

GAS WATCH 25.

Action Group successful in convincing Government to appoint Community Consultative Committee.

In what might well be the first positive step in ensuring that Sydney Gas/AGL be honest with the community, and that their exploration be open to examination and scrutiny by the Community, the Minister has taken the unusual step of establishing the "Bulga Gas Exploration Project Community Consultative Committee".

The establishment of this Committee is something that HB GAG has fought for since prior to seeing the Minister in February of this year, and which HB GAG has been unrelenting in its efforts to see happen. It is a unique appointment as there is no legislation requiring the Minister to do so, certainly at this stage of the exploration. It appears to be a clear acknowledgment that there are many difficulties with exploration in the Bulga and Broke areas which need to be addressed by the Government, Sydney Gas and the community.

HB GAG thanks the Minister for his foresight in establishing the Committee, before it was too late.

The Committee will be chaired by The Hon. Pam Allan and will include representatives from Sydney Gas, the Mineral Resources Division of the Department of Planning, Sydney Gas, Crs. Geoff Sharrock and Tony McNamara from Singleton Council, and up to four community representatives.

Nominations for the community representatives closed on 24th August and we hope to be advised of the appointments shortly. We believe it would be proper for the Committee to at the least include the head of Sydney Gas, Dr. John Saunders and the Chairman of our Group, Bob Kennedy.

It will be up to us as a community to make sure that the Consultative Committee works properly and keeps the community informed. We should be watching the Committee carefully to ensure that the concerns and wishes of the community are before it.

All this said, nothing has occurred which has changed our mind about opposing Sydney Gas/AGL drilling through any aquifers or water tables which might affect our bores or the health of the Wollombi Brook. Sydney Gas/AGL has provided no assurances or guarantees that the drilling will not contaminate or lower the level of the water table.

We must maintain our vigilance and say "NO" to Sydney Gas if they come knocking on your door looking for you to sign an Access Agreement. Sydney Gas has done nothing to confirm its claim that it is undergoing a change of culture.

AGL has also ignored us. We wrote to AGL as long ago as 13th March, 2007. We received an acknowledgment and an undertaking to examine the matters raised in our letter, however we have been ignored since. We have written again to AGL on 15th August seeking some response, however we are still waiting.

**Check out the HB GAG website for more information.
Contact HB GAG for free legal advice in relation to Sydney Gas, particularly
if they approach you seeking to drill on your own property.**

Hunter Bulga Gas Action Group Inc. PO Box 120, BROKE 2330

Tel: 0400456374 www.huntergasactiongroup.com.au