



THE NIMBIN GOODTIMES

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Police procession for CSG



Police escorting gravel delivery to Metgasco's Doubtful Creek gas drilling site Photo: Frackman

by Sue Stock

Two hundred people gathered at the Doubtful Creek blockade site on Sunday 3th February for a community picnic.

Local farmers, Githabul traditional owners, Kyogle residents and friends from across the Northern Rivers came together and enjoyed a barbecue, speakers and music, as the local community prepared to defend their land from Metgasco's planned CSG exploratory operations, expected to begin in the coming week.

"The turnout is brilliant. Working with the Githabul is really important, as we are all working for one thing – looking after our land and water," Leah Hobbs from Lynch Creek said.

Paul Hobbs addressed the crowd and said, "We will not be beaten. Massive amounts of people are against this. We are here to the end and will fight every one of these drill sites. We will be here every day."

Many families from the neighbouring farms attended the event.

Don Knight has been on his land since 1956. He is particularly concerned about the poisoning of his large dam which supplies the needs of

RFS catering bombshell

Richmond Valley Rural Fire Service brigade members, including three members of the catering brigade, ran a barbecue for police at the Doubtful Creek blockade on Tuesday 5th February.

Police paid for their steak and sausage sandwiches, apparently as a fundraiser for the brigade.

RFS zone manager for the Northern Rivers, Supt. Michael Brett said the request for catering came directly from the Richmond LAC Police Commander.

However, the deployment of volunteer fireys to support police, including the riot squad, in a crowd control operation, rang alarm bells around the country.

Richard Deem from Kyogle Group Against Gas said, "It is an extraordinary



his household, his 160 cattle as well as a resident colony of black swans and other local wildlife, and was upset that his neighbour had not bothered to inform him of the CSG development.

Local resident, Peter Stackhouse said, while tending the barbecue, that he and his wife have been at the site almost every day. "It is total environmental rape, and

there's nothing good about it," he said. "My only ambition is to send Metgasco bankrupt."

Another neighbour, Dean Draper, said, "The large gathering of these determined people here shows that this toxic industry is being forced on us – local people do not want it. The local farmers and residents want nothing to do with any industry that has the capacity to poison their

land, water and air. We want to protect the health of our children, of our families.

politicisation of the Rural Fire Service, getting them to assist the police in this situation. "They are supposed to protect communities in emergencies, not to subjugate communities who are defending their country from a gas invasion," he said.

Some RFS volunteers amongst the protestors were visibly distressed, and it seemed likely there would be mass resignations from RFS brigades, as social media spluttered with indignation.

After the BBQ lunch was completed, Supt Brett removed the brigade from the blockade area, saying they would not be returning.

"Following the large amount of negative feedback from the community, and further consideration, the NSW RFS agrees that this is a contentious local issue that should not involve its volunteers," he said.

land, water and air. We want to protect the health of our children, of our families.

"My neighbours are coming together and discovering their common interest, which includes the preservation of their land, community, land values and lifestyles."

Find directions to the site in column at right, or online at: www.csgfreenorthernrivers.org/?p=1781

Indigenous arrests



Uncle Kevin is led away by police after being arrested at the Doubtful Creek blockade. Photo: Brendan

Police arrested one indigenous elder and another Githabul traditional owner at the Doubtful Creek blockade on Tuesday 5th February. There was a massive show of police force at the site with forty-five officers in attendance, ambulance services, two random breath testing units, two police rescue trucks and tow trucks on site.

On Monday the government formally 'closed' the state forest adjoining the drilling site to the public under the NSW Forestry Regulation 2012. There are currently over one hundred people at the protest site and numbers are swelling rapidly.

"There are shades of Queensland in the 1980s here today, as police have used minor public order offences to arrest two Indigenous traditional owners, including a local elder Uncle Kevin," said Boudicca Cerese, spokesperson for CSG Free Northern Rivers.

"One of the Githabul men was arrested for preparing ochre as a precursor to a ceremony which the group was planning to conduct on their country.

"This is a disgraceful display by the O'Farrell Government – using such a massive show of force and trumped up charges to try to intimidate the local community and in the process showing appalling disrespect to the local traditional owners," she said.

Campers have moved to a nearby camp and vigil is being maintained at the front gate. The drill rig is expected to arrive on Thursday. Spirits at camp are high and all the protesters who can possibly get there this week and over the next few weeks will be appreciated. It's about 50km from Nimbin. There is a catering setup there, but visiting supporters are asked to please bring water and food donations.

From Kyogle, take the Geneva Road for a few kms, turn off at the Jehovah's Kingdom Hall, keep going to Ettrick and turn off into Knights Road, follow for 6 or 7 kms.



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