

To the Environment and Planning Committee,

The Earls Rd Landcare Group has declared its area to be coal seam gas free.

Our group strongly believes that unconventional gas extraction is an inappropriate development for this area, given the high environmental, agricultural, tourist and amenity value of the Latrobe Catchment. All forms of Unconventional Gas extraction result in saline water dispersal. This will affect our whole catchment, from the Latrobe River to the Gippsland Lakes, exacerbating already existing salinity problems in the lower catchment. It is contradictory to our statement of purpose.

At a Landcare meeting it was decided that we would invite our community to have their say in a one question survey; "Should we declare that this road be gas field free?"

We drafted a pre survey letter and letter-boxed all our residents. This letter provided information about the survey and suggested resources for residents to inform themselves about this issue. We then surveyed and sold many "Lock the Gate" signs. The response was overwhelming, a resounding 92 out of 95 responses said 'yes' to closing our roads to CSG exploration and development, three people abstained.

The yellow, triangular Lock the Gate signs have proliferated in our area and CSG free declaration signs have been placed at the ends of the roads.

Currently many Gippsland community groups are either working to or have declared their areas closed to Coal Seam Gas in order to preserve our land as an important food bowl in the long term and the tourism value of the Gippsland Lake System. Both of which are extremely important to Victoria's economy in the long term. Our community doesn't want the disastrous experience of Queensland and the Northern Rivers inflicted here. Our future energy needs must be met through the continued development of renewable energy sources especially solar and wind.

Ken Savage

Chairperson

Earls Rd landcare Group Inc.

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