



# THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

Take me, I am FREE

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## Can words alone stop CSG?

by Len Martin

Following comprehensive, community-based surveys, community after community in the Northern Rivers is expressing opposition to CSG mining by declaring itself Gasfield Free. Opposition is always over 95%, the balance being largely 'don't knows', with very few in favour, and is consistent over communities as diverse as Nimbin (of 1442 locals, 99.1% were opposed) and conservative farming Goolmangar (of 335 locals, 96.42% opposed).

The community-empowering CSG-free Communities Initiative (visit [www.csgfreenorthernrivers.org](http://www.csgfreenorthernrivers.org) for how-to-do-it details) is spreading like wildfire. In Tweed Shire the communities of Tyalgum, Crystal Creek, Doon Doon, Mt Burrell and Kunghur have declared themselves CSG-free. When Burringbar, Uki, Chillingham and Stokers Siding do so shortly, communities covering well over 50% of the area of Tweed Shire will have expressed their opposition to CSG, making it clear, along with Lismore, that CSG companies have no social licence to operate in this region.

Will such strong public opposition make politicians rethink their plans? I doubt it. NSW and QLD state governments seem hell-bent on promoting the industry – a cargo-cult mania with no regard for whatever devastation happens to the homelands of the unfortunate locals. And make no mistake, despite the blandishments CSG companies offer, there would be devastation of our homelands and communities. And this is not an issue for the future. It is happening now. The barbarians are at the gates.

The Sydney Morning Herald (August 23) reported that the first CSG production well approved by the NSW government is being drilled by AGL on the edge of Sydney, about 40 metres from the Nepean River. NSW Environment Protection Authority and Campbelltown City Council (CCC) had voiced concerns about water contamination, and AGL's



environmental assessment warned, "deep aquifers could cross-contaminate shallow aquifers during drilling". The well met fierce opposition from CCC, which said it could pollute the Nepean. The site includes pits to store dirty water sucked up with coal seam gas – placed next to the river, which periodically floods! CCC said AGL had not adequately addressed impacts on overall ecological health of the Nepean and potential impacts on downstream users of the river, and that this was unacceptable. The council voted for a moratorium on CSG "until conclusive evidence emerges that [it] does not damage groundwater". The drilling was still approved by the Planning Assessment Commission and started two weeks ago near the Menangle Park Paceway, without a public consultation process. So much for strong public opposition!

AGL claimed it had to push on, otherwise NSW could run out of gas. Funny that, only in April, AGL's managing director stated, "Gladstone is going to be like a giant vacuum cleaner for the east coast gas market hoovering up all the gas it can get its hands on" [for export] and refused to back calls for domestic reserves to be set aside to supply locals saying, "That is not a good policy: you end up distorting investment signals." Yes folks, that's what it's all about, mighty-dollar fast-buck profits for multinationals and bugger the locals. So how to halt them?

1) Continue to promulgate the CSG-free Communities Initiative. The more of us there are, the more we can pressure the polities.

2) Continue to sign petitions, write letters to papers and polities and in Council Election on Saturday 8th September, vote no to CSG.

3) Strengthen the basis of community opposition. Convert it to meaningful people power. When the rig moves into the neighbourhood, and it will, sooner rather than later – we must be able to do something more than write letters. Based on local survey data, each community needs a working group meeting regularly, to develop phone trees – essential in organising physical, non-violent action (NVA) and to encourage as many community members as possible to train for and participate in NVAs – all of which must be highly organised, highly disciplined, and non-vandalistic. Vandalism will simply alienate the uncommitted – our actions need to encompass all community members and all communities. Our strength will be in our numbers.

The Channon community has such a group up and running. In Nimbin, anyone who wishes to participate should contact Len Martin on 6689-0254 or [pteropus42@smartchat.net.au](mailto:pteropus42@smartchat.net.au) There is also a phone tree/NVA group sign-on sheet at the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre.



## Nimbin's 92<sup>nd</sup> Show

by Mal Rothwell

When the warm breath of Spring blows away the Winter chill, it is a sign that the annual Nimbin Country Show is just around the corner.

Not only is this year the 92<sup>nd</sup> show, but also it's the 40<sup>th</sup> show since the Aquarius Festival.

Over the years, the nature of farming in the area has changes. From early logging through to dairying, beef production, and more recently orchard fruit and nut cropping. With the break-up of the grazing blocks in the '70s and '80s, the district seems to be evolving towards hobby farms and smaller, more intense mixed farming.

The Nimbin Country Show reflects many of these changes.

After last year's success, the Blue Knob Farmers Market will again be held at the show on the Saturday, bringing local products closer to your plate. The Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre will be running a Sustainability Alley, with workshops and demonstrations, and a quest to find the sexiest farmer and our most sustainable produce.

The area has a growing urban population with limited contact with farm life. Country Shows usually reflect local occupations and

products, and this will be seen at this year's show.

We are expecting strong support in both the equestrian events over the two days, and in the cattle ring on the Saturday. The Dog Show will be in full swing on the Saturday, and there will be plenty of action in the poultry pavilion.

There will be lots of fun and games, entertainment, music, and talents quests. If you fancy yourself as a gumboot-thrower, a whip-cracker, or if you have three legs, make sure you enter the sporting events on the Saturday afternoon.

If you are a dab hand in the kitchen or workshop, check out our schedule of pavilion exhibits and enter your masterpiece. The Duck and Dog man will be there, Damien will demonstrate sheep shearing, and we are expecting a good showing of alpacas at this year's event.

Remember, the Country Show is where the town meets the country. Let's keep it rolling.

*The Nimbin Country Show is run by a small band of volunteers, who need new blood to help keep the show on the road. If you can spare a few hours to help out please contact Phil Williams on 6689-1583.*

## Let's make Lismore greener

- Renewable energy not coal seam gas
- Rate reductions for land with habitat value
- Water tanks not Dunoon dam
- A voice for Nimbin and Lismore's villages

**Vote 1 Greens** at the Lismore Council election September 8  
Read more about our policies at [northernriversgreens.org.au](http://northernriversgreens.org.au)

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Vanessa Ekins



Susan Stock

