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9th July 2015

Mr Keir Delaney,
Secretary, Environment & Planning Committee,
Parliament House, Spring Street,
Melbourne VIC 3002.

Dear Mr Delaney

East Gippsland Food Cluster Inc submission to 'Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria'

I write on behalf of the Board and Management of the East Gippsland Food Cluster, and thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the above.

The East Gippsland Food Cluster Inc (EGFC) is a not-for-profit member-based collaborative network of regional food and wine producers committed to supporting the sustainable development of our region's vital agrifood sector. Our membership reflects the diversity of our agrifood sector, and includes ASX listed company Patties Foods, large horticulturalists, broad acre graziers and meat producers, award winning cheese makers, and a number of boutique food and wine producers.

Agrifood underpins our regional economy, and our region plays a strong role in Victoria and Australia's food supply chains. Our region is well positioned to continue to play a vital role in local, domestic and global supply chains and food security into the future.

The EGFC, together with local and state government partners, is working hard to build on from this strong regional base in agrifood, and position the region as a premium food and wine production area. Together with East Gippsland Marketing we are about to roll out a new regional produce branding strategy – 'East Gippsland Produce – Naturally Good', which is not only designed to support our agrifood sector, but also encourage further regional visitation. All of this is premised on East Gippsland's 'clean green' environment and image.

The East Gippsland Food Cluster Board is broadly concerned about potential negative impacts of 'mining' on the agrifood sector and unanimously moved a motion at its meeting of 7th August

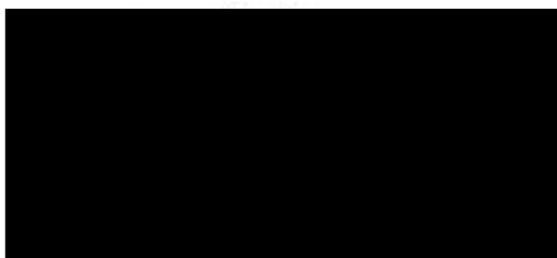
2014 whereby **'the EGFC is not supportive of any form of mining activities that pose a threat to prime agricultural land, waterways and aquifers in Eastern Gippsland'**.

The East Gippsland Food Cluster is particularly concerned about the potential impacts of Unconventional Gas in Eastern Gippsland. These threats are considered as both perceived (i.e. detract from the clean and green image of our region amongst consumers) and real (i.e. threats to land, soil and water).

The East Gippsland Food Cluster therefore urges the Victorian Government to ensure a highly 'risk averse' approach to Unconventional Gas is adopted and maintained.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for more information.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Bulmer
Chairman, East Gippsland Food Cluster
(Managing Director, Bulmer Farms)