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MEDIA RELEASE

COUNCIL URGED TO TAKE A STAND ON GAS MINING

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Clarence Valley Council has been urged by a local climate action group to join other north coast councils in demanding a moratorium on gas mining activities until there is better regulation of the coal seam gas industry.

Secretary of the Clarence Branch of Climate Change Australia, Janet Cavanaugh, says that the existing planning laws and the rules for assessing potential environmental impacts and issuing licences are flawed, as it leaves farmers and the community at risk.

"Our group has written to all councillors, asking them to join in lobbying the Government to place a moratorium on gas mining activities until the legal framework is improved and a full independent assessment of potential environmental impacts is completed," Ms Cavanaugh said.

"Other councils on the North Coast, including Ballina Shire, Kyogle Shire and Lismore City Council, have already resolved to do this.

"In response to community concerns, the NSW Government has started to take some action, including announcements of a 60 day moratorium on new exploration licences and new regulations to protect aquifers.

"However these announcements are still inadequate to prevent serious environmental and social impacts eventuating from gas mining, both in the exploratory and production stages.

"More needs to be done by the Government to tighten up the regulatory framework governing gas mining, and to improve compliance with these regulations," she said.

Councillor McKenna has lodged a Motion on Notice re a moratorium on Coal Seam Gas activities which will be discussed next Tuesday at Clarence Valley Council's Environment, Economic and Community Committee meeting.

Cr McKenna was the only councillor who attended the seminar on gas mining, held in Grafton in mid-May and presented by the Environmental Defenders Office.

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More information: Janet Cavanaugh 0429 479 968