

WILLIAMTOWN AREA

UNDER ASSAULT?

The Fullerton Cove, Williamtown and Salt Ash communities face an unprecedented triple threat to their way of life, health and environment. The Greens have supported these communities in their resistance to these threats and will continue to do so. We share the vision of most local people for their area – a predominantly rural landscape offering a great lifestyle. Williamtown airport and RAAF base are important contributors to the local economy, but the Department of Defence has not been a good neighbour. All three levels of government have failed the community on at least three important issues.

**THE
GREENS**

CONTAMINATION FROM RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN

In September 2015, the local community became aware for the first time of what the Department of Defence (DoD), the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and Port Stephens Council have known for at least two years – that toxic chemicals from fire-fighting foam have been leaching into soil and water surrounding the RAAF base since at least 2011, and probably much longer. A large 'red zone' has been declared, stretching from Fullerton Cove to Tilligerry Creek, limiting use of groundwater, and consumption of foods produced within the zone, with fishing bans extending even further. 650 families within the zone have found their property values destroyed and livelihoods affected, with serious unanswered questions about potential health effects. DoD have lived up to their name by going into 'Defence' mode over the issue, only now being forced to give answers to a Greens initiated Senate Inquiry. The EPA and Council have also not responded adequately to date

The Greens call on the Commonwealth Government to:

- **Allow full access by the EPA and independent experts to the RAAF base to carry out tests**
- **Ensure that the contaminants are contained and removed**
- **Co-operate with the State government in a comprehensive plan for testing soil, water and human health throughout the affected area**
- **Urgently arrange financial assistance for affected families and businesses**
- **Establish an independently run, fair and just compensation scheme, and if necessary buy out affected properties**

KEY:



**EXISTING CONTAMINATION
FROM RAAF BASE**



EXISTING SAND MINING



PROPOSED SAND MINING



**POSSIBLE COAL-SEAM
GAS DRILLING**



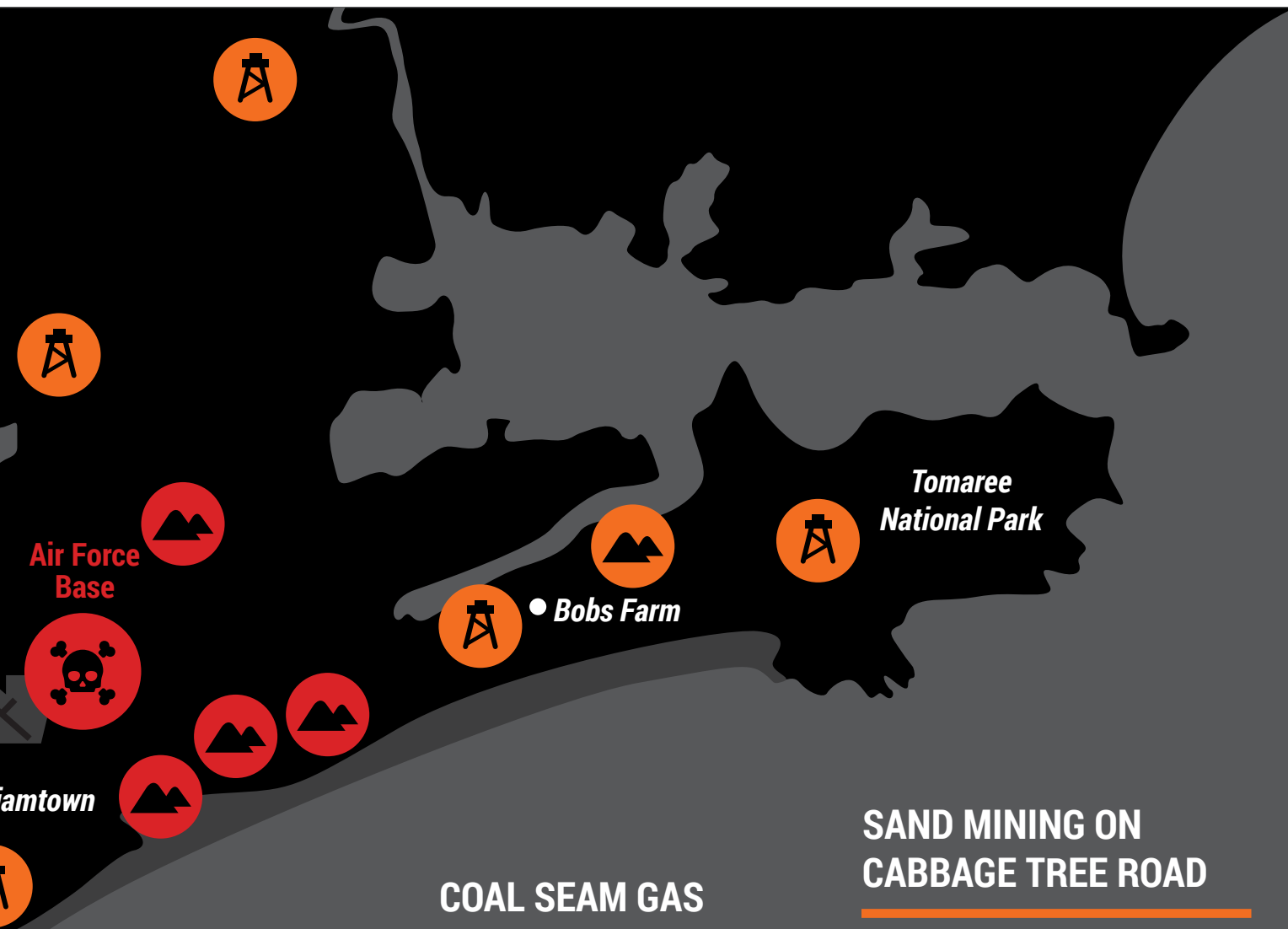
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• **Willi**



Newcastle •



COAL SEAM GAS EXPLORATION

The local community fought off Dart Energy's plans to drill CSG wells at Fullerton Cove in 2012, but the new licence holder is expected to try to drill again before long. The exploration area, which could eventually see industrial scale production, extends as far east as Bobs Farm and north to the Myall Lakes (as well as most of Newcastle). Exploration and production wells would threaten the precious Tomago sandbed water supply, with a range of other environmental and potential health risks. This area is simply not suitable for CSG activity, which in any case is an unwanted and unnecessary industry anywhere in NSW.

The Greens have called on the State Government to buy back the CSG exploration licence PEL458, as it has in many other areas of NSW, to remove this threat from the local community once and for all.

SAND MINING ON CABBAGE TREE ROAD

In 2014, Port Stephens Council controversially awarded a contract for quarrying of 4.6 million tonnes of sand over 15 years from Council owned land north of Cabbage Tree Road. The quarry would remove habitat for koalas and other at risk species, would destroy the quality of life of local residents, and would add hundreds of heavy truck movements to already overloaded and unsuitable single carriageway roads. It would also threaten the water table and disturb potentially contaminated soil within the recently declared 'red zone'. With a staggering lack of sensitivity to the Williamtown residents already struggling with the contamination issue, the quarrying company has just released its Environmental Impact Study for the quarry, which while scaled back will still seek to extract 3.3 million tonnes, clearing vegetation from 54 hectares.

The Greens call on authorities to defer assessment of the Cabbage Tree Road sand quarry Development Application until the contamination issue is resolved.

OTHER THREATS

On top of these three major threats, Williamtown faces inappropriate commercial 'strip' development around the junction of Nelson Bay Road and Cabbage Tree Road. Port Stephens Council has already irresponsibly approved multiple developments of fast food restaurants and pubs on rural zoned and flood prone land contrary to its own planning policies, and more are expected. Mature trees have already been felled even before any approval.

Aerospace related developments on land adjacent to the airport and already zoned for business make sense and can bring much needed jobs and income to the local economy. But restaurants and other facilities aimed at passing traffic will only further suck jobs out of established local centres including Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay, while blighting the environment and ruining the rural character of the area.

The Greens call on Port Stephens Council to stop approving commercial developments on rural zoned land around Williamtown, and ensure that its own planning policies are respected.

... And don't get us started on the activities of Port Stephens Mayor Bruce Mackenzie on his own landholdings in the Williamtown and Salt Ash areas!

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Below: Greens Senator Lee Rhiannon and Senate candidates Michael Osborne and Jane Oakley meet Williamtown residents, Nov 2015



www.portstephensgreens.org.au

Front Cover Image: NSW Environmental Protection Agency Williamtown Contamination Investigation Area
Back Cover Image: Taken by Michael Gormly.

[2015] Authorised and printed by Greens Senator Lee Rhiannon, 72 Campbell St, Surry Hills NSW 2010