

GAS WATCH 244.

Does AGL have any idea what it's doing?

Yesterday, an “as designed” coal seam methane gas escape from an AGL well, next door to the Spring Farm housing estate in Camden, is just another incident in AGL’s litany of environmental breaches in it’s quest for coal seam gas.

And as we all know, methane gas is over 20 times more destructive than CO₂ as a global warming blanket when released into the atmosphere.

Scientists have warned us before of the fugitive emission of coal seam methane from wells and have published that the leakage of methane from wells and cracks in the strata has been underestimated by some 62,000,000 tonnes over three years.

In case you’ve forgotten AGL’s recent methane gas history, here’s a reminder of just some of its failures:

- Yesterday leaked an unknown quantity of coal seam methane into the atmosphere.
- Dumped over 100,000 litres of salty contaminated water, without approval, onto good pasture in the Hunter, killing the pasture.
- Is currently spraying salty coal seam water onto pasture near Gloucester. Scientists say that if this continues as planned, some 2,500 tonnes of salt per year will be sprayed onto surrounding farmland. This will sterilise the soil. The NSW Chief Scientist found in her interim report that *“there is a complete lack of solutions”* to deal with large quantities of salt.
- Breached its Environmental Protection Licence at its Camden gas works by failing to monitor air emissions for 3 years in a row, but *“deeply regretted the non-compliance”* and was committed to pay \$150,000 to an environmental project and ordered to pay legal costs.
- AGL was fined for excessive nitrogen oxide emissions at its Camden works site once it started monitoring emissions.
- Obtained approval to frack wells in Gloucester prior to there being a comprehensive water study giving great concern to Midcoast Water, and despite strenuous opposition from the Gloucester community, and despite giving evidence to the Senate Enquiry that it would not undertake coal seam methane activities where it was not wanted and would *“move on”*.
- AGL was issued with a *“formal warning”* by the Government following a blowout of a methane well near Campbelltown caused by the *“incorrect operation”* of the well.
- AGL failed *“to comply with the Licence conditions in both of its Petroleum Exploration Licences affecting the Hunter Valley Wine Country”* (Report on Audit of Coal and Petroleum Exploration Licences in NSW – Phase 2).
- AGL recently admitted to not fully disclosing political donations when it should have in relation to its Gloucester approvals.
- And there’s more examples we have revealed previously.

How can this Company, AGL, be trusted with our environment; trusted to frack coal seams to release methane; trusted not to contaminate or diminish fresh water both underground and above ground; trusted to be honest with the community?

In the words of **George Souris MP**, who has been very quiet on the fracking subject lately: ***“the best thing AGL can do is surrender the PEL (Petroleum Exploration Licence) and save a lot of time for everyone in the future”***.



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