

GAS WATCH 214.

All important to the O'Farrell Government and the mining companies is:

The size of the prize.

The “significant of the resource” draft SEPP makes the SIZE OF THE PRIZE the “principal consideration” in granting mining licences for coal or methane gas.

The bigger the mine the better.

The more damage done to agriculture, the happier this Government will be.

Minister Hartcher says this will “improve investor confidence” in the mining industry.

BUT it will destroy investment and confidence in the agriculture sector.

This Government, both pre and post election has promised that there will be no coal seam methane gas activity in the vineyards.

In a letter received only today from The Deputy Premier and acting Minister for Resources and Energy, Andrew Stoner he said ***“All natural gas from coal seam exploration and production activity will be prohibited within and under areas identified as Critical Industry Clusters....the exclusion zones are being given effect through administrative processes to ensure that no approvals are granted for these activities within the exclusion zones”. “The changes will also prevent exploration activities in these areas from expanding or transitioning to the production stage.”***

BUT, Minister Stoner then goes on to say that the mapping of CICs is still taking place and he leaves the Government's door open to give the CICs a Swiss cheese approach of excluding properties within CICs which don't perhaps have a vineyard on them, even though there may be a vineyard next door. The maps were finalised, so far as the stakeholders are concerned, some time ago and should be left well alone.

This Government has frequently affirmed its promises that:

- there will be no Swiss cheese approach;
- there will be no properties within a CIC upon or under which coal seam methane mining will be allowed;
- that there will be no CSG activity within the boundaries of the declared CIC areas.

If the government goes back on its promises there will be no protection for the wine industry or the extensive wine tourism industry and the many jobs which flow from them.



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1st August, 2013. Contact: Graeme Gibson 65791062