

# South Eastern Midlands 'Gasfield Free'

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Residents from eight districts within the Southern Midlands Municipality of Tasmania have joined together to boldly declare their communities 'Gasfield Free'. A survey of over 400 homes located in Baden, Stonor, Parattah, Whitefoord, Tunnack, Mount Seymour, Levendale and Woodsdale revealed that 99.5% did not want to live in an invasive industrialised gasfield.

The district consists of highly productive small to medium sized farms, and tiny towns, made up of farmers, employees, retirees, tenants, all people who just love living there.

"The normally quiet, hardworking residents of the diverse community of the South Eastern Midlands have come out strongly to voice their rejection of gas mining. Not even one person amongst all the people surveyed wanted Gas Mining in their community." said Frack Free Tas spokesman Brett Hall.

"The survey team consisted of already busy people, mostly farmers willing to put aside their struggle with adversely dry conditions, to see that the survey was conducted thoroughly and correctly" said local Tunnack farmer Susan Scott who coordinated the survey. "The success of the survey 'on the ground' can be put down to local people knocking on doors, leaning over sheep yard fences, taking the time to engage others in conversation."

An exploration licence (EL3/2013) for Category 4 petroleum/gas was granted for a 5 year term in February 2014 and covers 3,868km<sup>2</sup> of the Southern Midlands. The exploration licence was approved by the State Government's mining minister without notifying the individual landholders or seeking to engage with the communities that would be impacted by such a decision.

Mrs Scott added "The message is very loud and clear, this type of exploration or commercial gas mining will not be tolerated here. With many farming families able to trace back as many as seven generations of local farming activity, it is easy to see why. For others, it is the feeling of outrageous injustice, that mining companies can violate the lifestyle they have chosen."

The South Eastern Midlands is the first district in Tasmania to declare "Gasfield Free" status, joining another 379 districts across Australia that have made the same commitment. "The communities should be congratulated on this achievement and proud of what they have been able to achieve by working together. This is 'bottom up' democracy at work where the people have a say in what happens to them and their community rather than being told by others what decisions have been made." added Brett Hall.

A public declaration of the area being 'Gasfield Free' will be presented to the Southern Midlands Mayor and Councillors at Oatlands Town Hall on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> of April at 12 noon.

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