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## MEDIA RELEASE

# GIPPSLAND'S 'FARMERS AGAINST FRACKING' BRING 10 000 SIGNATURES TO PARLIAMENT, CITY AND COUNTRY UNITE IN CSG FIGHT

Sunday, 18th August 2013, 1pm



Tomorrow, hundreds of Gippsland farmers and locals will travel to Melbourne to present Senator Greg Barber with 10 000 signatures calling for a ban on new coal and unconventional gas mining in Victoria.

In an unusual alliance that reflects an Australia-wide movement against the expansion of coal and gas mining on prime agricultural land, Gippsland farmers, business owners and local people, as well as urban Melbournians, will march from City Square to the State Library. Chloe Aldenhoven from the Melbourne-based group Quit Coal said, "The fact that people from Melbourne are also joining this fight shows how much our farms and our water are valued in Australia."

The crowd, rallying under the 'Farmers Against Fracking' banner, will present the 10 000 signatures to Senator Barber, who will table them in Victorian Parliament on Tuesday. They will be joined by MC Rod Quantock, and speakers including potato farmer Tanya Brown and primary school teacher Kirra Boulton.

Ms Boulton of Seaspray said that, "The spirit of cooperation and support among our Gippsland communities in fighting this threat is phenomenal".

Many are making the trip after giving up hope that Energy Minister Kotsiras will follow through on his promise to consult locals over the controversial proposed mining in the farming region. Coal Seam Gas and other unconventional gas mining poses a number of risks to food and water security that are of paramount importance to the survival of farming communities.

The rally follows a 600 strong celebration recently held in the small coastal town of Seaspray, where 98% of the community voted to keep the town coal and gas free. Seaspray sheep farmer Trevor Flint, who has also worked in the gas industry, says "I don't want to live in a gasfield, I've worked in the gas industry, people don't understand, they don't know what they are playing with. If my stock gets contaminated and I can't sell it, where do we go from there, what do we do then? We don't want this dangerous industry here, we don't want this anywhere in Victoria," he said.

Under current legislation, exploration licenses are issued on farmland and farmers have little say over whether or not mining goes ahead on their land.

[Photograph of Seaspray locals at existing gas well available here.](#)

When: Sunday 18th August 2013, 1pm

Where: City Square, Swanston Street, Melbourne CBD (marching to State Library for presentation of signatures)

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### For comment

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Kirra Boulton, 0488 757 521

### Website

[www.lockthegate.org.au/victoria](http://www.lockthegate.org.au/victoria)

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