

Water study for Broke

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'Offer of good will'

By Peter Reynolds

SYDNEY Gas will carry out a water monitoring study on the potential impact its core hole drilling will have on Broke's water aquifers.

The water study was a request from the Broke and Bulga gas community consultative committee, who is concerned about the possibility of water contamination or depletion due to drilling activities.

The University of Newcastle's Professor Garry Willgoose has been appointed to oversee the study on behalf of the community consultative committee.

Professor Willgoose is a world renowned environmental engineer and will be evaluating the water data provided by Parsons Brinckerhoff, who will be conducting the monitoring.

Chief executive officer for Sydney Gas, Andy Lukas, said his company was taking the concerns the Broke and Bulga communities have regarding the drilling seriously.

"This is not a condition of consent to our drilling, we are spending close to \$200,000 for the monitoring as an offer of good will to the community," he said.

"We accept that our exploration is dependent on protecting water aquifers and while we may be confident in our activities, I understand the Broke community wants solid proof."

Sydney Gas will be conducting pump tests to determine whether or not there will be any impacts on the water aquifers.

These will be conducted on seven water bores that will be

drilled near the currently existing test wells.

During a pump test, water from the coal seam is pumped out of the gas well, with the water levels monitored daily in several aquifers, including the coal seam.

If the coal seam is separated from the upper aquifers, water levels in those aquifers will remain constant and will not drain into the coal seam.

The water monitoring bores will detect any changes in water levels.

The testing is expected to begin in April and run for a week.

Mr Lukas said if it is found that the drilling has no effect on the water aquifers, Sydney Gas plans to begin full scale testing of its wells.