

GAS WATCH 37.

I'M NOT GOING TO SAY THERE'S A ZERO CHANCE OF WATER CONTAMINATION" (GENERAL MANAGER, SYDNEY GAS)

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE AGREES.

Wollombi Valley Online recorded questions and answers at the second Wollombi/Sydney Gas meeting on 14th July, 2008.

When questions were put to the General Manager, Mark Harper, concerning risks associated with bushfires, flooding and contamination of the Wollombi Brook, Mark Harper is reported to have said:

"There is no risk whatsoever posed by bushfires or flooding.

I'm not going to say there's a zero chance of water contamination"

This is exactly what we have been putting to various officers of Sydney Gas for a couple of years now:

- **That any drilling through water tables creates a risk to ground water and surface water!**
- **That any removal of water and/or gas from coal seams risks ground water and surface water.**
- **That a creation of any void beneath water tables, aquifers could result in contamination or diminution of the water tables and the Wollombi Brook.**
- **That any risk to any water supply is too great!**

It appears that the current General Manager agrees with us.

It appears that the current General Manager also agrees with the observations of the former Premier of NSW, Neville Wran: *"Nobody can you look you in the eye and say there is not a possibility of contamination; that there is not the possibility of reducing the level of the water table."*

The latest, and current, CEO of Sydney Gas, Andy Lukas, appears to be really not quite sure: *"It is extremely unlikely"* that coring would impact on groundwater or surface water resources he said in paragraph 12 of his letter to us of 29th May '08.

"I can confirm categorically, that there will be absolutely no impact on the groundwater or the surface water as a result of core hole drilling" he said in Paragraph 14 of the very same letter.

Earlier CEOs of Sydney Gas have varied in their opinion from there being a “miniscule” risk to our water, to a “minimal” risk.

CONFUSED YET? One way or the other you would think Sydney Gas would have its story straight by now.

As we have said previously, a report to the Department of Environment and Climate Change reads:

“As groundwater is extracted it also depletes natural groundwater reserves and aquifers which can have consequences for other regional land uses which may experience a loss of net usable water. This is particularly relevant for farmers who rely on bore water. One solution can be to re-inject recovered water back into aquifers. This however can contaminate these groundwater aquifers.”

Is it that Sydney Gas has now looked at this DECC report and agrees that there is a contamination and diminution risk there? Who knows, when the information coming out of Sydney Gas is so varied.

But, perhaps there is some hope. When the General Manager was asked “are there any more drill sites being discussed or planned?” the General Manager is reported to have replied: “No other sites are planned.” Let’s see if any more drill sites appear. Be interesting to see whether or not this reported reply is correct and there will be no other drill sites.

Water in Australia is too precious to have Sydney Gas, or anybody else, drilling through and under aquifers and water tables. Any risk of depletion or contamination is too much. The Government agrees that water in the southern States is going to become more and more scarce. The Government knows there is a risk. Sydney Gas is now reported to have admitted there is a risk.

**DON'T RISK OUR WATER!
DON'T RISK OUR FUTURE!
DON'T RISK OUR INDUSTRIES!
DON'T LET SYDNEY GAS ONTO YOUR LAND FOR ANY REASON!**

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