

# GAS WATCH 193.

## Hunter Wine Industry applauds exclusion of Hunter Wine Country from coal seam gas activity.

Today's announcement by the O'Farrell Government that the Hunter Vineyards are to be excluded from CSG activities honours the pre-election promises of the O'Farrell Government, and was received warmly by the people of the Hunter.

The devil is always in the detail, however, and we await expectantly for that detail. The exclusion area is shown in the Strategic Land Use Plan entitled "Strategic Agricultural Lands (Viticulture)" and you can find a copy of the map at [http://huntervalleyprotectionalliance.com/pdf/HUNTER\\_SAL-Viticulture-with-road-labels-20111130.pdf](http://huntervalleyprotectionalliance.com/pdf/HUNTER_SAL-Viticulture-with-road-labels-20111130.pdf).

**What we now require is to take this from being announcements to being LAW. Not a simple State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) but law – strong, irrevocable legislation similar to the Character Preservation (McLaren Vale) and (Barossa Valley) Acts in South Australia.**

**And we need that law to be in place before the Federal election on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2013, or it may never happen.**

Until those laws are in place we will continue to lobby Government and resist AGL Energy from continuing its exploration in the vineyard areas, blockading their properties if necessary.

You would think that AGL would count their losses in the vineyards and pull out, in accordance with evidence given by the GM of methane mining for AGL, Mike Moraza that they would not force themselves on any landowner and would move on.

Perhaps the shareholders should be asking their Directors: why did AGL continue exploration in the Hunter Valley knowing that they had been warned two years ago by Upper Hunter MP George Souris who said "*AGL should surrender their PEL in the vineyard areas and save a lot of time for everyone in the future*"; and the further warning over a year ago by Minister Brad Hazzard that any company which continued to explore for CSG in Strategic Agricultural Land was "*loopy*" and was "*wasting its shareholders money*".

But no, AGL published a rather arrogant and threatening Media Statement today saying that it wanted to continue with CSG extraction in the Hunter Valley, ignoring the groundswell of community objection, and coming up with a new phrase, a "gas supply crisis" – a claim denied by BHP which says there is plenty of gas available for NSW.

### **AGL also claims in its media release:**

- that CSG is a low impact industry – **wrong**, it has destroyed environments throughout the world and fracking is banned in the whole of France.
- It has made investments in NSW – its investments in the Hunter can be sold off. This is the risk of investing. You take the good with the bad.
- It relinquished land in the vineyard area – it has offered to relinquish certain land, but not due to community pressure, it was not prospective for CSG.

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19<sup>th</sup> February, 2013. Contact: Graeme Gibson 65791062

