

# **GAS WATCH 82.**

## **NSW GOVERNMENT**

### **dawdles behind Queensland in regulating the coal seam methane gas industry.**

What is wrong with our Minister for Mineral Resources, Ian Macdonald.

He refuses to initiate a cumulative environmental assessment of the many impacts on agriculture, the environment and the people in the Hunter Valley, of coal mining, power station emissions, dust, toxic airborne chemicals, coal seam gas exploration, hot rock power station development, and Defence Forces noise and light.

Yet his counterpart in Queensland has only today announced, with Federal Government assistance, a \$3.8 million coal seam gas water feasibility study in Queensland. Such is the obvious seriousness of the threat to our fresh water from coal seam methane gas extraction.

According to the joint Federal and Queensland State press release there is \$12.9 billion available from the *Water for the Future initiative*, and the \$3.8 million will come from the *Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program*.

Has our Minister for Mineral Resources no initiative? Has he no comprehension of the risk to the future of NSW? Has he no plan for the environmental future of the Hunter Valley? Has he made a conscious decision to sacrifice the Hunter Valley to the fossil fuel industry?

Why, in view of the serious threats to the fresh groundwater of the Hunter Valley, hasn't Minister Macdonald taken the initiative as has been done in Queensland, and sought Federal financial assistance, if NSW has spent all its money elsewhere?

Yet Minister Macdonald refuses to even initiate a cumulative environmental assessment of the Hunter, and ignores the risk to fresh water supplies.

Acknowledging that the risks in the coal seam methane gas extraction industry, Stephen Robertson says *"This study will assist the coal seam gas industry to better manage the risks to ground and surface water associated with its mining activities, and ensure that the industry can grow productively while also looking after the environment."*

But our Minister Macdonald accuses the community of being anti-energy and anti-development when a request is made for an environmental assessment.

It seems that this Government has given up and can't wait for the election.



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