

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES OF KEY INDUSTRIES IN THE CLARENCE VALLEY

Data summary

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During the 2023 NSW State Election, a team of Southern University researchers undertook a community survey in partnership with the Clarence Catchment Alliance. A number of local issues were identified by a group of stakeholders who attended a survey-development workshop in March 2023, to which over 30 different industry and community groups were invited to attend.

The intention of this work is to provide sound information for policy makers regarding community perspectives on several industries operating in the Clarence Valley. This includes levels of public interest and concern around the topics identified by the local stakeholders.

An established election-survey method was applied (Luke 2014; 2017), with Human Research Ethics approved (#2023/017). This sampling method allows for a cross-section of local residents to be surveyed in order to gain a representative sample of the population. Volunteers were trained in election-survey methods (as per Luke, 2014), and posted at all main electoral booths in the Clarence. Residents were invited to participate and given an information sheet to read and keep. The survey was a one-page paper survey administered through a purposive sampling technique, with a record kept of refusal rates across locations. A total of 1042 respondents came from 114 different locations, spread fairly representatively across the region. The highest response came from Grafton, followed by Maclean and Yamba.

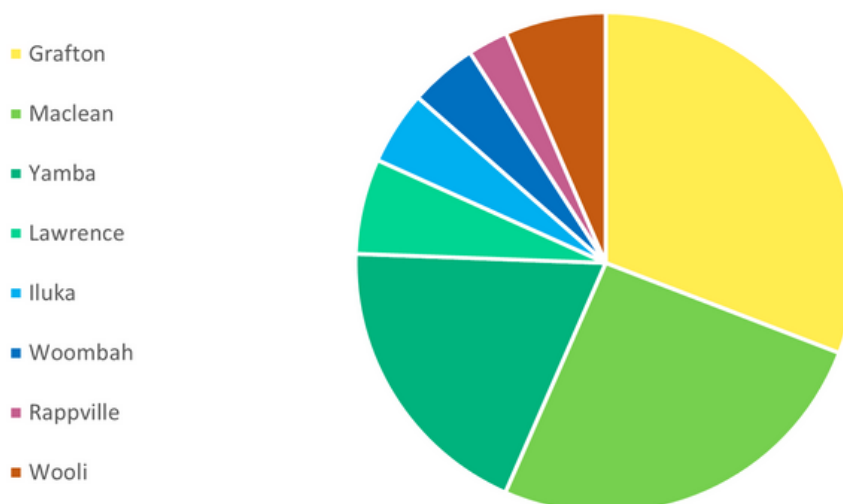


Figure 1: Proportion of respondents by survey area

Residents were asked what they liked about living where they do, and overwhelmingly, responses to this question related to an appreciation of the regional communities and natural environment of the area, including the beach, the rivers and the wildlife. Some discussed the importance of this natural environment for local industries:

“ Clean green environment:
Good for fishing, farm
industries and tourism.



Many people mentioned the community and wildlife of the region. The peace and quiet of where they live was also very important to those who responded to the survey.

The importance of various issues in the Clarence region are listed in Figure 2, below.

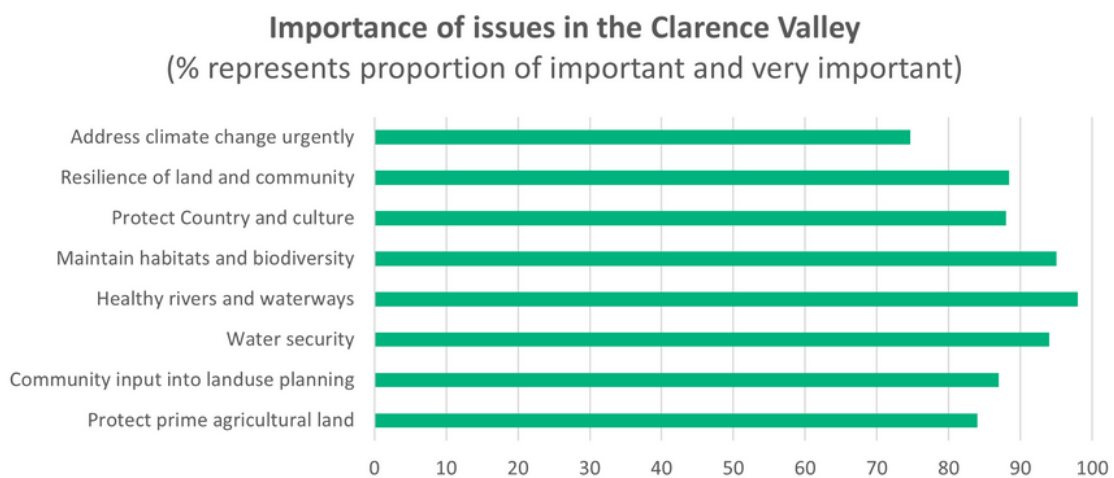


Figure 2: Importance of activities and issues in the Clarence Valley.

The survey posed a question on the extent of support for four Clarence Valley land uses that were identified in the stakeholder workshop, with the responses shown in Figure 3.

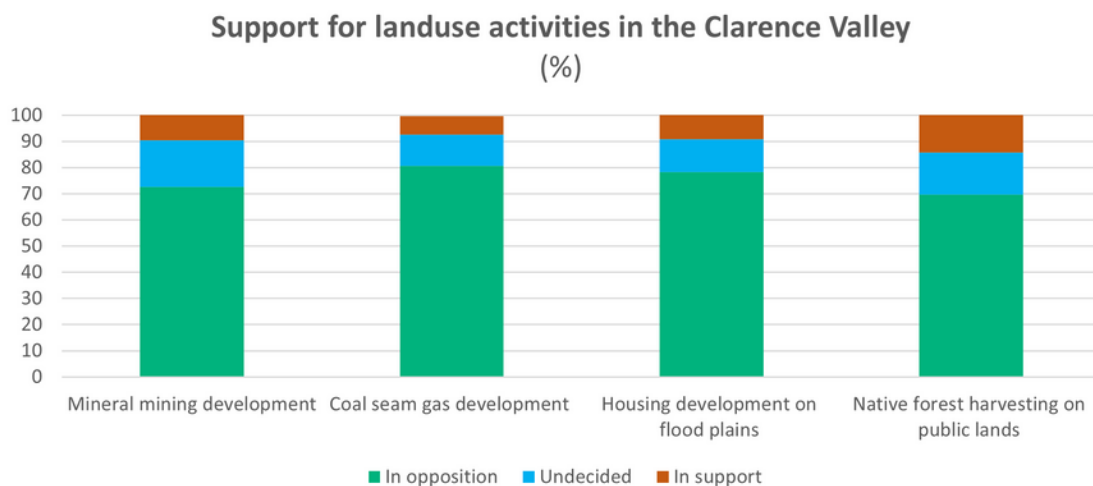


Figure 3: Responding to the survey question: “To what extent do you support the following in the Clarence region?” The survey results indicate low levels of support to the four industrial activities listed in the survey.

References

- Luke, H., Lloyd, D., Boyd, W., & den Exter, K. (2014). Unconventional gas development: why a regional community said no: a report of findings from the 2012 Lismore City council election poll and exit poll survey (New South Wales). *Geographical Research*, 52(3), 263-279.
- Luke, H. (2017). Social resistance to coal seam gas development in the Northern Rivers region of Eastern Australia: Proposing a diamond model of social license to operate. *Land Use Policy*, 69, 266-280.