

GAS WATCH 227.

AGL - wants land in protected winegrowing regions made available for CSG drilling and fracking.

Santos - agrees that if a farmer says “no” they will go away.

Santos CEO David Knox says that it is important for farmers to be given a choice saying that Santos will not be seeking to drill for coal seam methane gas where landholders say “no”.

“Under this company I operate, if you don’t want me on your land to drill a well, I will not be coming. I will work with farmers who do want me on their land, and I think it’s very important that people are given that choice” he said.

This Santos approach mirrors announcements by Prime Minister Abbott. We hope that Santos does what it says it will do.

AGL, however, takes the opposite approach and has forced itself on the farmers of Gloucester through the Courts.

AGL has also announced that it is seeking that the properties it has bought in the Broke and Bulga winegrowing region be exempted from the protected viticulture Critical Industry Cluster and made available to them for unconventional coal seam methane drilling and fracking.

AGL has announced this, notwithstanding that it bought those properties well knowing that the Government gave pre-election promises in 2010 and 2011 that it would protect the winegrowing areas of Broke and Bulga from coal seam methane gas activity. It is high time that **AGL** stopped bullying rural landholders and took a leaf out of the Santos book.

AGL bought these 4 properties in and around Broke and Bulga obviously hoping that they would be able to drill and frack for unconventional coal seam methane gas on those properties.

The Government has announced the protected Critical Industry Cluster areas and the residential exclusion zones which affect those **AGL** properties. BUT **AGL** is attempting to have its properties excluded from the protections under a sweetheart offer from the Government. Submissions have been made to the Government to remove that sweetheart offer – it doesn’t exist in any other industry.

AGL should accept the verdict of the community; accept that it does not have any social licence to drill or frack for coal seam methane in prime agricultural areas or protected Critical Industry Clusters; accept the approach of Santos that if a farmer says “no” they will not force their activities on the farmer; accept the view of the Prime Minister that farmers should have the right to say “no”; accept that there is a real risk to the environment from CSG activity; and just go away!

FAREWELL AGL.

HUNTER VALLEY
PROTECTION ALLIANCE

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