

GAS WATCH 20.

Core hole through water table.

Sydney Gas/AGL have, according to a member of the drilling team who was questioned by a neighbour the other day, penetrated the water table and have now drilled down about 550 metres under the surface. The risk to the water table and as a consequence the Wollombi Brook and the Hunter River is now real.

Of course none of this information has been conveyed to anyone by Sydney Gas, whose local part time Community Manager appears to have disappeared.

The lack of monitoring of the activities of this Gas company is a matter of great concern. We have already had noise complaints from neighbours to the 24 hour hotline, which has now been set up and which appears to be the mobile number of one Scott Black who, it appears, is the Hunter Manager for Sydney Gas. He hasn't yet made himself known to our Group, notwithstanding the undertaking of the Land and Community Manager that he would do so. But we've spoken before about these undertakings. Not one undertaking given by Kourouche or other employees of Sydney Gas can be recalled as having been kept.

One of these noise complaints resulted from a motor running all night, an event prohibited under the approval Sydney Gas has obtained. The noise complaints have resulted in Sydney Gas arranging for noise measuring near the entrances to neighbouring properties, but not at neighbours homes which is where the noise affectation actually is. A useless exercise patting the neighbours gently on the head.

Sydney Gas has had a liner fail in one of the mudponds they have dug on the property in Inlet Road. It has apparently been repaired.

With these small mistakes, how long before there is a significant and possibly damaging mistake.

Also, without proper monitoring of this core hole drilling, nobody is aware of whether or not Sydney Gas is properly sealing against possible loss or contamination of the water table that they have penetrated; nobody is aware of whether or not the mud ponds hold contaminated or fresh water mixed with the mud. No-one tells us.

Additionally we now have Sydney Gas conducting "seismic acquisition works" on various roads around the district. A few days only notice in the local paper was given of these works which are disrupting traffic with many local roads closed on temporary bases whilst the work is carried out. Again Sydney Gas has not properly consulted the community, or even spoken to the community about their proposals. It appears they have no concern whatsoever for the local communities and continue to prefer to keep the community in the dark in relation to their proposals. How many times have we asked "what do they have to hide" or is it just that their people on the ground, Black and Kourouche, don't know how to relate to the community or simply don't understand their obligations for community consultation.

Surely Sydney Gas must also see from the recent floods, that there really isn't any place in this small valley for gas mining. Take out the flood plains, take out the areas over the water tables, take out those areas within 50 metres of orchards, vineyards, structures, water ways, take out those areas within 200 metres of a dwelling house. What's left then in our little valley? Sydney Gas are conducting a wasteful exercise that you would think can't go anywhere. There are so many areas in NSW where there is coal seam gas, without having to put small, closely developed rural communities at risk; without having to put water tables, brooks, rivers and water supplies at risk. You wonder why Sydney Gas persists with this exploration in Broke and Bulga.

SYDNEY GAS CANNOT COME ONTO YOUR LAND WITHOUT YOU SIGNING AN ACCESS AGREEMENT. DON'T BELIEVE ANY SPIN THEY MAY TELL YOU. SEEK LEGAL ADVICE IF SYDNEY GAS PROVIDE YOU WITH AN AGREEMENT TO SIGN. THEY ARE NOT CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL SIGNED AND YOU CAN SEEK ADVICE FROM ANYONE. THE HUNTER BULGA GAS ACTION GROUP WILL REFER YOU TO A SOLICITOR, WITHOUT COST TO YOU, IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE WITH SYDNEY GAS.

Check out the HB GAG website for more information.

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