

I write in response to your request for community and industry feedback on the direction of coal and gas mining in New South Wales.

On behalf of my family, I wish to request a moratorium on all coal seam gas mining in NSW immediately.

In 1908 my Great Grandfather sailed from England to settle in North West NSW. He brought with him extensive knowledge of farming practices and a respect for the land that is still present in the 5th generation of our farming family. For over 30 years my parents, Doug & Helen Cush, have been farmer's in the Bellata district of NSW. Bellata, situated in the Golden Durum Triangle, is a region world renowned for its rich black basalt soils and is responsible for production of some of the world's best Durum wheat and other food and fibre commodities. In 2003 our family began production of Bellata Gold gourmet pasta, the world's only pasta that is 100% traceable from the paddock to the plate. Our family owned and operated company has invested millions of dollars in regional NSW to produce an award winning product that is the delight of master pasta makers and gourmet chefs alike. In this time we have become owner /operators of every stage in the production chain. We farm over 11,000 acres of prime agricultural land at Bellata, in addition to operating a state of the art durum mill and pasta making facility located at Tamworth. We directly employ 24 people across our businesses with additional staff during peak periods. Our products are sold all over Australia and exported around the world. Arguably our greatest asset is the rich earthy flavour of our pasta, the result of the unique soil we grow our durum wheat in, however just as much a part of our product appeal is the beauty of our surroundings - nestled at the foot of the picturesque Nandewar mountain ranges. The introduction of coal seam gas mining in our district has the potential to not only ruin our agricultural land and precious underground water supplies but also our product image.

Our family's succession plan is well established. Together with my husband and two small children we have built a home, life and business at Bellata with the intention of continuing our family's proud farming heritage. In addition my sisters and their husbands and families are also entrenched in local farming and the management of our businesses.

As recently as last week Planet Gas Limited conducted seismic surveys of our area with the intention of drilling for coal seam gas. This procedure was done with very little public consultation and underhanded tactics to coerce neighbouring landholders into signing access agreements. In this short time my entire world has been turned upside down. A future that was once certain is now uncertain. The confidence to invest in our business has been robbed from me as I can no longer be confident of the value of our existing business assets with the threat of mining on our doorstep. I am also concerned about the future health of my family as very little is known about the risks coal seam gas mining poses to human health.

I ask all levels of Government to protect New South Wales's prime agricultural land, of which there is very little, to guarantee the future food and fibre needs of all Australian's. Stop coal seam gas exploration and mining and protect our food bowls.

Yours sincerely,

Natalie Tydd