

Good citizens?

Another interesting week of news from the oil and gas industry: on 14th November, industry executives were outraged by claims, in the Climate Justice Taranaki submission (www.climatejusticetaranaki.info) to the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment on fracking, of the industry 'buying' social licences. In their response, Canadian Tag Oil claimed to be trying to be a 'good citizen'.

Yet one week later your paper reported that Tag Oil had been illegally flaring volatile hydrocarbons to the atmosphere around Ngaere, not for a few days or weeks, but for 10 long months. Stratford District Council spokesman, Mike Avery, compared the area to the 'bowels of Mordor'.

Yet one of the affected landowners who had been trying to have this illegality addressed, school teacher Sarah Roberts, had been labelled by Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) as mischievous and vexatious.

Who exactly are good citizens here?

To continue with Mr. Avery's Lord of the Rings analogy, perhaps TRC would consider the lord of Mordor, Sauron himself, to be a good corporate citizen?

Certainly he created lots of jobs. It seems the industry's plans for massive expansion around Taranaki will mean a lot more flaring, along with multiple frack jobs, the latter around the ring plain of an active, though presently quiescent, volcano.

Elsewhere fracking and deep well injection have now been linked with earth quakes registering up to 5.3 on the Richter scale. Let us hope Mt Taranaki is not woken from its slumbers.

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