

**Property Rights Australia  
Submission  
into  
CTSCo Surat Basin Carbon Capture and Storage  
Project**

The EIS Coordinator (Surat Basin Carbon Capture and Storage Project)  
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## Submission into CTSCo Surat Basin Carbon Capture and Storage Project

Property Rights Australia (PRA) was formed in 2003 to protect the property rights of those unfairly targeted by the Vegetation Management Act 1999. We are a non-profit organisation of primary producers and small businesspeople mostly from rural and regional Queensland who are concerned about continuing encroachments on the rights of private property owners. The organisation was formed to seek recognition and protection of the rights of private property owners in the development, introduction and administration of policies and legislation relating to the management of land, water and other natural resources. Set up in South West Queensland in January 2003, PRA's membership now extends across most states and all major rural industries. PRA is not affiliated with any political party.

### Summary

- a) The Great Artesian Basin (GAB) is an icon and under no circumstance should it be damaged
- b) The GAB is an important resource economically and environmentally to agriculture and rural and regional communities
- c) No harm should be done to present users or potential users of the resource for the purpose of carbon capture
- d) No special treatment should be given to the transport of "hydrogen" and "ammonia" under the Petroleum and Gas Act
- e) There should be no compulsory access powers given to this experimental project
- f) It should not be forgotten that this procedure is experimental with outcomes unknown

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The Great Artesian Basin is iconic, and no harm should be permitted to be done to it under any circumstance. Many landowners, some supported by government, spent hundreds of thousands of their own money to cap bores and pipe water sourced from the Great Artesian Basin under the GABSI scheme in order to preserve the resource and restore pressurisation. We already know that the pressure of the resource can be changed. Why would it be considered acceptable to pump many tons of a material, possibly contaminated, into an aquifer and potentially super-pressurise it.

Other methods of dealing with Carbon Dioxide need to be found other than the possible contamination and pressurisation of a system which supports a significant portion of Queensland. All sorts of carbon projects in the present climate are being put forward as socially beneficial. These projects all need to be balanced against any negatives that they may cause whether they be economic or environmental.

This project is not the only CCS project under consideration and if the regulation requiring environmental factors to be taken into consideration is removed it will open the door for other projects of a similar nature and more damage to aquifers.

The publicly available information on which the decision is being made all comes from the company itself.

The Queensland Government needs to have an independent evaluation, also publicly available, done by a group such as the Independent Expert Scientific Committee (IESC) which the government obtains advice from for Mining and CSG applications.

The proponent claims that no damage will be done to existing bore owners while acknowledging that no new user will be permitted in the footprint area in future. Does this mean that existing owners will not be permitted to drill replacement bores or new bores?

How will owners be compensated if their bores are affected and what standard of proof will they require? This has been a hard fought area under Petroleum and Gas Law and is vitally important to landowners.

It is also claimed that the aquifer is too deep for normal users. Landowners over much of the Artesian Basin regularly construct bores which are a kilometre or more deep. Local councils in regional areas also rely on underground water for isolated communities. Would they be considered a "normal" user?

In the future, with better technology and perhaps greater demand for water all users will expect to get to the depth of the proposed aquifer. Uncontaminated water will continue to be a premium resource.

The proponents do not consider the water potable. They also claim that it does not fall within the parameters considered acceptable for livestock. Such parameters are often arbitrary. As a research assistant in a previous life for a best management group and handling test results of all sorts for a large group, this board member knows that much of the underground water on which livestock thrive, does not always fall within parameters. Livestock owners who adjoin this experimental area will attest to the fact that it is suitable for production. The claims of the company on this matter do not give a reasonable excuse for damaging the aquifer.

They also claim that it is a confined aquifer. Identifying the exact underground topography is always ongoing and subject to revision. Indeed, the IESC has been known to request more surveying and modelling to be done including well outside the proponents footprint.

This is meant to be a three year trial of new technology. What safeguards would the government have in place to discontinue the trial, and in what timeframe, if environmental harm, or more environmental harm than expected, resulted?

Landowners are currently already forced by government to host a plethora of players on their land including mining and CSG, power lines and other infrastructure. It is not unknown for landowners to be conducting negotiations with up to a dozen external projects, all of whom want a piece of their land and time. This is regarded as a one-sided negotiation by landowners. CCS projects can conduct commercial negotiations at commercial rates if they expect landowners to host their infrastructure.

Glencore proposes to insert "hydrogen" and "ammonia" more clearly in the relevant sections of the P&G Act so as to give it greater right to operate pipelines and facilities on the land held by private businesses.

This experimental project is high risk and should be treated as such. Concessions to companies seeking to perform these sorts of experimental procedures should not be given and they should be severely scrutinised.

Joanne Rea,  
Board Member,  
Property Rights Australia.