**Monday 1 April 2013**

**The coal seam gas industry promotes itself as a cleaner carbon-fuel alternative; but how do we know this is true? Until now much of the information used to back this claim has come from the industry itself.**

The problem is this "cleaner-greener" claim doesn't always square with experience on the ground. Next on Four Corners reporter Matthew Carney talks to farmers who've seen rivers bubble with methane, their bore water polluted with chemicals, while the reserves of ground water on their property have dropped alarmingly.

He also looks at the latest research that suggests the coal seam gas industry might be a much bigger greenhouse gas emitter than previously thought.

But why weren't these problems picked up in the development approval process? The answer is simple: according to one insider, the approval process is significantly flawed. Four Corners reveals what really happened when two major companies applied to develop thousands of square kilometres of southern Queensland for coal seam gas. Using hundreds of pages of confidential documents, the program reveals that the companies didn't supply enough basic information for an informed decision to be made about environmental impacts. Despite this, various government agencies permitted the developments to go ahead, allowing the companies to submit key information at a later date. A decision which shocked some who were involved:

"It was quite frightening that they would consider approving such a project without the basic information that a normal mining project would have been asked to submit, given that this was like six hundred times the size of your standard, large mine."

This same insider claims pressure was applied to the bureaucracy to fast track approval for coal seam gas development. This allegation would deeply concern many farmers who have seen their land used for coal seam gas sites and raises significant concerns about the future expansion of the industry across Australia.

**GAS LEAK!, reported by Matthew Carney and presented by Kerry O'Brien**