



JEREMY BUCKINGHAM MLC
THE GREENS NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

23 May 2011

Greens call for investigation into Camden gas well blowout

Greens MP and coal seam gas spokesperson Jeremy Buckingham has written to the NSW Environment Minister calling for an investigation into a possible pollution incident at one of AGL's Camden Gas Project wells near Glen Alpine in Sydney's Southwest.

The incident occurred on Tuesday May 17 and was captured on video.

Mr Buckingham said, "I was near the site, talking to a local resident when this incident happened. A foamy, gassy substance started shooting into the air. After five minutes a spray of foamy liquid was spurting about 10 metres high and blowing back towards the water supply canal.

"Everything we know about this industry points to a pollution risk to water and here we have a gas well releasing an unknown substance into the atmosphere next to water infrastructure.

"I have written to the Environment Minister asking her to initiate an investigation into the incident.

"The Greens have introduced a *Coal Seam Gas Moratorium Bill* into the NSW Parliament because this industry has not been proven to be safe. The bill includes a specific prohibition for coal seam gas mining in the Sydney Metropolitan area. It would stop these kinds of incidents occurring in and near residential areas.

"I have also informed the local water managers and the NSW Office of Water as well as the local MPs for Wollondilly, Campbelltown and Camden of the blowout incident. I am asking for their support for the Moratorium Bill, it is in the interests of their communities," Mr Buckingham said

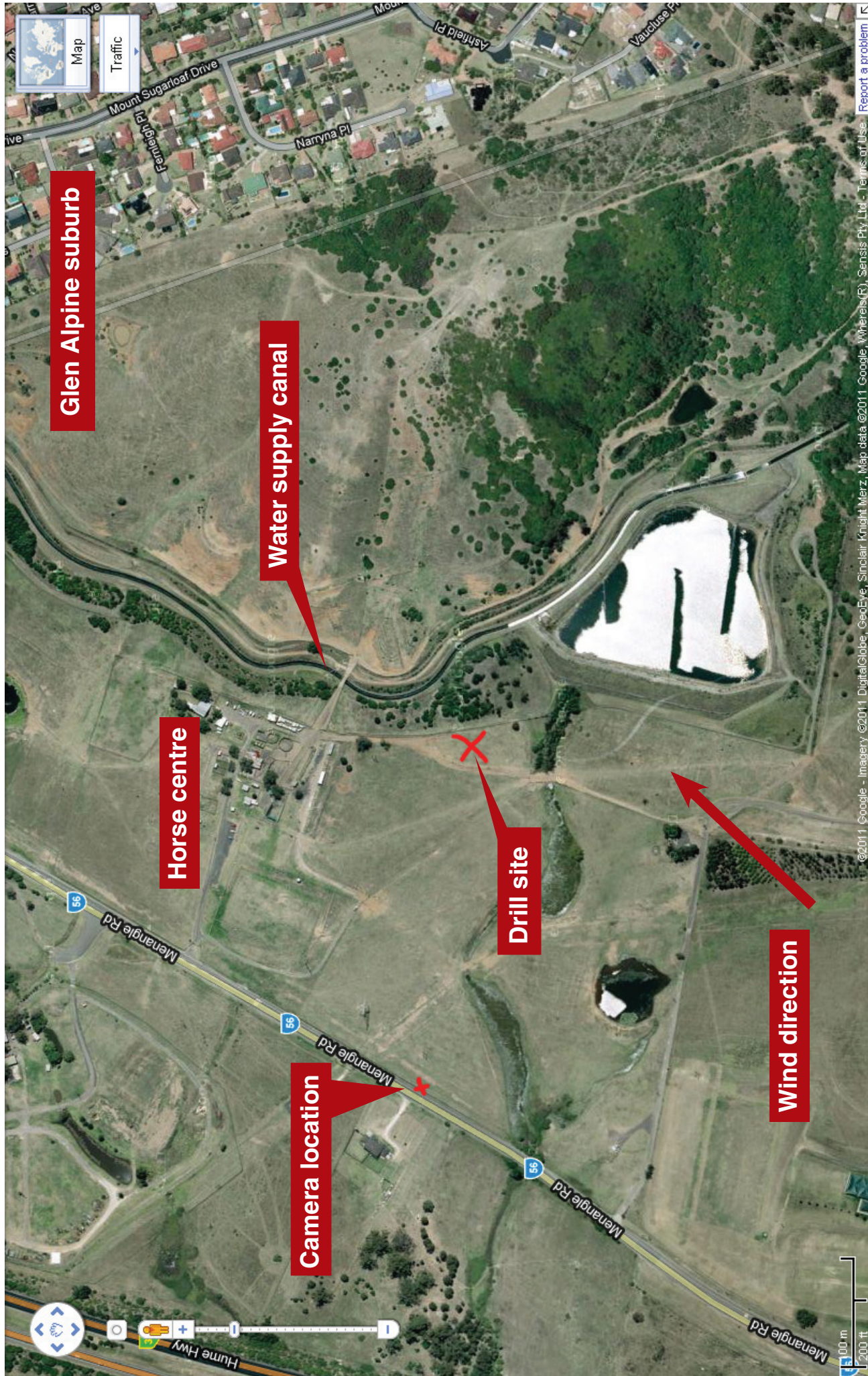
AGL are planning to expand their operations into the Scenic Hills District. They have a proposal lodged with the Planning Minister for 72 new coal seam gas wells.

Mr Buckingham said, "The Greens are saying the Scenic Hills and the wider Metropolitan area is not the place for this kind of industrial development. We need to protect people, the environment and our heritage from this industry.

To view video footage of the incident: <http://bit.ly/aglblowout>

A copy of the letter is attached.

Contact: Max Phillips 9230 2202 or 0419 444 916



Glen Alpine suburb

Water supply canal

Horse centre

Drill site

Camera location

Wind direction



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Robyn Parker
Minister for Environment
Level 32 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

CC:

AGL

Jacqui Kirkby, Scenic Hills Association
NSW Environment Protection Authority
Brad Hazzard, Minister for Planning
NSW Office of Water
Sydney Catchment Authority
Sydney Water
Jai Rowell, Member for Wollondilly
Brian Doyle, Member for Campbelltown
Chris Patterson, Member for Camden
Wollondilly Shire Council
Campbelltown City Council
Camden Council

RE: COAL SEAM GAS BLOWOUT INCIDENT

Dear Minister,

I am writing to alert you to an incident witnessed by me at an AGL coal seam gas well on 17 May 2011 near Menangle Rd Gillead (See map below).

I am writing to you as the minister responsible for upholding the Protection of the Environment Operations Act and request that you initiate an investigation into what occurred at this site.

The incident started sometime between 9:45am and 10:15am and continued for at least 15 minutes before we left the area. It may have continued for much longer. The incident was witnessed by me,

my staff and a Chanel 10 news crew. It was also caught on film by both my office and Chanel 10. I have enclosed a DVD with footage of the incident.
(for cc recipients, the footage can be viewed at: <http://bit.ly/aglblowout>)

What was witnessed at the site was a release of what appeared to be a foamy liquid into the air. After some time it became more watery and shot higher into the air and was blown by the wind across the surrounding area. This incident occurred next to the Sydney Water Supply Channel, the Broughton Anglican College and a nearby residential area.

My concern is that this release was related to gas drilling or hydraulic fracturing and may have contained chemicals which have now been released into the atmosphere near local homes and the school and potentially into the water supply channel.

You are no doubt aware that AGL has a current project application with the Department of Planning to expand further north into the Scenic Hills Area with an additional 72 gas wells.

In reviewing the various conditions of the existing AGL gas operations in the area I also noted that the last annual environmental performance report available on the company's website was for the period 2008-2009. This report noted that exceedences in sulphuric acid mist and sulphur trioxide air emissions on a number of occasions between 2006 and 2008.

I also note that the last Independent Audit provided on the website is for 2004-2006.

I am happy to make myself available to your office or departmental offers to assist in an investigation of this incident. I can be contacted on 9230 2202.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JB' or 'Jeremy Buckingham', written in a cursive style.

Jeremy Buckingham MLC