



## NSW Anti-Coal Seam Gas Election Rally 20<sup>th</sup> March 2011

On Sunday March 20<sup>th</sup> 2011, an election rally was held to call attention to the destructive impacts on communities across NSW from coal and coal seam gas (CSG) mining. The Rally “Can’t Eat Coal, Can’t Drink Gas” was organised by the Lock the Gate Alliance (then a national coalition of coal community action groups) and the Nature Conservation Council. The rally attracted more than 1200 people from all over NSW. Guest speakers from Queensland warned NSW what to expect if the new government after March 26 continued to allow CSG to expand in NSW (NSW has only 3.5% CSG production compared with Queensland). The former Mayor of Gloucester told how the NSW Minister for Mineral Resources told her “hose your community down” for objecting to AGL’s plans to put gas wells into the area. See LTG & NCC press coverage <http://lockthegate.org.au/nsw-election-rally/>



The Scenic Hills Association (SHA) was asked to speak at the Rally. Greg Burke of SHA (and a Carmelite Friar) told how AGL, using Part 3A legislation, planned to put 72 wells into the Scenic Hills Protection Area, even though local planning prohibits *extractive industries* and *mines*. The wells will run horizontally for up to 2.5 km from the well heads, drawing gas from seams that run under 26 suburbs in Campbelltown and Camden local government areas. Some of these suburbs haven't even been built yet and Greg questioned whether future home owners would be properly informed before they bought. Greg said the South West already had a lot of social and health problems and was sick of being used as an industrial dumping ground. AGL plans to use the controversial 'fracking' process (hydraulic fracturing) associated with contamination of ground and surface water, which could destroy the fragile rural environment and the remnant bushland (much of it classified Critically Endangered) of the Scenic Hills. Greg spoke of the Scenic Hills as a beautiful place and having national significance for its aboriginal history. It is at the centre of an area known as the Yandel'ora meaning “land of peace between peoples” . It also has Australia’s largest botanic garden at Mount Annan where AGL plans to put parts of its gas gathering system. Greg said that AGL had not been honest with local residents and landowners about the adverse impacts its plans would have on the area.

