

GAS WATCH 215.

Environmentally dangerous mining versus established, clean and responsible farming and tourism.

AGL Energy seeks to ruin the Hunter Valley wine industry with its unsustainable Coal Seam Methane mining

whilst

Margan Family Wines at Broke in the Hunter takes out Gold for Excellence in Sustainable Tourism and Gold for Excellence in Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Boutique Breweries at Hunter & Central Coast Tourism Awards 2013 this week.

We have the wine industry working successfully at sustainability, and continuing its 200 year old tradition.

On the other hand we have AGL Energy which has been found to regularly breach its environmental obligations – air pollution; ground pollution; failing to monitor emissions; fail to report; and more.

Margan Wines have a “commitment to protecting the environmental values of our property for future generations ensuring we integrate environmental responsibility and accountability into all aspects of our operations.”

Unconventional coal seam methane miners are putting extreme pressure on the O’Farrell Government to give them 21 years of methane extraction from under the vineyards, from which the wine industry, including the wine tourism industry, and the environment may never recover.

On 19th February, this year, the O’Farrell Government endorsed the State Environmental Planning Policy excluding Coal Seam Methane Gas activity in the vineyards, in the horse breeding areas and within 2 kilometres of residential areas (SEPP).

That SEPP, protecting the wine industry, was supposed to have been promulgated before the end of April, 2013.

It is still sitting in Cabinet. I appears certain that nothing will come out of Cabinet until after the Federal election on 7th September so that the Coalition will not be embarrassed nationally if O’Farrell fails to keep his pre and post election promises and does not make the exclusion SEPP law.

The O’Farrell Government needs to finalise the SEPP and give the wine industry some confidence to invest in the future, rather than giving the coal seam methane industry a green light to destroy us.



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