



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Coal Seam Gas

SPEECH

Wednesday, 1 October 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Page 11029
Questioner
Speaker Elliot, Justine, MP

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Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (09:35): Yesterday, the people of the North Coast had a huge community victory and I rise today to congratulate them. Yesterday, the New South Wales state Labor leader, John Robertson, came to Lismore on the far New South Wales North Coast to announce that, under a state Labor government, the North Coast would be declared coal seam gas mining free and unconventional gas mining free. John Robertson was joined by Walt Secord, New South Wales shadow minister for the North Coast and shadow minister for health, and Luke Foley, the New South Wales shadow minister for the environment. They were also joined by our three outstanding state Labor candidates Ron Goodman for Tweed, Isaac Smith for Lismore, and Paul Spooner for Ballina. These three Labor candidates are standing up for our community, representing our values and fighting for the issues that are important to us. This announcement by the state Labor leader means that, under a Labor New South Wales state government, the Northern Rivers will be protected from harmful CSG and unconventional gas mining.

The policy, aptly named Labor's Plan for a CSG-Free Northern Rivers, means that Labor will not allow for any new CSG exploration licences to be established on the North Coast. Also, it means that we will reject renewals of existing licences and refuse any applications to expand existing operations. This policy formally ratifies the platform put forward by the New South Wales Labor conference in July to ban CSG and unconventional gas mining on the North Coast. If elected, this will ensure that our unique environment, our water resources and our local industries, businesses and agricultural lands are protected from this harmful industry.

This announcement is a true recognition of the massive community-based campaign to protect our region. I would like to acknowledge all of those individuals and groups that have worked so hard and fought so hard for this outcome—congratulations.

Labor's policy is in stark contrast to the National Party, who, in fact, have abandoned the people of the North Coast. For too long the National Party have pushed their pro-CSG drilling, fracking and expansion agenda. They have ignored the community and now the community will punish them. Yesterday's announcement shows who is really listening to our community: it is the Labor Party, it is John Robertson and it is our three fantastic state candidates. At the New South Wales State election in March 2015 voters face a very clear choice between the Labor Party, who want to stop CSG mining, and the National Party, who want to expand it.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank John Robertson for delivering this policy. I want to thank him for visiting the Bentley protectors camp. I want to thank him for listening to the people of the North Coast. I want to thank him for really, really making a difference in the lives of so many. He is a true community champion to all of us in our region, and we thank him so much for delivering this fantastic plan—a plan for a CSG-free North Coast.