

srlup - Submission re valuable land use

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Subject: Submission re valuable land use

Director

Assessment Policy, Systems & Stakeholder Engagement

NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure

Submission regarding proposals to balance valuable land uses around NSW.

Dear Director,

Rosebank residents live in fear

I live in Rosebank. Google it and you will find references to a village or hamlet, but apparently the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure does not accept either of these designations for Rosebank.

At a recent Environmental Defenders Office forum in Lismore the speaker was unable to define what constituted a village and members of the audience came up with a variety of definitions. *The Macquarie Dictionary*'s definition of 'village' is quite clear: " 1. A small assemblage of houses in a country district larger than a hamlet and smaller than a town. 2. The inhabitants collectively." (p1934). Under these definitions Rosebank is certainly a village and on that basis should be in the mining exclusion zone. It currently is not and residents fear for their future.

A hilly land mass Rosebank comprises coffee and macadamia plantations, rich-grazing land, temperate rain forests and smallholdings of various sizes. A number of properties have been handed down from

generation to generation. Both business and households are dependent on reliable rainfall and the quality of the ever-flowing creeks as are the creeks' inhabitants, dragons, water hens, platypus and our famous green frogs. At the northern end of Rosebank Rd is a village-type square with houses clustered around the general store/ Green Frog café (at present undergoing renovation). When open it was also the local post office and a popular unofficial meeting place for coffee and conversation. The Rosebank rural fire service HQ is a short distance to the north of the square. A few kilometres to the south, also on Rosebank road is our education centre, the Rosebank primary school (established 1891) and, the pre-school which is based in the community hall (circa 1897). Enrolments for both schools have been increasing in recent years as more families find a home here. Near the primary school, is the nature reserve, built and maintained by local volunteers. It is an important educational tool, for students and visitors as it carries informative botanical descriptions of the regional plants and trees preserved here. This is also one of the Rosebank koala sanctuaries.

The Village Journal, an informative monthly publication, keeps Rosebankers in touch with community news.

Rosebankers work on the properties and smallholdings and at larger community centres, such as Lismore a hassle-free 20 minute commute.

The State government's recent decision to allow owners of rural properties to build a second separate dwelling on their land has fulfilled a long-held need. For farmers it will allow them to stay on their properties while handing it over to a younger generation and/or provide an income through leasing. It will almost certainly lead to a building boom, so long as the area has a future. At present the uncertainty is preventing any confidence in planning developments. For example, my wife and I, owners of a smallholding (2.5ha), have spent thousands of dollars reviving and improving our house and land since moving here six years ago. Our current plans for more improvements have been put on hold under the threat of CSG mining. Owners of larger properties, farms and plantations are also taking into account the mining threat in making plans for the future.

The recent tragic bushfires have drawn national and international attention to small communities such as ours. Politicians have publicly assured the stricken residents of those villages, hamlets and townships damaged by the fires of help to start again, to re-build, to revive their communities. Nature too will play its part, fresh air and vegetation will return as will the native animals and pure water will flow again in the creeks and rivers. Imagine the outcry had a politician said that not all such places could be saved, that the land, air and water had gone forever, that it is pointless re-building as their homes and land were no longer of value.

That is the threat under which Rosebankers currently live since these same politicians who have voiced their concern for the bushfire victims are allowing coal seam gas miners to take over our lands.

We are one of 119 communities that have declared themselves gasfield free in the beautiful Northern Rivers region, voting 93 per cent against.

I respectfully submit Rosebank should be designated as the rural growth area it most certainly is and should be protected from coal seam gas activity by its addition to the exclusion zones.

It would take only one mining operation to destroy Rosebank and surrounding areas forever.

Yours sincerely

Ken Anderson

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