

PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM

21 June 2011

SUBMIT PETITION AS FOLLOW UP TO CONVENERS MEETING WITH ADMINISTRATORS (CMA) ITEM 3 dated 3/5/2011

CSG MINING AND EXPLORATION AND SIGNED BY ATTENDEES OF COMMUNITY REFERENCE PANEL (CRP)

At the Conveners Meeting with Administrators (CMA) on 3 May 2011, Neighbourhood Committee 4 raised concerns of the issue of Coal Seam Gas mining and exploration (item 3 of agenda). In response Council advised in part ***“WCC has made submissions to the Department (of Planning) regarding specific applications raising concerns in relation to environmental management and potential impacts...”***

Those concerns raised by Council are a growing voice in the community and by other Councils, that the spread of Coal Seam Gas (Methane) Mining has far outstripped the safety and current regulatory protection provisions. Fellow Councils such as Lismore, Tweed, Ballina, Singleton and Cessnock together with organisations such as the Country Woman’s Association (both New South Wales and Queensland) have passed motions seeking caution and other positive steps to stop the spread of CSG mining in its current form (attachment 2). In my mind, there is no doubt a precautionary approach is needed as we don’t want CSG to be a repeat of the 1950's "asbestos" tragedy.

Recently Council undertook a program designated the Community Reference Panel (CRP). A diverse group of community members met to discuss effective ways to interact with Council detailing various open lines of communication. One such method was by way of Petition to Council. I submit a Petition on behalf of 3 members of the Community Reference Panel seeking Council *“to pass a resolution regarding Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining within the Wollongong LGA area”*.

I would pleased to have the General Manager read into the minutes of this meeting the draft resolution on Coal Seam Gas mining as per the petition in attachment 1.

Thank you to Council for the opportunity to present this petition. Administrators, General Manager, are there any questions?

Greg Petty
130 Walker Street
Helensburgh NSW 2508
(0407) 473 889

Attachment 1

Petition for Wollongong City Council

To pass a **resolution** regarding **Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining** within the Wollongong LGA area, and more specifically the Illawarra Escarpment consisting of Illawarra Conservation Area, Sydney Catchment Authority and the Woronora Dam.

That Wollongong City Council:

1. Unreservedly support the request of the Petitioner's for a moratorium on all Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining exploration and fracking in NSW, more specifically a moratorium on CSG mining and fracking practices along the Illawarra escarpment and within the confines of Wollongong LGA.
2. Make strong representations to the State Government to protect the health and safety of all residents immediately by writing to:
 1. *The Premier of NSW Barry O'Farrell,*
 2. *Deputy Premier of New South Wales, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services Andrew Stoner,*
 3. *NSW Minister for Resources and Energy Chris Hartcher,*
 4. *NSW Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage Robyn Parker,*
 5. *NSW Minister for the Illawarra Gregory Pearce,*
 6. *NSW Minister for Planning and Infrastructure & Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW Brad Hazzard,*
 7. *NSW Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson,*
 8. *NSW Minister for Healthy Lifestyles Kevin Humphries, and to the*
 9. *NSW Leader of the Opposition John Robertson,*

to strongly urge a total ban on CSG mining exploration and particularly the practice of hydraulic fracturing in NSW. This would prevent any effects of CSG mining on groundwater - water quality of the Sydney Catchment Authority and **Dharawal State Conservation Area**, the environmental impact on the biodiversity and sustainability of sensitive flora and fauna ecosystems along the **Illawarra Escarpment Conservation Area** and areas including and bordering the **Southern Highlands** where aquifers naturally exist beneath the Sydney catchment area. If these aquifers are cracked and/or polluted not only is future water at risk but also our biodiversity and mature trees. All of the above will impact on amenities, ratepayers, residents, community, local and overseas tourists in their ability to enjoy and maintain a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

3. Unreservedly acknowledge the importance of Woronora Dam in its role as the primary water source to the Northern Illawarra, and the risk of contamination of the water supply is far too great, Wollongong City Council demands the Petroleum Exploration License's be rescinded immediately.

N.B: The residents and ratepayers of Wollongong LGA do have serious concerns regarding Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining and the practice of hydraulic fracturing in NSW, more specifically within the Wollongong LGA along the **Illawarra Escarpment**. The practice of fracturing along the Illawarra escarpment has the potential to cause major impact to the sustainability, conservation and biodiversity of the **Illawarra Conservation Area**, amenities, landholders and water quality of the Sydney Catchment Authority, **Dharawal State Conservation Area**, and Southern Highlands region.

Petitioners: Greg Petty Raymond Robinson Warwick Erwin

Signed this eighth day of June, 2011

Attachment 2

Similar motions of support

The following Organisations have passed motions or acted positively concerning Coal Seam Gas (CSG) Mining

- Country Women's Association of New South Wales – Annual Conference May 2011
- Country Women's Association of Queensland - Annual Conference 2010
- Lismore Council -December 2010
- Tweed Shire Council - 19 April 2011
- Ballina Council – 28 April 2011
- Singleton Council
- Cessnock Council
- Moree Council

Country Women's Association of New South Wales

89th Annual Conference Resolutions Carried May 2011

MOTIONS OF URGENCY

3. Goolhi Branch (Namoï Group):

“That the CWA of NSW approaches the relevant Ministers, objecting to any adverse environmental and social impact resulting from coal seam gas activities and infrastructure, including the impact on property rights and just terms compensation.”

Country Women's Association of Queensland

External Resolution: 17

That QCWA require the Premier of Queensland to urgently act to stop the development of Coal Seam gas exploration and mining on prime agricultural land. Only after impact studies have been carried out and the results evaluated by independent people should mining activity be allowed to re-commence in any form.

Reason: The long term effects of Coal Seam gas mining on prime agricultural land have not been investigated fully. Pollution of the land and water, the Great Artesian Basin in particular, do not appear to have been given due consideration, surely a disaster in the making? The mineral and salt deposits must be disposed of safely, without causing further damages to and pollution of the precious food producing areas of Queensland. Adequate compensation for land holders and protection for their Property Rights should be a top priority.

Guaranteed food security for the people of Australia must be a top priority for government consideration.

If, as has been suggested by some politicians for many years, we end up relying solely on imported food we will no longer control the price, high quality and standard of food, continuity of supply, or knowledge of how to grow food to feed Australians. Initially imports may be cheaper but once we become reliant on imports the price will increase. We cannot be certain that imported food has not been sprayed with products outlawed for use in Australia or fertilized with human waste. Knowledge and expertise of our farmers will quickly disappear when they are squeezed out (or die out) because they cannot compete, initially, with imported food.

External Resolution: 40

That the QCWA support a moratorium on Coal Seam Gas Industry until there has been more conclusive research done by relevant authorities who can assure the safety of the landholders, communities and their residents affected by these industries.

Reason: The Maranoa Region alone will have over 10,000 – 15,000 wells. These wells have a life of 20-30 years. It takes about 6-8 years for the water extracted to become less than the gas extracted. This water is stored into ‘dams’. Each well has ‘leads’ or water and contains salt. Some of this water is being treated – 75% clean. And 25% is left as brine.

This water is being taken from the Great Artesian Basin on which the communities in our region rely for their water supply. It has been stated by Government this water will take up to 30-50 years to replace. The main concern is that no one knows what happens underground, so could be a disaster. The communities in these small towns rely on this water

and are put on water restriction, but the gas companies are allowed to extract whatever is necessary. Also what are the companies going to do with the brine – believed to be millions of tons of salt per year.

A gas company can get a bore licence in 2 weeks while a town is still waiting for a new bore, some 2-3 years

On the Downs, should a one in 100 years flood happen, the salt in the evaporation ponds could end up in the Condamine River which will then end up in the Darling River system. At the moment one gas company has been given approval for treated water to be released into the Condamine River. In the Maranoa area, untreated water was being released into a flowing creek with already evidence of an environmental disaster happening – trees along the creek dying.

Also these wells can be drilled within 100 meters from a dwelling – would you allow this to happen in urban areas?

Lismore Council

December 2010

That Council:

1. Unreservedly support the request of the NSW Farmers Association for a moratorium on all Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining in NSW.
2. Write to the Premier and the Minister for Environment Climate Change and Water as well as the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for the Environment, Local Member to strongly urge a moratorium on CSG mining and particularly the practice of hydraulic fracturing in NSW until an extensive and independent environmental impact statement has been concluded on the effects of CSG mining on the environment and in particular the effects of CSG mining on groundwater.
3. Write to the Prime Minister, Federal Minister for the Environment and the Local Federal Member as in point 2.

Councillor Comment

Coal Seam Gas mining exploration has recently been conducted in the Lismore LGA in the Kerrong Valley. Experience of similar mining across the Surat and Bowen Basins in Queensland brings into question the process of CSG mining and in particular the use of hydraulic fracturing. Several mining wells in Queensland have reported issues with contaminants in ground water suspected to be the result of the process of hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' during mining. A Geoscience report in September questioned the assumptions made in the respective mining company's environmental modeling. The report further raises concerns regarding the potential impact on the Great Artesian Basin, local aquifers, and surface water. The implications for farmers and urban residents in the Lismore LGA if ground water becomes contaminated are enormous. Currently there is a lack of adequate data to assess the implications of the process of hydraulic fracturing on ground water. A moratorium should be implemented until an appropriate independent assessment of the environmental impacts of CSG mining is conducted.

Staff Comment

Manager Integrated Planning

Council's Environmental Strategies staff are aware of exploration activities for coal seam gas resources in the Clarence-Morton Basin, including the Lismore LGA. We have also received a summary of a community information session held in Lismore on 25 August 2010 by Arrow Energy Ltd, which includes a map of the exploration areas.

The issues around the exploration and subsequent mining of coal seam gas are complex. Council would prefer any representation to the State Government to be reasoned, accurate and well researched. For this reason staff require adequate time to properly research the relevant issues, including the NSW Farmers position on coal seam gas.

Our Sustainability/Climate Change Officer currently has a high immediate workload focused around Delivery Plan projects and meeting end of year milestones on the 'CBD Greenovation' Project. Sufficient time to research these issues will be available in the New Year and we request that they be presented at a Councillor Briefing early in 2011. A letter can be drafted subsequent to the briefing.

TWEED SHIRE COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 19 APRIL 2011

RESOLVED that Council:

1. Provides a submission to the draft NSW Government Coal and Gas Strategy advising that the Tweed Community has serious concerns over the prospect of the "Green Cauldron" being utilised for Coal Seam Gas exploration and production because of the lack of clear and understandable advice and information of the technology and its impacts on the environment, the amenity, landholders and water quality;
2. Calls for a moratorium for the whole of Tweed Shire in relation to coal seam gas exploration; and

3. Writes to State Members for Lismore and Tweed and the Federal Member for Richmond advising them of Council's decision and seek their support.

The Motion was **Carried**

BALLINA COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, BALLINA, ON 28/04/11 AT 9.00 AM - Page 19 of 25 of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Ballina Shire Council – 28/04/11

The **Motion** was **CARRIED**, therefore it was **280411/ 30 RESOLVED**

1. That Ballina Council unreservedly supports the request of the NSW Farmers Association for a moratorium on all Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining in NSW.
2. That Council write to the NSW Premier, NSW Opposition Leader, The Federal Environment Minister and our Local Member to strongly urge a moratorium on CSG exploration and mining in NSW until an independent environmental impact statement has been concluded.

SINGLETON COUNCIL

Amended LEP to prohibit CSG (to start in areas already identified by AGL)

CESSNOCK COUNCIL

Amended LEP to prohibit CSG in specific rural zones.

New motion underway from Environmental committee to prohibit outright.

MOREE COUNCIL

Imposed a 60-day moratorium on processing new seismic survey applications.

It has requested an agricultural impact assessment, and if 60 days is insufficient, the council will extend the moratorium.