



Submission re review of CSG activities
Shirley Gladding to: csg.review
Please respond to "Shirley Gladding "

25/04/2013 08:13 PM

History: This message has been replied to and forwarded .

CONFIDENTIAL

I welcome the opportunity to be allowed input concerning the review of CSG activities .

1) I live in the Illawarra and have been aware of the concerns in the community , both locally, state-wide and further afield, for the last couple of years. Of most concern, in the Illawarra at present, is the Apex project, which is currently being assessed by the PAC, regarding 16 exploration bores. This project is in and around drinking water catchments that are part of the system providing drinking water to 4.5 million to people in Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Illawarra. There are serious risk factors needing consideration regarding this project, which is seen to be a serious threat to the integrity of our drinking water supply. Possible contamination of ground water is most worrying, also the risk of loss of water from our catchments, fire risks, (this is bushland) and the industrial footprint on our escarpment. The bores will be in the ground forever. After they are decommissioned, they will break down over time, as steel and concrete do have a limited life . Over time, risks of leaks and cross contamination of water increase . Our community has been running a strong campaign against this project for the last two years, such that Apex admit that drilling has not commenced to date due to community action . Following re-application, when the original licences expired, the latest applications were recommended for approval by the Planning Dept, but referred to the PAC, for final assessment, due to the amount of submissions received opposing the project.

2) Regarding baseline monitoring, baseline studies have been seriously lacking to date . e.g. AGL were found not to be monitoring groundwater in Camden . Estimates of fugitive emissions generally are claimed by the industry in general to be far lower than is being proven. I believe no base-line data is available for monitoring health . The air-quality test carried out by the Southern Cross University in the Darling Downs , near Tara, in Queensland, show elevated levels of methane. This is an area where kids are getting rashes, nose-bleeds etc.which parents believe is connected to CSG wells around them and concerns about contaminated water.

Breaches of licences have happened, which include:-

In the Pilliga (Eastern Star/Santos) 10,000 litres of saline was discharged into the bush , due to a pipeline failure, killing vegetation, and unreported until it received media attention .

Santos have been storing contaminated water in unlined storage ponds .

AGL received a government warning, following a blowout of a methane well near Campbelltown, and an admission to dumping thousands of litres of saline onto pastureland , killing pasture. Note, AGL was expelled from its membership of the respected Hunter Valley Wine Industry Assn, following breaches of licences. In January, an AGL well-pad was flooded when the Nepean River , nearby, overflowed, during a 'minor' flood, raising concerns that a nearby drilling site and storage ponds could have contaminated water .

In conclusion, here, my concerns are:-

that base line data is often not available , for ongoing evaluations.

Monitoring of compliance of companies is not thorough , usually depending on self-regulation and reporting by the industry , which has been proved to be most unsatisfactory.

Decisions are made to allow bores to be drilled in most inappropriate place , such as close to a river!

I understand that assessments made in regard to applications for licences are based solely on the bore/s in question and that cumulative impacts are not included . if this is still the case, this is most inappropriate. Our escarpment is already affected by long-wall mining, with recorded subsidence, and possibly linked to land-slides we have experienced. Studies carried out by Dr Ann Young and similar to work carried out by Dr Phillip Pells , indicate that long-wall mining is probably displacing water already. And still more coal-mine expansions are planned! These points must be taken into account.

3) Regarding areas that should be off limits from coal seam gas mining :-

Drinking water catchments need to be strictly off limits . Secure, clean drinking water should be a right for all citizens and for future generations . Water contamination and water loss is the most serious concern in CSG mining.

All other water catchments should be off limits, for the protection of our rivers and general waterways and to safeguard their contribution to irrigation , fishing etc.

Farmland should be off limits. We are a country prone to droughts and floods , each a consideration where CSG is concerned. Loss of water is of grave concern, especially when water is already in short supply. So too is the risk of flooded storage ponds in times of heavy rains. With predicted climate change, we have a responsibility to ensure the protection of farmland for the future .

All areas of notable environmental importance should be off -limits, as we have a responsibility to protect flora and fauna at risk , understanding that these areas contribute to the delicate balance of our ecosystems .

All residential areas and individual residences should have an exclusion zone , due to risks of fugitive emissions and impact of nearby industrial work , such as truck movements, vision impact of drill sites and noise levels, and potential risks to mental and physical health .

CSG should be excluded from areas where residents vote for no coal seam gas in their community. This should be there right in a democratic country , especially with many councils not wanting CSG and considering the many proven risks .

All areas above should be excluded immediately, including current licences.

4) Regarding international, national and state comparisons:-

I would like to comment that we have seen many concerns and adverse affects of this industry around the world, in Queensland, where production has been happening for some time and now in NSW. There is no doubt that there are risks and many politicians are voicing this in our state. Some efforts are being made by changes in legislation and this is heartening. However, recognising the very real risks involved, I note that recent changes in legislation merely put extra discretionary decisions in place but no actual bans (except for some residential exclusion zones, and, for some reason, racing studs and vineyards). It does not seem wise to put decisions often in the hands of one person , who, possibly could be swayed according to the politics of the day, when needing to weigh up environmental

impacts against the economic (supposedly) benefits. We need responsible, definitive legislation that protects water, farmlands, sensitive environmental areas and communities for the long-term, considering the short-term revenue against the potential irreversible impacts.

5) I refer comments in (2) regarding AGL's breaches of licences and suggest these are looked into and current practice and adherence by that company is checked . It seems wise to inspect and monitor activities in as many sites as possible . Discussion with local communities should also be encouraged . Many people are giving up much time to monitor local projects and research their concerns and are very informed .

6) Please ensure that independent advice and information is sought from independent experts, in compiling information papers. More research is needed by independent scientists.

Thank you.

Shirley Gladding
3/2 Kialoa Road
Woonona 2517