gas and other unconventional gas industries and call for their cessation.” ⁴²	Moderate: Specific reference is made to the threat to water resources, which is positive. A general opposition to unconventional gas would protect water from that industry, but there is no policy on coal mining.
Exclude coal and gas mining from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural heritage sites • sensitive environmental areas • productive agricultural land • residential areas 	<p>Cultural heritage: No stated policy. General opposition to unconventional gas would apply.</p> <p>Sensitive environmental areas: No stated policy. General opposition to unconventional gas would apply.</p> <p>Agricultural land: No stated policy. General opposition to unconventional gas would apply.</p> <p>Residential areas: No stated policy. General opposition to unconventional gas would apply.</p>	Moderate: A general opposition to unconventional gas would largely protect these matters, but there is no policy on coal mining.
Landholder’s right to say no	<p>“A landowner should be guaranteed the right of refusal of entry to their land if they so choose” but also:</p> <p>“Where an activity or proposed land use for any land can be shown by independently verified and validated scientific, economic and social research to be damaging or create a net community wide disadvantage the landowner must not grant that</p>	<p>Positive: The intention of this policy is laudable, in that it attempts to give landholders the right to say no, but also to give communities the power of self-determination as well.</p> <p>The policy should be made specific to coal and gas extraction, or it will become unwieldy and</p>

⁴²

All policies are taken from the “Policy” page of the party’s website, unless otherwise stated.

	access or use”	may interfere with implementation of other laws.
No-go zones to protect Australia’s national tourism landscapes.	No stated policy	Moderate: The general ban will largely protect national landscapes from unconventional gas. However, there is no policy relating to coal mining in these areas.
A moratorium on coal seam gas and other unconventional gas mining until research is complete, include into impacts on health, water and the environment, and an assessment of all substances used in drilling and fracking	“Until scientifically rigorous evidence, independently tested and verified shows impacts can be managed aquifer withdrawal, hydraulic drawdown, coal bed dewatering and produced water reinjection associated with coal seam gas and unconventional gas industry activities should all be prohibited activities.”	Positive: It’s encouraging to see all of the damaging activities listed here.
Stronger regulation of fracking chemicals under the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme	No stated policy	Positive: The general ban on unconventional gas will prevent the use of fracking chemicals
National enforced standards on air pollution from coal and gas	No stated policy.	Moderate: The general ban on unconventional gas will control air pollution impacts of gas mining. However, there is no policy on air pollution from coal mining.
Stop taxpayer handouts to coal and gas corporations, and make miners pay their share in tax.	“Whilst ever government has a policy which allows subsidies this policy should be regressive or punitive on environmentally damaging, medically or socially harmful industries and progressive or supportive on sustainable industries.” “Where damage to land or any ecosystem has occurred the person or agency that has caused, encouraged or allowed this damage to occur must bear the full and ongoing cost of full and proven complete rehabilitation.”	Moderate: The policy is broad and vague. Whilst it implies subsidies should be limited to damaging industries, it appears to fall short of removing subsidies for coal and gas corporations. It does not refer to the Mineral Resource Rent Tax.

<p>Ensure that coal and gas corporations pay for fugitive emissions and downstream impacts, to limit climate change contributions.</p>	<p>“Non-renewable energy and especially fossil fuel energy should be de-incentivised and phased out as rapidly as possible.”</p>	<p>Positive</p>
<p>Hold a Royal Commission to investigate the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments .</p>	<p>No stated policy.</p>	<p>Poor</p>

Socialist Alliance

Lock the Gate priority	Relevant policy/statement	Score/evaluation
<p>Exclude coal and gas mining from important water sources</p>	<p>“We support the demands of groups such as Rivers SOS who call for a one kilometre buffer zone between coal mines and key water sources such as rivers and reservoirs.”⁴³</p> <p>“Ban all unconventional gas extraction, fill the existing bores, and set up a maintenance and inspection program to continue to check their integrity into the future.”⁴⁴</p> <p>“No new coal mines or coal-fired power plants should be approved”⁴⁵</p>	<p>Positive: The general bans proposed would provide protection for water resources. We note that the opposition to all new coal and gas is broader than the LTG platform, and would have to be supported by a detailed transition plan for affected communities.</p> <p>Acknowledgement that buffers are needed is positive. We would also like to see a specific policy on groundwater.</p>
<p>Exclude coal and gas mining from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural heritage sites • sensitive environmental areas • productive agricultural land • residential areas 	<p>Cultural heritage: No stated policy. General ban on unconventional gas and new coal mines would apply.</p> <p>Sensitive environmental areas: “No mining or mineral exploration in national parks and other areas of high conservation value.”⁴⁶</p> <p>Agricultural land: “Stop the use of prime agricultural land for urban development or mining.”⁴⁷</p>	<p>Positive: We note that the opposition to all new coal and gas is broader than the LTG platform. A detailed transition plan for affected communities would be necessary.</p> <p>Stated policies on exclusions would be useful, as fallback from blanket ban.</p>

⁴³ Coal and Steel policy. January 2010. <http://www.socialist-alliance.org/page.php?page=892>

⁴⁴ Agriculture policy <http://www.socialist-alliance.org/page.php?page=893>

⁴⁵ Climate Change policy. Third edition. 2010. <http://www.socialist-alliance.org/page.php?page=674>

⁴⁶ Environment policy. <http://www.socialist-alliance.org/page.php?page=206>

⁴⁷ Agriculture policy <http://www.socialist-alliance.org/page.php?page=893>

	Residential area: no stated policy. General ban on unconventional gas and new coal mines would apply.	
Landholder's right to say no to mining	No stated policy.	Poor.
No-go zones to protect Australia's national tourism landscapes	No stated policy. General ban on unconventional gas and new coal mines would apply.	Positive: Tourism landscapes are protected by default due to opposition to all new coal and gas. Stated policies in the absence of such a ban would be useful. We note that the blanket ban policy is broader than the LTG platform, and would have to be supported by a detailed transition plan for affected communities.
A moratorium on coal seam gas and other unconventional gas mining until a robust research program is completed	Call for "A royal commission into the full impacts of unconventional gas" and "An immediate moratorium on all unconventional gas exploration and production until the outcome of the royal commission and democratic decision about the future of existing projects."	Positive The call for a moratorium and a Royal Commission is positive. We encourage the party to release further detail on the scope of the Commission and matters to be addressed.
Stronger regulation of fracking chemicals under the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme	No stated policy. General ban on unconventional gas would apply.	Positive Providing a more detailed policies on controlling chemical use for fracking and drilling, in the absence of a blanket ban, would be useful.
National enforced standards on air pollution from coal and gas	No stated policy.	Poor
Stop taxpayer handouts to coal and gas, and make miners pay their share.	"Rather than the public, the mining industry will be financially accountable for the bill of cleaning up the toxic water pollution from	Positive:

	50,000 abandoned mines nationally” ⁴⁸ “all subsidies to the coal industry must end.” ⁴⁹	
Ensure that coal and gas corporations pay for fugitive emissions and downstream impacts, to limit climate change contributions	“Australia’s response to climate change must include the phasing out of coal, including the planned phase out of coking coal.” ⁵⁰ “No new coal mines or coal-fired power plants should be approved” ⁵¹	Positive: With a flat ban on new coal and gas projects, a transition plan for communities would be necessary and detail on this would be useful.
Hold a Royal Commission to investigate the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments .	Call for “A royal commission into the full impacts of unconventional gas”	Moderate: The policy should be extended to cover coal and to focus on how resources have been managed by Australian Governments.

⁴⁸ Agriculture policy <http://www.socialist-alliance.org/page.php?page=893>

⁴⁹ Coal and Steel policy. January 2010. <http://www.socialist-alliance.org/page.php?page=892>

⁵⁰ Coal and Steel policy. January 2010. <http://www.socialist-alliance.org/page.php?page=892>

⁵¹ Climate Change policy. Third edition. 2010. <http://www.socialist-alliance.org/page.php?page=674>

LOCK THE GATE ALLIANCE

AUSTRALIANS WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT OUR LAND, WATER, AND FUTURE

This briefing note sets out an 8-point-plan for national reform of coal and unconventional gas mining in Australia - our Call to Country. It explains the policy demands and the specific actions that Lock The Gate Alliance and member groups are seeking at a Federal level. Full details about our national campaign are available at www.calltocountry.org.au. Over-arching all of the reforms set out below, are changes that we are seeking to give landholders the right to say 'no' to coal and gas mining. These changes could potentially be enacted using various powers, either the corporations power or trade and commerce powers.

Call to Country - Background Briefing Note

1. Put in place an urgent moratorium on coal seam gas and other unconventional gas mining

Stop processing any applications for exploration or production of unconventional gas under the *Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, until a rigorous scientific research program has been completed into its impacts on human health, water resources and the environment. This should include an assessment by the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme of all substances used in drilling and fracking fluids.

2. Use trade and commerce powers to create no-go zones to protect productive agricultural land, national tourism icons and all residential dwellings from coal and gas mining.

The Federal Government has constitutional powers to make laws with respect to trade and commerce and corporations and their export activities. These powers should be used to prevent export of coal or unconventional gas that has been obtained from productive agricultural land, national tourism icons or in the vicinity of human habitations. The latter should take the form of large buffer zones around all residential dwellings. There should be a requirement for free and informed consent from landholders prior to mining occurring.

The powers could be enacted through the existing *Customs Act 1901*, related export laws or new measures. These powers have been used in the past to control some forms of mining, including to restrict sand-mining at Fraser Island. In that case, the High Court of Australia found that it was a legitimate use of Commonwealth powers to regulate trade and commerce in this manner.

3. Strengthen Federal environment laws to exclude coal and gas mining from important water sources, cultural heritage sites and sensitive environment areas.

The Federal Government has constitutional powers to make laws with respect to external affairs, including any matters protected by international treaties. It already has a legal role via the Federal *Environmental Protection and Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

However, both the Federal Government and the Federal Opposition have indicated their intention to weaken the power of the EPBC Act and hand over approval powers for large mining developments to state governments. This would dramatically weaken a legal system which is already inadequate.

Instead of weakening our environment laws, they should be strengthened to include a trigger for the protection of water resources and to require an upfront regional assessment of the cumulative impacts of coal and gas mining and the creation of exclusion zones for important water resources, cultural heritage sites and sensitive environment areas. Full approval powers should remain with the Federal Government - the EPBC Act should be altered to prevent approval powers being delegated to the States.

The EPBC Act should also be amended so that approvals cannot be given for coal and unconventional gas mining unless the Minister is satisfied that all affected landholders have given free and informed consent to the project.

4. Put in place appropriate national standards on coal and gas pollution and enforce compliance with them.

Current air pollution standards in Australia are implemented by an agreement under the Council of Australian Governments - the National Environment and Protection Measure for Ambient Air Quality ("NEPM"). Under this scheme the States are responsible for implementing measures to regulate 6 different air pollutants.

The number of pollutants regulated under the scheme is inadequate to cover many emissions from coal and gas mining and the standards set for pollution of small particulates are inadequate. The Commonwealth has no way of enforcing compliance with the scheme - in the Hunter Valley, for example, air quality standards are regularly exceeded due to coal mining without any penalties being imposed.

The Federal Government should develop a comprehensive set of national standards on air quality and incorporate them into the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The standards would be binding on States and would provide the Federal Government with a role in ensuring compliance with them.

5. Stop using taxpayers money to provide handouts to big coal and gas corporations and make the miners pay their fair share in taxes

The Federal Government spends up to \$10 billion on subsidies to big coal and gas corporations each year. This funding is provided via the Fuel Tax Credits program which pays the diesel fuel bill for machinery and vehicles, and via accelerated depreciation for

unconventional gas projects. Vast sums of public money are also injected into infrastructure projects for coal and gas developments - such as railway lines for coal transport and big dams to facilitate coal mine developments.

The Minerals Resource Rent Tax was introduced by the Federal Government and commenced in July 2012 with the aim of returning more of the enormous profits from coal and iron ore corporations to the public purse. However, the scope and design of the tax was manipulated so much by the miners themselves that instead of returning a forecast \$2 billion in first year revenue, it has only returned \$126 million in its first six months.

The mining tax should be fixed to make all of the major mining corporations pay their fair share and to return some of the wealth from the resources boom back to the wider community.

6. Reject current development proposals for coal ports, mega-mines, dams and unconventional gas wells in significant areas.

The Minister for Environment will soon have to make decisions on whether to approve or reject proposals for new coal ports in the Great Barrier Reef and the Hunter estuary, open-cut mega-mines in Central Queensland, a gigantic new coal-related dam on the Dawson River, and 8,000 new coal seam gas wells in Qld.

The Federal Government is already a decision-maker for most major coal and gas developments due to its existing powers under the EPBC Act. So, the problem isn't a lack of power, it's a lack of courage. The Federal Government has never refused approval for either a single coal mine or an unconventional onshore gas field. It never says no. That has to change - balance means that some developments should be rejected, including the extremely harmful projects listed above.

7. Conduct research into greenhouse gas emissions from mining and make sure they are properly accounted and fully paid for.

The National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Scheme (NGERs) is designed to provide data and accounting in relation to greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption and production. However, a lack of real data on fugitive emissions from coal and gas mining means that such emissions are not being properly accounted or paid for. Amendments are required to provide precautionary accounting, baseline monitoring and a rigorous independent research program.

8. Hold a Royal Commission to investigate the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments

The allocation of coal exploration titles in NSW by former Minister for Primary Industries Ian MacDonald has become the subject of one of the biggest corruption inquiries the country has ever seen. In Queensland, the fast-tracking of approvals for coal seam gas

projects by the previous Labor Government has been referred to the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

It is apparent across all states that coal and gas corporations have a strong influence on decision-makers and that planning processes are heavily biased towards approval of projects. At the same time, the role of communities in decision-making has been dramatically reduced. A Royal Commission is urgently needed to investigate all aspects of the management of coal and gas resources by all Australian governments, both state and federal, and the relationships between governments and corporations.

Coal and gas corporations are having a major impact on the functioning of our democracies, and root and branch review and reform is needed to introduce the highest standards of independence, probity and transparency.