

GAS WATCH 183.

AGL Energy's contribution to the Hunter Valley during 2012 – Happy New Year.

Of course there's plenty more than that which is set out below, but thanks [AGL](#) for ruining our 2012, for ruining our Hunter Valley, for ruining our environment, for ruining our beautiful area, for ruining our property values and our businesses, and for ruining our rural lifestyles. We just hope when it comes around for AGL to seek production licences that the Government lives up to its firm promises and saves the Hunter from your pillaging.

Here's some of [AGL's](#) contribution to the Hunter Valley during 2012.

- Ignored the advice of Minister Hazzard that they were "loopy" and "wasting their shareholders' money" by continuing to explore in declared Strategic Agricultural Lands, viz the "critical vineyard cluster" of the Hunter Valley.
- As a result is gambling millions of its shareholder dollars on the Government being a liar.
- Became the first member of the peak wine industry body, the Hunter Valley Wine Industry Association, to be expelled from membership for engaging in activities which have the very real potential to cause irremediable and permanent damage to viticulture and is contrary to the interests of licensed vignerons in the Hunter Valley.
- In retaliation to its expulsion, announced a "scholarship" for winemakers. This turned out to be a sham as it was restricted to the 5 winemakers who made wine from grapes grown on AGL properties. AGL have announced that they will attempt to do the same thing again this year, however most of those 5 winemakers have said they won't have anything to do with AGL any more.
- Announced the commencement of drilling and fracking coal seams under the vineyards of Broke and Bulga, including the Pooles Rock vineyard of the late David Clarke, despite the many dangers to the environment cited in the report of the Government's own Chief Scientist.
- Claimed that coal seam methane mining could co-exist with viticulture, the GM of methane mining for AGL citing as evidence that *"I know of one petroleum project in California which has a form of co-existence"* with agriculture. We've all seen the results of the coal mining industry's 1980s claim that it could co-exist with agriculture.
- Has been part of the lies, spin and exaggeration of its industry body APPEA.
- Gave evidence to the Upper House enquiry that it would not force any landholder to allow them on to explore for coal seam methane, but fought tooth and nail in Court against the residents of Gloucester to ensure it could drill there.
- When found out, AGL admitted breaching conditions of its Environment Protection Licence at its massive Camden gas works for over 3 continuous years. This on top of several other breaches of Licence conditions including the blowout of a gas well because of defective operation, breaching various conditions in the Hunter, dumping of salty water onto pasture, killing the pasture, and more.
- Failed to acknowledge scientific evidence that the fugitive escape of methane gas from wells and cracks has been underestimated by 62,000,000 tonnes over three years.
- Despite Singleton Council unanimously rejecting coal seam methane mining in the Shire, arrogantly announced it would defy the Council and go ahead with fracking coal seams.
- Failed to rule building a gas works or a water treatment plant on land it owns in the shadow of the vineyard village of Broke.
- Claimed it could shandy salty, contaminated water from the coal seams with fresh water from the Hunter River to irrigate pasture and grape vines. Have they no interest in the environment. Diluting the mix doesn't reduce the amount of salt!
- Continued to ignore the advice of George Souris MP for the Upper Hunter that *"the best thing AGL can do is surrender the PEL and save a lot of time for everyone in the future."*
- Confirmed its position as one of Australia's biggest polluters when it bought the Loy Yang brown coal power station.
- Made a mockery of community consultation in, amongst many other things, refusing to divulge which area it was to compulsorily give up on renewal of its exploration Licence until the Government had approved it.
- Selected a Broke village wine festival weekend to slash an overgrown 25 acre paddock adjacent to the village filling the air with dust, seeds and noise whilst cellar doors tried to impress visitors.
- Announced to Singleton Council that it proposed to extend its exploration footprint into the Pokolbin

State Forest and the Singleton Army base, triggering an urgent unanimous resolution by Singleton Council to oppose further CSG exploration in the Singleton Local Government area.

- Announced that there is very little, in the overall scheme of things, coal seam methane under the vineyards, but that it was prepared to jeopardise a 200 year old industry for a few years of methane extraction. As Joel Fitzgibbon, our Federal Member says "*if in doubt, leave it out*".
- Lied to the community when it claimed that a water test in a small area in Broke showing that interconnectivity between fresh water aquifers and coal seams could be extrapolated throughout the Hunter. Professor Willgoose debunked this claim.

That's enough of a good year. Let's hope that AGL sees the light in 2013 and gives up its inexorable rush to ruin the wine industry.

Isn't it great to have such a wonderful neighbour?



PO BOX 116 BROKE NSW 2330 www.huntermvalleyprotectionalliance.com
10th January, 2013. Contact: Graeme Gibson 65791062