



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

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Back to the barricades?

Compiled from news sources

CSG miner Metgasco has announced that it has paused formal negotiations with the NSW Government and will initiate court action for damages over the suspension of the company's 2014 drilling program.

The move brought an immediate response from anti-CSG campaigners, including Greens MP Jeremy Buckingham, who said, "It is not up to taxpayers to bail out this company, which has comprehensively failed to gain a social license to operate, and they should not be trying to extort the NSW Government."

The company had its exploration license suspended by the State government after pressure from thousands of community members. The dispute reached the point where the government was considering sending in 800 police to allow Metgasco access to the blockaded Rosella well at Bentley.

However, the government capitulated at the last minute, instead suspending Metgasco's license for "lack of adequate consultation", a decision that was later struck down in the NSW Supreme Court.



Kyogle Knitting Nanna, Margie Brace
Photo: Heather Dunn

The government had been in negotiations with Metgasco for months in the wake of the court decision, until the company's September 1 announcement that it will end discussions and sue for compensation.

The company also said it would prepare for a judicial review to have PEL 426 in Grafton renewed and for the award of a production license for PPLA 9 in Casino; and conclude contractual agreements for a seismic acquisition program to the west of Lismore, and for the drilling of the

Rosella project.

In a statement to the stock exchange, Metgasco chief executive Peter Henderson said, "Metgasco would have preferred to settle its claim for 2014 suspension damages with the New South Wales Government out of court and is happy to resume good-faith discussions with government in this respect, but not at the expense of having to indefinitely suspend its business activities."

"We expect the government will provide all necessary police

protection to allow the lawful activities to be undertaken safely and securely and we were given assurances in this respect as part of our discussions with government."

In a brief statement to media, the NSW Minister for Energy and Resources, Anthony Roberts said the government had noted Metgasco's statement that it was willing to resume negotiations and said, "The government also remains ready to continue negotiations in good faith with Metgasco."

Spokesperson for local opposition group Gasfield Free Northern Rivers, Aidan Ricketts, said he believes Metgasco was engaging "mostly in a bargaining gambit".

"They're basically trying to screw the New South Wales government for as much taxpayer money as they can get; they've got frustrated with how slow that's moving, so they're having a tantrum, pulling out of negotiations, and trying to force the government's hand," Ricketts said.

"But they could well be forcing the government's hand to cancel the licenses in the Northern Rivers."

Gasfield Free Northern Rivers co-coordinator Elly Bird said, "If Metgasco doesn't want to conclude negotiations for a graceful exit from the Northern Rivers, then that's

all the cue the NSW Government needs to call their bluff, and cancel the licenses by act of parliament to protect the Northern Rivers forever through legislation. Every other political party in the State wants them to do so."

Jeremy Buckingham said, "Where is the Member for Lismore, Thomas George? He promised to have the license cancelled by 30th June, yet here we have Metgasco forcing their way back to Bentley with an assurance of police protection given by the government."

"If Metgasco goes back to Bentley, then the community will be there to meet them in large numbers and with determination to protect the land and water," he said.

Member for Ballina, Tamara Smith said, "Should that drill rig come anywhere near our beautiful Northern Rivers, rest assured I will be standing on the frontline with the community."

Coal seam gas opponents converged on the offices of local MPs in Lismore, Grafton and the Tweed on the day of Metgasco's announcement, delivering flowers to "represent the hope that with the coming of Spring it will be time for the Northern Rivers to bloom into a safe, secure gasfield-free future."

Community-owned energy: power to the people!

by Sebastien Sledge, NR Guardians

On Tuesday 11th August, I went to the launch in Lismore of a local renewable energy retailer named Enova.

This company will be owned by locals and designed to encourage local renewable growth and give people a better price for power.

This will keep tens of millions of dollars in our local economy and create many local jobs not to mention the growing of real green power locally.

Let's literally take the power back!

Enova must be a minimum of 51% locally

owned but can be much more, as locals will get first preference. This is the start of something really big and progressive! We must do this, as it will not happen without us. We need to do this, as our government won't.

As I understand it, Enova will have a number of different arms:

- A not-for-profit arm that will help support people in the community who can't afford to go renewable.
- A future finance arm that will help finance these and more local renewable projects.
- A retail arm that will sell equipment and advise customers on products that are best

for them.

- An electricity distribution arm that will buy locally-produced power and true Australian green power and sell power for a cheaper price.

No other energy retailer compares! As it is now, out of 130,000 local residential electricity consumers, 91% of them are powered by fossil fuel generation (81% are Origin customers).

Just imagine that if we gained 20% of the local electricity market, that would equal 60 million dollars a year staying in our local area. This is a win / win for all locals and

the environment... including employment opportunity for young people as many trades will be needed across the field.

This is a game changer, and once set up we can expand into other communities or help them set up similar projects. Please help share info about Enova. Investors are needed to make this happen. The Prospectus is available and can be downloaded on-line: www.enovaenergy.com.au

The Enova team will be at Birth & Beyond in Nimbin on Wednesday 9th September from 6.30pm.

Find out when they are visiting your town.



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