

GAS WATCH 264.

Deputy Premier has it right – ban CSG mining in the Northern Rivers – protect our agricultural industries.

But go further, ban it in all areas of the State where it could affect sustainable agriculture.

The Daily Telegraph reports this morning of a split in the Baird Government calling for coal seam methane gas mining to be banned in the State's north.

The Deputy Premier Troy Grant supports the ban because *“the Northern Rivers community does not want CSG.”*

It is reported that Metgasco chief Peter Beter Henderson said *“There's a small group of people who are anti-fossil fuel, anti-development...”*. Really?. There is a massive community movement to save agriculture, our water, our food bowls, our health from the ravages of CSG mining.

There are sound scientific reasons why the Northern Rivers community, and most other communities for that matter, doesn't want CSG mining, not the least of which are:

- the fact that the CSG industry has no idea what to do with contaminated fracking water, with the massive amounts of salt and dangerous chemicals pumped up from the coal seams;
- the risk to fresh water aquifers;
- the risk to ground water and productive soil;
- the damage to the health of humans as has occurred in Queensland;

And further it is reported that, in the Northern Rivers area, there is enough coal seam methane “gas to supply most of NSW for 3 years”.

Three years only!!!

Why would anyone risk the environment and the health of its citizens for 3 years of gas. Why would any Government risk temporary or permanent damage to sustainable agricultural and its associated industries for 3 years of gas, most of which will probably go overseas.

Metgasco is reported to to have spent \$140 million on exploration and will want it back if CSG exploration and extraction is banned in the Northern Rivers.

If CSG mining is permitted in the Northern Rivers, the prospective loss of agricultural production, the loss of jobs in the agricultural industries, and the like will no doubt result in a significantly greater loss to the State than \$140m.

Premier Baird is reported to be non-committal saying that “NSW has the toughest CSG standards in the country, delivering world's best practice regulation”. Not quite right really.

The recommendations of the Chief Scientist have not yet been put into law, consequently the industry is still not “manageable”. And still the CSG industry has no idea what to do with fracking water.

The Chief Scientist did not say that “extraction was safe”. Indeed what she did say that it could become manageable if her recommendations were adopted. She did not address the question of fracking water.

We call on the Nationals at their Conference today to also support the banning of CSG mining in the winegrowing areas of the Hunter Valley. We call on our new Member for the Upper Hunter, Michael Johnsen, will stand up and be counted and move for protection of our winegrowing industry and our food bowls. We look forward to seeing where Michael Johnsen stands.



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