

From: [Mal Hamill](#)
To: [Agriculture Resources and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Submission in regard to - Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Bill 2014
Date: Friday, 4 July 2014 7:07:31 AM
Attachments: [Media Release - CSG.pdf](#)

Dear members of the Committee

The Uniting Church in Australia, Presbytery of The Downs has, through clergy and members located in areas effected, closely monitored the impacts of mining and CSG extraction on our communities and landholders.

In April this year, the Presbytery released statements setting out its views of issues relating to CSG. A copy of this statement is attached to this email.

I urge you to consider the views presented in this statement as you review the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Bill 2014.

Thank you in anticipation

Yours faithfully

Mal Hamill

Mal Hamill
Secretary - Presbytery of The Downs
P.O. Box 432, Toowoomba, Qld 4350
Ph: 07 4681 2173, Mobile: 04 1122 4248
mal@hamill.net.au



**PRESBYTERY OF THE DOWNS
UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA**

Phone: (07) 4638 9989
E-mail: downspres@bigpond.com

P.O. Box 432
Toowoomba Qld 4350

MEDIA RELEASE REGARDING COAL SEAM GAS 15/4/2014

Church calls for mining moratorium.

The Uniting Church in South East Queensland has issued a statement calling for an immediate six-month moratorium on all new coal seam gas exploration and development licences.

Spokesman for the Church Mrs Sharon Kirk said that the moratorium was to give everyone a breather and do some quality research into the health and community impacts as well as the long term economic benefits and costs.

"We're not taking sides, our churches contain people who are employed by the mining industry and those who are on the land and in rural communities." Mrs Kirk said.

"We simply want to create a space where we can get the facts on the table, assess the real impacts and get all sides of the debate talking with each other." she said.

The Downs Presbytery statement recognizes, "Whilst mining has been beneficial to our nation, the Uniting Church also recognises that benefit has often come at a cost to the environment, personal and family relationships, rural communities and infrastructure."

The statement also claims "The dangers associated with CSG mining processes and the rapid expansion of the industry are significant and potentially irreversible. To proceed with further CSG mining and expansion of the industry in the absence of definitive information is irresponsible."

Rev Graham Slaughter, Uniting Church Leichhardt Patrol Minister likens it to a David and Goliath scenario. "It's the little people, the powerless people, that are the ones that are caught in the middle and they are the ones who seem to be bearing the consequences."



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PRESBYTERY OF THE DOWNS**

*PO Box 432 Toowoomba Q 4350
Phone: 46 389 989 Mobile: 04 279 627 81
Email: downspres@bigpond.com*

Uniting Churches in the Darling Downs call for Mining Moratorium.

The Downs Presbytery of the Uniting Church in Australia, which covers the Darling Downs and South West Queensland region, calls for a moratorium of six months on further issue of any Coal Seam Gas (CSG) exploration permits and production licences. The Downs Presbytery calls for a moratorium in order to give governments, communities, scientists, environmentalists, and the CSG industry time to take stock of the current situation, to seek clear evidence, and to amend practices and processes where necessary.

The Downs Presbytery acknowledges that the issues and concerns surrounding the rapid growth in mining and mining exploration, especially coal seam gas mining, are many, varied and complex. This is clearly not a one-sided debate. The Downs Presbytery recognises that there are both advantages and disadvantages associated with mining. As a faith community which believes in a God who cares about all people, the Uniting Church refuses to take sides in the debate and will continue to reach out to all people of our State – miners and farmers, indigenous and non-indigenous, Australian residents and migrants – treating all with dignity, respect and love. As a faith community, which works for justice, the Uniting Church will continue to advocate for fairness for all people and care of the environment.

The Downs Presbytery acknowledges that our nation has benefited and continues to benefit through mining our natural resources. Mining has provided economic growth at local, state and national levels. Mining has provided employment, careers, and investment opportunities for many Australians. Mining companies have not only contributed to communities but generated communities and townships around the country. Mining provides many resources, in particular energy, used to build and sustain our society and living standard. The Uniting Church itself, as a whole and individuals within it, has benefitted, directly and indirectly, from mining.

Whilst mining has been beneficial to our nation, the Downs Presbytery of the Uniting Church in Australia also recognises that benefit has often come at a cost to the environment, personal and family relationships, rural communities and infrastructure.

In recent years, many concerns have been raised in regard to coal seam gas mining; some concerns are directly related to the mining process and therefore these are not new; other concerns have arisen out of the rapid expansion of the CSG industry throughout eastern Australia which has caused unprecedented difficulties for governments, labour forces, communities and the environment.

Whilst the negative impacts of the rapidly expanding CSG industry are evident, the range and magnitude of these negative impacts are contested. Like all matters of this complexity, the decision to endorse or to oppose is based upon an acceptable pay-off between the benefits and the costs of the situation. In the absence of empirical data, such an analysis is difficult.

This absence of conclusive evidence is of great concern to the Uniting Church. The dangers associated with CSG mining processes and the rapid expansions of the CSG industry are significant and potentially irreversible. To proceed with further CSG mining and expansion of the industry in the absence of definitive information is irresponsible. It is for this reason the Uniting Church across the

Darling Downs and South West Queensland, calls for a moratorium of six months on further issue of any CSG exploration permits and production licenses. This six month pause could also be utilised for governments to improve legislation and policies, for government departments to revise development planning, and for stakeholders to evaluate, and if necessary repair, relationships with other stakeholders.

The Downs Presbytery of the Uniting Church in Australia also calls on its own people, and people of all churches, to be proactive in this matter. Regardless of your locality or involvement with CSG, seek a full understanding of all the issues, work for justice for all peoples and the environment, reach out to all with the love of Christ, and continue to pray over this complex situation.

Sharon Kirk

Mrs Sharon Kirk
Presbytery Minister
Presbytery of the Downs, Uniting Church in Australia
March 18, 2014



MRS SHARON KIRK

(Photo by Mal Hamill – used with permission)

COAL SEAM GAS SITE PHOTOS

(Photos by Rev Graham Slaughter, UCA
Leichhardt Patrol Minister used with permission)





REV GRAHAM SLAUGHTER

(Photo by Matt Pulford – Uniting Church
National Assembly)

COAL SEAM GAS SITE PHOTOS

(Photos by Rev Graham Slaughter, UCA
Leichhardt Patrol Minister used with
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