

GAS WATCH 23.

SYDNEY GAS THINKS THAT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION IS THE ISSUE OF A NEWSLETTER.

Many local residents have today received an “information sheet” purported to be under the hand of Scott Black, a local employee of Sydney Gas.

Let's look at how accurate it is:

- It says that it is a “summary of key issues identified through consultation”. **WRONG.** There has been no substantive community consultation.
- It says that coal seam methane gas is recovered by drilling a well bore into the coal seam. **WRONG.** It is recovered by forcing millions of litres of good fresh water, mixed with sand, into coal seams, fracturing the seams under neighbours land who have not given any consent. Then pumping out that water, by then toxic, and trucking those millions of litres of water away over our roads. In addition there have been major spills of that contaminated water both in Australia and overseas resulting in large tracts of land becoming poisoned, sterilised, maybe for centuries ahead killing plants and trees.
- It says that methane gas is very safe. **WRONG.** It is an explosive gas responsible for many explosions and deaths throughout the world. When it escapes into the atmosphere it is more than TWENTY TIMES MORE TOXIC as a greenhouse gas than Carbon Dioxide.
- It says that methane gas is an “environmentally friendly energy source.” **WRONG.** The burning of any fossil fuel damages the environment and contributes to global warming.
- It says that disturbance of the natural environment is limited to access tracks and small well site footprints. **WRONG.** Research shows that there is a REAL THREAT to water tables and waterways through which drilling occurs. Hydrologists say that when a void is left after gas mining, it could collapse resulting in the water held in water tables falling into the void and disappearing, resulting in loss of rivers and streams. History shows that toxic water escapes or is spilled (as happened with Sydney Gas in Camden) and, as a result, can kill the local environment. The record of CSM miners worldwide is not good, and in NSW the law governing this type of mining is lacking. The drilling and fracturing process is very noisy. Flares are lit for months on end during the exploration process. The flares drove the wild bird life out of the Dooralong and Yarralong Valleys.
- The methane gas mining will “boost employment opportunities”. **WRONG.** Sydney Gas has previously said that there will be some fencing and some water carting in the exploration stage that may go to local contractors. However if they reach the stage of production, then it pretty much runs itself.
- The Seismic Acquisition survey significantly damaged local roads. It is hoped that Singleton Council won't be spending locally gathered rates to repair roads which were damaged in the pursuit of profits.
- The Community Consultative Committee is something that HB GAG has been pushing for since our first contact with Sydney Gas and also with Minister Macdonald. It was the brainchild of HB GAG. However, looking at this “newsletter” it appears that HB GAG doesn't even warrant a seat. It this

Committee going to be constituted like the Sydney Gas focus groups, ie specially selected community members with no particular interest in the gas exploration and mining. By the way, there still has been no release of the results of those focus groups held months ago, despite Sydney Gas telling the participants that the results would appear in the Singleton Argus.

- Sydney Gas has ignored our request to identify the two further sites that the “information sheet” says are the subject of REF preparation.

The “information sheet” is just another self-serving statement from Sydney Gas so it can say in its Reviews of Environmental Factors that it is consulting with the community. Consultation means not just to inform, but to listen to and act upon.

Just another example of the culture within Sydney Gas which doesn't appear to have changed since they abandoned their drilling in the Dooralong and Yarralong Valleys, valleys not dissimilar to ours.

The only way we can save our valley and its environment is to have a united stand opposing Sydney Gas and its secret invasion of our valleys.

REMEMBER, SYDNEY GAS/AGL CANNOT COME ONTO YOUR LAND WITHOUT YOU SIGNING AN ACCESS AGREEMENT. DO NOT RELY ON ANYTHING SYDNEY GAS MIGHT TELL YOU IN PERSON OR BY EMAIL.

SEEK LEGAL ADVICE IF SYDNEY GAS PROVIDE YOU WITH AN AGREEMENT TO SIGN. SYDNEY GAS MIGHT TELL YOU THE AGREEMENTS ARE CONFIDENTIAL. THEY ARE NOT, UNTIL SIGNED, AND YOU CAN SEEK ADVICE FROM ANYONE. YOU CAN SHOW IT TO WHOMEVER YOU LIKE IF IT IS UNSIGNED.

THE HUNTER BULGA GAS ACTION GROUP WILL REFER YOU TO A SOLICITOR, WITHOUT COST TO YOU, IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE WITH SYDNEY GAS.

BETTER STILL, GET SYDNEY GAS TO AGREE TO PAY YOUR LEGAL COSTS IN SEEKING ADVICE ON ANY ACCESS AGREEMENT....But get Sydney Gas to agree, in writing, to pay your legal costs.

Check out the HB GAG website for more information.

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