

MEDIA RELEASE

10 September 2014

AGL fails to adequately monitor methane emissions in Gloucester

In August 2013 AGL committed to developing a robust methane monitoring through consultation with community, stakeholders and agencies and to having the program in place before fracking commenced. AGL has not honoured this commitment.

The baseline monitoring completed to date falls far short of a robust program. It is not peer reviewed and it covers a very short space of time and surface area. It is unclear whether data collected distinguishes between methane emanating from coal seams and methane emanating from other sources. This is an important issue as emissions from coal seams can contain not only methane, but also other pollutants linked to increased cancer risks and other health impacts.

To Groundswell's knowledge, AGL has collected no baseline data on coal seam methane concentrations in surface water such as the Avon River and surrounding creeks. There is a major thrust fault that runs from the area around the Waukivory wells into the bed of the Avon River, posing a high risk of gas migration into water used for crops and beef and dairy cattle. How will AGL identify any increase in methane concentrations in our surface water without a baseline for comparison?

The only continuous fugitive emissions monitoring in place for the Waukivory pilot seems to be two monitors, both in one location. These will not identify fugitive methane that may escape through the many faults that criss-cross the Waukivory pilot area. AGL has acknowledged that they have a poor understanding of high and low permeability zones across the basin and the lack of basin-wide continuous monitoring will not help them to gain a better understanding of the impacts of operating in such a complex geology.

Groundswell spokesperson Jennifer O'Neill says:

"When the health of the Gloucester environment and its residents is at risk what AGL has done is woefully inadequate. AGL should honour its commitment to establish a robust methane monitoring program before they commence any work and before it starts fracking near Gloucester homes."

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