

Probably like many people who live in the city and in particular, on the North Shore, the first time I became aware of coal seam gas was when it was discovered that a licence to drill for coal seam gas had been granted in St Peters. What! Then I heard reports about the dreadful health and environmental effects of fracking for shale gas in the United States. Many of us watched the film GASLANDS. I became aware of the coal-mines under Sydney's water catchments, the effects of csg mining on the people of Camden and we watched the ICCAC investigation reveal corrupt dealings between NSW politicians, mining companies and government departments. We understood that a great betrayal of the people of NSW was under way. If we didn't act along with Stop CSG Sydney, Lock the Gate and other groups across the state, we would lose so much of what we too often take for granted, our suburbs, fertile farmlands, clean water and the beautiful wild-places of NSW.

In Lane Cove, Sally Kennedy was distressed as she watched the devastating emotional toll on a friend, as he battled a coal mining company on his land in the beautiful Bylong Valley. Sally decided to act. She organised a public meeting that was well attended. Our group in Lane Cove formed around her skill and enthusiasm and we became the Lane Cove contingent of the Our Land Our Water Our Future campaign. With the help of Pablo Brait we built a strong network of volunteers. We understood that the farmers needed our help. The city does care about the bush. In Lane Cove we care about where our food comes from. We care about the livelihoods of our farmers in NSW. We respect their hard work to put food on our tables. We understand how important their export business is for the Australian economy.

We know that the capacity to grow food in our own state, to have clean water, to have healthy diverse eco-systems in protected wild places, is far more important than the short term gains provided by multi-national companies who want to mine for csg and coal without any care or consideration for the damage they leave behind.

The petition that is about to be presented to parliament was a major part of our campaign work. It travelled with the Lane Cove group whenever we reached out to the public: at local street stalls, public meetings, film nights for Frackman.

On doorknocks throughout the suburbs of Lane Cove we surveyed the resident's awareness and opinion about coal seam gas and coal mining. The petition went with us. Along with getting hundreds of signatures for that petition, our purpose in Lane Cove was to make sure

our state representative, the then Minister for Energy and Resources, Anthony Roberts, also got that petition and its message. From early 2014 to now we have made sure that Anthony Roberts could see us, hear us and would never forget us. We made sure he had our undivided attention.

And now he has that petition in the NSW Parliament. A petition signed by 15,000 people across Sydney and NSW, people from hundreds of Sydney suburbs, some represented on the signs on display here today. We expect Minister Roberts to show great respect for that petition and understand what it represents about his constituency in Lane Cove and in communities across NSW.

What does it represent? It represents a powerful and passionate community commitment to a thriving future, a just and safe future for our children and all generations to come. We want Minister Roberts to know that it was an easy petition to get signed. Rarely did anyone refuse to sign or say they were not interested. The people in the suburbs of Sydney care about the bush, about farmers and they care about our water catchments and our dams. And they care about the long term future of NSW.

Now that Minister Roberts has been promoted to Minister for Planning we will all be paying him even more attention, including us in Lane Cove. We will be wanting to know, for whom is he planning?

Will he be looking after the interests of the coal industry? Or will he elevate himself to the side of justice and recognise that coal and coal seam gas cannot exist with farming, with water catchments and in special wild places. That coal and coal seam gas for energy is a fool's paradise.

Or will we see him choose short term gains? Will the shadow he casts over history reside only in the deep, toxic coal pits of the Hunter Valley or in the contaminated waters of our aquifers punctured by coal seam gas mining.

Minister Robert's has a choice. Minister Roberts, know that we are all here, watching and listening and ready to act.