

CAM

COAL ACTION MURIHIKU

News Update No 3 August 2012

The Great Fracking Frenzy

Dave Kennedy, whose concerns include social justice, quality public education and environmental sustainability, presents some facts about fracking.

Over twelve months ago very few New Zealanders had heard about fracking and now it is becoming one of the most hotly debated issues involving a good deal of emotion.

With L&M looking at the potential of fracking in Southland the issue is coming closer to home. While the industry claims that the process has minimal environmental effects it was recently revealed that some worrying, uncontrolled fracking has already occurred in our region. In 1995 two fracking wells were set up just south of Ohai, resulting in a toxic mix of chemicals (mainly formaldehyde and coal residue) being poured into a nearby stream.

The Minister for Energy and Resources, Phil Heatley, and former Conservation and Environment Minister, Nick Smith, have been very dismissive of Green MP Gareth Hughes' attempts to get a moratorium on fracking until the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment releases her report.

Nick Smith wrote an opinion piece, that featured in a number of newspapers, claiming the opposition to the industry was "a lot of fracking nonsense". While admitting chemicals are used and small earthquakes are caused by fracking he explained that the environmental risks were minimal, especially if there were proper controls and monitoring. While his claims

were largely factual he has down played the realities and mentioned some things that are basically untrue.

While the natural gas extracted by fracking produces half the emissions of coal at the point where it is burned, there is a lot of gas released during the extraction process that is unaccounted for. When

you combine the uncaptured gas with what is burned the climate change impacts are actually similar to coal.

Heatley and Smith have also claimed that if we didn't frack then we will kill our geothermal industry; this is factually incorrect. Gareth's enquiries have revealed that fracking isn't used here at all to extract geothermal energy.

Taranaki woman, Sarah Roberts, has been chasing the Taranaki Regional Council for over a year and found they do no monitoring, they rate fracking jobs as compliant when their own reports show they have not complied on a number of counts, and they appear to accept the industry's word for the safety of their operations.

In the US, where fracking is most prevalent, insurance companies refuse to insure the industry and the EPA has launched a number of investigations into its environmental safety. Gareth Hughes has done an excellent job of raising real concerns about the known environmental effects and the potential damage caused by an uncontrolled industry.



They're concerned about fracking here
www.flickr.com/photos/billb1961/7671448384/



www.flickr.com/photos/hikingartist/5727394282

The Great Fracking Frenzy cont. from p 1

Dr Jan Wright has agreed to write a report on fracking in New Zealand and her respected independent view will be necessary to sift fact from industry spin and bring some sense to the issue. The Commissioner may even come out in support of the industry and we must be prepared for that possible outcome. Whatever her decision, it is already patently clear that without proper independent monitoring of the industry there is potential for poor practices to occur that would result in environmental damage and negative effects on people's health. This is not an industry that can be relied on to self regulate.

For more information: <http://localbodies-bsprout.blogspot.co.nz/2012/08/the-facts-around-fracking-frenzy.html>

And a Reminder

Former Green Party Co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimon also commented on Nick Smith's opinion piece in which he describes fracking as "the least of New Zealand's environmental worries." She points out some of the factual errors in the piece and ends by reminding us that, "We might meet adequate local environmental standards by tightening up massively on the rules and the monitoring and stopping spreading fracking waste muds and liquids on farmland, but we will not meet climate change concerns other than by leaving it in the ground."

To read Nick Smith's article: www.stuff.co.nz/nelson-mail/opinion/7454992/Fracking-explained-and-defended

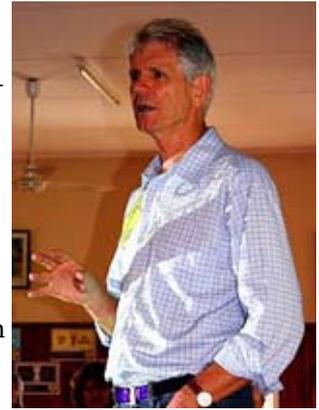
ONE TO THINK ABOUT

"The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment."

Gaylord Nelson, Co-founder of Earth Day

Lock The Gate

Drew Hutton is a widely respected Australian environmentalist who has campaigned successfully on managing toxic waste and he is now focussing his energies on fracking. This has been mainly a battle being fought by Australian farmers and Drew's "Lock the Gate" campaign has brought an awareness of the issue to those living in urban areas.



"I'm from Queensland and a couple of years ago I went bush to investigate coal seam gas. And I said to farmers out there, we can't win this as purely a farmer's battle. And we can't win this as environmental battle. What we've got to do is bring the two together, bring farmers and environmentalists, city and country together."

Participants at CANA's Summer Festival in January were inspired by hearing from Sid Plant, the Queensland farmer who has stood up to mining giant, New Hope. We are now fortunate to be able to hear Drew Hutton speak as the only South Island stop during his upcoming tour will be at Gore. Details are:

When: 29th August 7.30pm
Where: James Cumming Wing
Ardwick Street Gore

And While You're There ...

Check out the CAM information stand, especially if you're geographically or geologically challenged as John Purey-Cust will be displaying a range of topographical and minerals maps of Southland.

Queensland Protest



www.flickr.com/photos/greensmps/6719650401/

The Perfect Environment for Industrial Expansion?

Outspoken Southland farmer, Joe Nowak, questions the 'big talk'

Big government and big business have long talked up the virtues of lignite. And we already know the language: "Largest industrial complex in NZ"; "cleanER burning briquettes"; a still bigger briquetter and enough ammonia urea to lavish the South Pacific for the next 100 years. As well as the need for energy security through coal to liquid fuels, of course.

Glowing prosperity and jobs for all; or an illusionary mirage of an oasis in the desert?

If the launching of the new briquetter is anything to go by things are not that great. The tiny factory, now a year overdue (depending which media releases you follow) and 100% over budget. That does not bode well for fledgling industrial optimism in the Valley.

But to get a perspective as to the likelihood of future development there is a need to look overseas.

The giant BHP Olympic Dam project is being delayed due to financial uncertainty. Olympic Dam is not really a dam, but a proposed 80 billion dollar expansion of a uranium, copper and gold mine in South Australia. It is the latest victim in a series of ambitious projects to be withdrawn by the mining giant. Shell Oil is slowing its (\$17 billion Aus) investment in gas and oil pipelines in Australia, while Chevron is reviewing its giant Gorgon (\$43 billion Aus) gas project in West Australia. All appear to be affected by the soaring dollar and high labour costs.

Record high commodity prices continue to deflate as China is flooded with iron ore and coal. Steel in-

dustry profits alone have fallen 96% from last year in China, as demand from Europe continues to dwindle. Having turned to ambitious infrastructure programmes, after the sub-prime housing crisis, steam is running out as local governments have produced a magnitude of projects of marginal, or often negative economic return. All the while its vast investment in foreign exchange reserves is locked in devaluing US bonds. Economies as diverse as India and Japan

are also weakening. While America, the once great tentacle of financial power, staggers under a debt burden unknown to previous generations. And then there is Europe...

There is a growing fear that the housing bubble of 2008 was never addressed. The massive printing of money, along with arti-

ficially contrived interest rates in response to the housing crisis may not be working. This time around we may be in for a real recession. Nations left naked by central bankers and central planners will not have the financial reserves to do it all over again. Is this really the environment that would lure canny investors to a third rate product, in an obscure corner of the world, far removed from markets?

While no contingency can be ruled out, the likelihood of any ambitious industrial expansion appears increasingly remote, either here or anywhere else.

Our only concern now being a 'tinker toy' experiment of a briquette factory, of inconsequential significance.



www.flickr.com/photos/gara/68769542/

Proposed Action at Briquette Plant Opening

Keep an ear out for the date of the briquette plant opening with CAM members formulating an appropriate action to remind State Energy and others that we are serious, will not go away and that their schemes are meeting growing opposition.

Commissioning of the plant appears to be meeting some obstacles so the date seems to be being pushed out till September.

The action is still under wraps but people who want to get involved and can spread the word to ensure a good supportive crowd, please contact a member of CAM

CAM/CANA Summer Feste

Yes! CAM is taking up the challenge of organising another family Summer Feste around lignite and coal issues – focusing on education, fun and forward planning.

Dates: Fri 18 Jan to Mon 21 Jan 2013

Venue: Dolamore Park camping ground and native forest reserve north west of Gore.

Please put these dates in your diary and plan to come. More details about how to register will be advised soon.

Lifetime Conservation Commitment

Jenny Campbell relates the achievements of Southland Environment & Conservation Award-winner, 90 year-old Don Lamont of Gore

Don Lamont was the most surprised person present at the Southland Environment and Conservation Awards, held on 25 July in Invercargill when his Lifetime Achievement Award was announced. The citation described his commitment to the Southland Environment for over 60 years since he arrived here from Whanganui to farm at Pine Bush, after serving in Italy in World War II. He and his late wife Margaret were horrified at the felling of native bush in the area and set to, replanting their farm in natives along with exotic shelter belts, and going on to help found 'Men of the Trees' in 1958.

The Lamonts joined Forest & Bird in 1959 and Don is still an active member. He recently took the lead in starting a group to replant the old Gore landfill site with natives, a vision Mrs Lamont had. In 1963 he became an inaugural member of the Southland Farm Forestry Association. Environment Southland's Gary Morgan said when reading the citation. "Donald is a great advocate for the integration of trees on farms and the benefits they provide for stock shelter, soil conservation, water quality, wildlife habitat and commercial return." He went on to describe Don as a person who quietly listens, quietly persuades and whose calmly reasoned arguments have a lasting effect.



Don Lamont views his award with daughter Trish

Don's activism continues with his current involvement in the campaign to stop the mining of lignite in the Mataura Valley, seeing digging up productive farmland as a ridiculous notion. "This is out of date technology and the power used to remove the overburden and then mine the lignite is a waste of resources," he said. "We should be putting investment in to clean green energy such as solar."

*"Why should I care about future generations?
What have they ever done for me?"*

— Groucho Marx

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Jenny Campbell is the Southland contact for both CAM and CANA (Coal Action Network Aotearoa)
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If you would like to make a donation to local or national campaigns, cheques may be sent to:
John Purey-Cust

203 Campion Rd RD4 GORE 9774

Newsletter items to Jane Young by September 10:
janejimmyoung@slingshot.co.nz

REPORT LAUNCH

A View to the South: Potential Low Carbon Growth Opportunities for the Southern Region Economy

When: Tuesday August 28 6pm

Where: Invercargill City Libraries Meeting Room, 1st Floor
50 Dee Street, Invercargill

Keynote Speaker: Dr Ganesh Nana, Chief Economist, BERL

Please join WWF and BERL to celebrate the launch of this groundbreaking report, which discusses the ways in which we can thrive and create jobs while avoiding greenhouse gas emissions.

Light refreshments will be provided.

For catering purposes, RSVP by 5pm Friday August 24 to:
lbarry@wwf.org.nz 04 471 4297