

7 September 2011

The Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
web.senate@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir

RE: Inquiry into Management of the Murray Darling Basin – impact of mining Coal Seam Gas

Our Alliance has had the opportunity of perusing the submission of AGL Energy Ltd, dated 15 July 2011 made to your inquiry.

Without addressing all the matters raised in that submission, we feel it is incumbent upon us to bring to your attention certain omissions under the heading "The Impacts of mining CSG on the sustainability of water aquifers and future Licensing arrangements".

Under that heading AGL Energy Ltd, asserts that a water study in the Broke area of the Hunter Valley "confirms that shallow and deep fractured rock aquifers are disconnected".

This assertion omits to disclose that such a conclusion only relates to a radius of 20 to 50 metres around a particular exploration well and cannot be extrapolated to any other area of Broke or the Hunter Valley. It is very restricted.

The submission of AGL Energy also omits the significant risk to the fresh water aquifers resulting from the proximity of long wall coal mining in the area.

Attached is the report from Professor Garry Willgoose, who was the peer reviewer of the pump test, together with a report from Dr Gavin Mudd who independently reviewed the test on behalf of our Alliance.

We would be happy to provide evidence to your enquiry or to facilitate either Professor Willgoose or Dr Mudd in attending the enquiry.

Secondly, in relation to the "Conclusion" in the AGL submission it is claimed that AGL operates "with the highest operational and environmental standards." Unfortunately this is not quite accurate.

In 2010 AGL was found to have dumped at least 100,000 litres of contaminated water onto agricultural land, killing the vegetation. The appropriate Government Department ordered AGL to remediate the land.

In 2011 AGL was given a formal warning following a blowout at a coal seam methane gas well near Campbelltown when a "de-gasser" wasn't being used properly, according to AGL, resulting in substances being shot dozens of metres into the air.

Committee:

Eden Anthony, Commodore Chris Elsmore RAN Rtd., Stewart Ewen OAM, Adrian Garton, Graeme Gibson Dip. Law, JP., Roger Goldfinch, Tom Jackson JP, Elizabeth Johnstone, Robert Kennedy; Graeme O'Brien BA, M Ed Stud. JP, Richard Owens OAM, Alan Stevns, George Tlaskal, Hugh Upward.

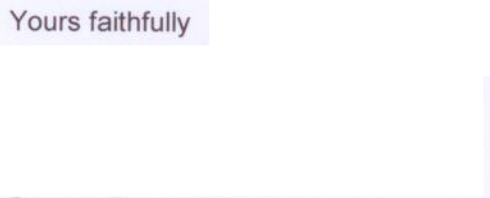


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It appears that the coal seam methane gas miners have a mentality of claiming to be environmentally sensitive, but not performing in accordance with their claims.

The law governing coal seam methane gas mining must be significantly tightened to stop these miners from risking the environment and the groundwater.

Yours faithfully


Stewart Ewen OAM
Chairman
Hunter Valley Protection Alliance Inc

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