

July 11, 2010

To:

Industry and Investment NSW
Singleton Council
Bulga Community Consultative Committee
AGL
Residents of Broke, Bulga, Fordwich and Milbrodale

RESPONSE TO AGL HUNTER VALLEY GAS PROJECT UPDATE DATED JULY 7, 2010

AGL has prepared a newsletter style update on its Hunter Valley Gas Project. It was delivered via email to select contacts at Industry and Investment NSW, Singleton Council and the Bulga Community Consultative Committee (BCCC). It was also dropped off in printed format to a number of residential households of Broke. It is also understood that it was to be posted on community notice boards at the Broke and Bulga stores.

The newsletter is rife with incomplete and inaccurate information. It does little to raise awareness to the issues of complaint that have been made by a number of local residents due to the noise from the AGL's Broke exploration wells bordering the local community. Further, it does not answer the many questions raised about AGL's plans for this and its other sites.

Following are some key points raised by the newsletter that illustrate the problems in AGL's communication:

1. *"AGL has received feedback from some residents of Cochrane Street about noise emissions from the gas flow testing at HB01 and HB02."*

AGL has received written complaints from residents on Rogers Street, Nelson Street and Cochrane Street. These are the residents most seriously affected by the noise from the Broke site. They have been making written complaints for several weeks. Ms. Barry of AGL has followed up in writing with several of the complainants. She also met with one of the local residents on Cochrane St. However, during her meeting on Cochrane St., Ms. Barry claimed that there had been only one complaint and none had been received from other streets in

Broke. Further, in the newsletter AGL has stated that the complaints are restricted to residents on Cochrane Street. This is incorrect.

2. *“The additional measures should contribute to significantly reducing the noise that is being heard by the residents.”*

AGL has installed the noise barriers at the site as noted in the picture included with the newsletter. The motors have been restarted. The local residents have reported that the noise levels have returned to or near the levels they experienced prior to the erection of the barriers. As noted in the complaints by the residents, the noise levels at night prior to the introduction of AGL’s operations at the site were near zero. The noise from the site is unacceptable. The noise is preventing people, in particular young babies, from being able to sleep through the night.

Further, the barriers have further ruined the views for the community, increasing the industrial look of the site. The picture included in the newsletter is from another site taken from a distance greater than the distance HB01 and HB02 are from the residents in Broke. The issue of AGL’s operations on the rural views negatively impacting the community have been raised a number of times but the problems simply get worse.

3. *“AGL has arranged for a local contractor to plant locally sourced native tress on its property at Broke. The seedlings will be fenced in to keep stock out and to ensure that the fence lines can be slashed and maintained. This work is part of AGL’s improvement process for the property and was one of the suggestions from local residents.”*

- The local contractor is currently erecting a stock fence only. No knowledge was given to the addition of trees.
- The local resident suggestion was to use trees to assist in the reduction of noise and to reduce the impairment of the rural site lines by AGL. The seedlings proposed by AGL will do nothing to abate noise levels nor reduce the negative impact by AGL operations on the views for many years to come.
- The proposed plans are not an improvement. Rather they are simply a patch to the problems introduced by AGL’s operations.

AGL communications have been a problem from the outset. It is rare

for AGL to submit anything in writing to the community. Even rarer are face-to-face meetings with residents of community. On the occasions AGL does communicate, whether in writing or verbally at the BCCC meetings, it is typically in a format that provides little to no concrete answers to any of the questions and concerns raised. For example, the local residents referenced in the newsletter have repeatedly asked AGL to outline their plans for the Broke site. In particular, they are concerned AGL seems to be preparing the site for the development of a large processing plant. The responses from AGL have been vague at best. Without any concrete answers, residents are left to guess what the fate of their community may be.

AGL states on its website in the context of its project work in the Hunter *“AGL operates with the local community in mind, maintaining ongoing communication with land owners, neighbours, government, local communities and industry groups, as well as other interested parties.”* As illustrated in AGL’s handling of their operations here in the Broke area, AGL is not meeting the terms of its own public statements. In relation to the Bulga Community Consultative Committee, AGL states on its website *“It is aimed at facilitating good working relationships amongst committee members and to act as a channel to assist AGL in improving communication, education and notification within the general community.”* Feedback from the local committee members clearly indicates that this stated purpose is not being achieved in any fashion.

AGL is not meeting any acceptable levels of community communication and engagement. The residents of the Broke-Bulga area are fed up. The lack of communications, with the resulting uncertainties, and ongoing operational issues are clear indicators that the presence of AGL coal seam methane operations in this and similar areas are unsustainable and must be brought to a halt.

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