



# THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

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## Land Council welcomes miners

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council has launched an application to conduct exploration activities for Coal Seam Gas in the Tweed and Byron Shires. Byron Shire Council has passed a Motion to oppose the granting of Petroleum Special Prospecting Authority (PSPAPP55) in Tweed and Byron Shires. The application for a PSPAPP55 covering a large part of Tweed Shire and extending into Byron Shire was advertised last week in local media. "Anybody who believes that the coastal and urbanised areas of the Tweed and Byron Shires are not under direct threat from Coal Seam Gas should think again," said Michael McNamara from Lock the Gate, Tweed.

"It is an insult to the community that this application should be advertised only three weeks after the Rock the Gate Northern Rivers protest rally against CSG held at Murwillumbah." More than 4,000 Northern Rivers residents attended the rally to demand that the Northern Rivers be declared Gasfield-Free. Indigenous people were at the head of the march, alongside other community members opposed to CSG operations. "Elders and other Aboriginal community members from various Northern Rivers communities have publicly stated their opposition to CSG operations," said Mr McNamara. Community surveys along roads in

Tweed and Byron shires show that 97% of respondents are opposed to CSG. Byron Shire Council on 25th October resolved seven actions opposing CSG operations in the Shire. "There is no social licence to conduct CSG operations in Tweed & Byron Shire," Councillor Rose Wanchap said. "Now is the time to get very vocal in your opposition to the granting of this application." Contact the NSW Aboriginal Land Council to express opposition to the application and to call for its withdrawal. They can be contacted at PO Box 1125 Parramatta NSW 2124, phone 9689 4444. A comment may also be submitted online at: [www.alc.org.au/contact-us.aspx](http://www.alc.org.au/contact-us.aspx)



## Mine threat to sacred site

by Steven Strong

Despite an open acknowledgement in the Cultural Heritage Assessment commissioned by Grahams Quarries conceding that this place was a men's ceremonial ground, development to mine has been approved and soon what was sacred will become a massive gaping hole.

On Sunday 2nd December, a cultural gathering was held at Cedar Point Hall. This was never meant to be a protest or occupation, but a day dedicated to Original culture and lore. It was held at a place very close to a sacred Githubal men's ceremonial site where young boys were initiated into manhood. Flanked by 15 scarred trees and sitting above a lucrative lode of high quality basalt rock, there now exists a dreadful conflict of interest. According to Githubal Elder Kevin Boota this place is both their "cathedral and university," a special place to "teach their young language" and reconnect "with the Spirits of the site." According to the non-Original authorities and registers, it has no legal standing and is a profit-in-waiting. Close to 80 came, sat, talked and shared in culture, friendship and a men's smoking ceremony. The Elders spoke about how essential this place is to their future well-being, not only in soul but body. As Rob Williams Snr. pointed out, the "ongoing men's health is linked to the preservation of that site."

Rob Williams Snr. thanked those who came to join in their struggle to reclaim what is rightfully theirs. He voiced his frustration that what had taken place was legal, and despaired at being "tired of being bullied by councils and by government in regards to our culture." But this meeting was merely a beginning. After discussion amongst the Elders it was decided that they meet again at this place, and continuing doing so until justice prevails. On 23rd December, a day that has many layers and untold potential, the Githubal and their supporters will meet once more at Cedar Point Hall at 9.30am. They need help, they need support and they demand that their heritage be protected. We invite you to join us in this struggle against another group of miners and another hole in the ground.

## Learn non-violent skills to combat dirty industry

by Len Martin

CSG methane is not clean. It is a non-renewable fossil fuel that produces less CO<sup>2</sup> than coal when burnt, but has 25 times the global warming effect when leaked into the atmosphere. Yet Australian governments are hell-bent on pushing the industry, despite a frightening lack of scientific evidence on its long-term harmful effects on farming, water quality, biodiversity, or community health. And there is increasing evidence that "fugitive CSG emissions" (leaks) during production and transport make it dirtier than coal, with high methane levels found in drinking water close to gas wells, though the leakage route was not specified. Southern Cross University scientists have now found high atmospheric methane levels near Queensland CSG wells, with measurements suggesting leakage is not confined to well-heads. A report by John Williams (former CSIRO head scientist and NSW Natural Resources Commissioner) and colleagues ([www.ies.unsw.edu.au/acedd/CSG-Analysis-Report.pdf](http://www.ies.unsw.edu.au/acedd/CSG-Analysis-Report.pdf)) spells out the lack of scientific data.



Are you listening, Minister? Hundreds of people tried to have their questions answered by Brad Hazzard at Lismore City Hall on 5th December

Read the Federal Energy White Paper at: [www.ret.gov.au/energy/facts/white\\_paper/Pages/energy\\_white\\_paper.aspx](http://www.ret.gov.au/energy/facts/white_paper/Pages/energy_white_paper.aspx) As for dirt, you can't get much dirtier than the politicians promulgating the industry: dissembling weasel words on communities' right to appeal to the courts; CSG opponents smeared as "extremists" and accused of "left-wing plots to destroy the economy"; threats to shut down the Environmental Defenders Organisation; Mr Ferguson allegedly wanting Federal Police and ASIO to keep an eye on activists. So much for democracy.

What do we do? Resist with non-violent direct action. To that end, the Nimbin Bush Theatre is booked for Sunday 16th December from 10am to 5pm for a session of Non Violent Action training/skill-sharing, facilitated by Alan Roberts and Sarah Antil. The number of participants is limited so please book your place in advance by contacting Jenny on 6689-7393 or by email at: [jenmartin@aapt.net.au](mailto:jenmartin@aapt.net.au) Participation will involve a gold coin donation on the day. The Bush Theatre will be serving refreshments and lunch. This is Stage 2. Let battle begin!

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