



Conservation
Council SA

MEDIA RELEASE
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Gas flames in the South East visible for 40km: Protests heat up ahead of state election

Production testing on high value agricultural land in South Australia's South East has raised concerns of the local community and prompted protest this week.

Beach Energy's Haselgrove 3 gas well began flaring as part of production testing on Saturday and is expected to continue for at least a week. The flames are visible from as far as Mt Gambier, 40km away.

Brett Mashado, co-Chair of the Limestone Coast Protection Alliance, speaking from the protest site said, "Industrial gasfields are not what the community want to see expanding across the South East region.

"We are concerned about the threat of water pollution and depletion, air pollution from gas emissions, health risks, noise pollution, and the damage to the South East's reputation as a clean and green producer of food and wine," he said.

A Parliamentary inquiry tabled in November 2016 found that there was no social licence for gas mining in the South East.

A survey undertaken by the Limestone Coast Protection Alliance over a number of years in 50 communities across the South East found that 96% of those surveyed indicated they want to live in a gasfield-free region.

"With the state election looming we are calling on all candidates to listen to the community and commit to a ban on all gas exploration and development in the Limestone Coast and Otway Basin region," said Mr Mashado.

"If there was just one message I could convey to my fellow South Australians in Adelaide and across the state it would be: your food comes from this region — please help us protect it."

Josh Coates, Community Outreach Coordinator for the Limestone Coast Protection Alliance was on hand to witness the flaring and community protest.

"It is disturbing to see this gas well operating and flaring so close to vineyards and plantation forest," he said.

“The visual impact, noise and smell are shocking and fly in the face of the bright, tourist-friendly image most of us have of the Limestone Coast.

“To put our most productive agricultural areas at risk for fossil fuel extraction flies in the face of common sense. This must be an election issue,” said Mr Coates.

Craig Wilkins, Chief Executive of the Conservation Council of SA said, “In SA we’ve got far better options than turning our food bowl and natural spaces into industrial gasfields.

“With an abundance of exciting renewable energy options, we don’t need to risk our state’s clean marketing edge, our water supplies, and our health.”

Release Ends

Media comment: Josh Coates 0438 805 284 or Craig Wilkins 0417 879 439

Photos, professional footage and interviews available

Professional footage link: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/a6jigd7t6u4sdil/Penola%20Gas.mp4?dl=0>

Images below taken on 14 February 2018: Flaring gas well at Haselgrove 3 site and community protest near Haselgrove 3 site, 8km south of Penola.

