

# **GAS WATCH 79.**

## **Hunter Valley Sacrificed by NSW Government. Minister Ian Macdonald rejects win/win proposal to save the Hunter Valley.**

A community deputation to Minister for Mineral Resources, Ian Macdonald on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2010, proposed that before there was any further mineral development of the Hunter Valley, that the NSW Government require a full Environmental Study of all current, future and cumulative impacts of coal mining, coal seam gas exploration/extraction, hot rock power stations and Defence Forces activity. The full submission can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/hvpa-MinisterA>

The proposal was dismissed out of hand by the Minister who accused the community of being anti development and anti energy.

Coal Seam Methane Gas explorer AGL Energy has agreed that it would take part in any Environmental Assessment of the area, however they stated that they thought it was the Government's responsibility to initiate it.

A full Environmental Assessment of the area would have been a win/win for the Government, for the Hunter Valley and for the methane gas and coal explorers and miners. There is no downside.

To require such an Environmental assessment would have:

- Shown that the Government is prepared to be a leader in the protection of the environment – a win;
- given comfort to the rural communities of the Upper Hunter – a win;
- provided the methane gas explorer, AGL Energy and the coal miners with a template for environmentally sensitive activity in the Hunter – a win;
- ensured the protection of the environment of the Hunter Valley – a win.

But Minister Macdonald has refused the unrefusable. He has aided and abetted the sacrifice of the agriculture, horticulture, viticulture and beauty of the Hunter Valley, to the fossil fuel industry. He has perpetuated the rape of the Hunter Valley.

He has lost the opportunity to give the community a way forward. He has deserted, on behalf of this State Government, the community and the environment of the Hunter Valley.



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April, 2010.

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