

## Visiting your MP to call for a gasfield free Northern Rivers



**Buddy up with someone else** - This allows you to support and complement each other in your advocacy efforts. It also provides you with a witness to your MP's responses and gives you another brain for good questioning. It also makes the visit fun and easy. You can go out for coffee afterwards!

**Be polite, respectful and diplomatic** - Don't accuse your MP or tell them off, just let them know your concerns about invasive gas mining and why you want the region protected. Speak to them how you would like to be spoken to, with firmness and courtesy. You are there to enlist their support, not to blame them.

**Plan a friendly 'opener'** – Remember your MP is human and will respond better to a conciliatory and conversational approach to the meeting. Openings such as "Gee, you must feel like the meat in the sandwich" allow for interesting responses that may be revealing. Eg. "Yeah, you have no idea about the pressure I am under from above". Setting a friendly inquisitive tone at the start will allow you to explore your MP's motivations for rejecting or supporting a Gasfield Free Northern Rivers.

**It's as much about democracy as it is about the science** - You don't need to *prove* the science is bad or debate the issue, just share all of your concerns and make your request. Hundreds of visits by a diversity of people will demonstrate the depth and breadth of the community who are opposed to invasive gasfields. Remember, a trickle becomes a river!

**Keep it simple** – Taking along credible information and images about the impacts of unconventional gas extraction can help to inform your MP on the topic, as you may well have done more research on the issues than they have. However, stick to what you know and don't get bogged down too much with complex scientific arguments. Speak from personal experience and explain how industrialised gasfields would affect you and your community. eg. "Industrialised gasfields are not safe and risk too much of what it is precious in the Northern Rivers. Please cancel all PELs."

**Don't let your MP avoid the issue** – Politicians may try to avoid your questions or create 'red herrings' to distract you from the real issue. Remember, your local MP works for you and has more resources at their disposal to answer complex questions. For example, if the MP asks you if you know the cost of compensating all existing drilling companies if the licences were to be cancelled, you can say, "Now, that is a good question. Please do tell!" Remind your MP that the Office of Coal Seam Gas, in their [suspension letter](#) to Metgasco dated 14<sup>th</sup> May, stated that failed community consultation is grounds for licence cancellation, in which case, no compensation would be required.

**Dress to impress** – This will preclude them from discriminating against you or dismissing your concerns based on your appearance.

**Request MP's personal position** - Ask your MP to state their personal position. Write their position down in front of them to show that you have heard it and that you expect them to be accountable for it.

**Encourage active listening** – After expressing your desire for cancellation of PELs covering the Northern Rivers and explaining the reasons why, ask your MP what they think your position is, in order to demonstrate that they are listening to your views.

**Follow up MP's promises to answer specific questions** – If there are burning questions that you feel have not been adequately answered, ask your MP to find out. If they make a promise to provide you information, follow them up and make sure they answer your question. For example, "How many wells is Metgasco proposing in the Northern Rivers?". If the information is not available, ask your MP to follow up and get back to you with the answer.

**Need some inspiration?** – [Watch the advertisement](#) that was about to go to air just as the Metgasco drilling suspension was announced, as well as other inspirational videos on our [YouTube channel](#) for reasons why the Northern Rivers community is overwhelmingly opposed to gasfield industrialisation.