

GRIP Newsletter

October/November 2010

Successful GRIP Members Meeting of the 28th October

Thank you for the wonderful response to our meeting. 60 people attended and 23 apologised. The call to help with our new campaign saw 28 people put up their hands. Thank you
Thank you

Apology

I wish to apologise for my unprofessional behaviour on the night. I spoke without thinking and 18 months of frustration just came out. I do know that people support us and they often don't know what to do. It is good that members can now be involved.

We will be sending out more information about the campaign when it gets going. There is a certain amount of surprise attached so we don't want to say too much. It will commence on the 8th November.

The cost of the campaign will be great so please renew your membership as the money will be needed. Details at the end of the newsletter.

NSW Farmers Association's call for all new mining and coal seam gas developments in NSW to be suspended until there is a strategic plan which protects food security and agricultural land.

The NSW Farmers Association Policy Statement is attached and I request that you all read it. It outlines not only the problems that farmers and rural people face when coal and gas exploration comes to their area but also outlines what changes can be made to the process.

They outline 4 areas for Proposed Solutions

Improved Strategic Planning and Natural Resource Allocation Decision-Making

Exploration Licences, Mining/Gas Licences and Access Agreements

Aquifer Interference

Compensation

The GRIP Committee believe that this document should be the blueprint for mining in NSW if not Australia. In our support we have sent out a Press

Release to all papers, radio and TV outlets. It is important to note that other areas are taking up the call for the Moratorium.

Gloucester Shire Council asked to support the moratorium

GRIP has sent a letter to our Council asking it to publically support the NSW Farmers Association Moratorium. See below.

Mr Alan Young

General Manager

Gloucester Shire Council

Dear Mr Young

We refer to the attached Policy Statement from the NSW Farmer's Association calling for all new mining and coal seam gas developments in NSW to be suspended until there is a strategic plan which protects food security and agricultural land.

The Recent Camberwell Review of the cumulative impacts of coal mining has resulted in several important initiatives on the part of State Government. The first of these is as follows:

"Strategic Management Initiatives

The Government is establishing a Cabinet Sub-Committee to develop a Coal Mining Strategy for the State. This task group will be chaired by Tony Kelly, Minister for Planning, Lands and Infrastructure and brings together the portfolios of Planning, Lands and Infrastructure, Health, Treasury, Environment and Climate Change, and Industry and Investment. The key tasks of this group will be to develop: an overarching strategy to guide investment in the industry, strengthen the linkages between exploration and development of the State's resources and avoid, or minimise land use conflicts with other significant industries and residential land use;

and a targeted strategy to deal with the specific issues in each coalfield, with a particular emphasis on minimising the cumulative impacts of mining in the Hunter Valley.

It is intended that the Strategy will be outlined by October 2010." (refer attachment)

Subsequent to this announcement, the NSW Farmers association have called for a moratorium on all coal mining and Coal Seam Gas developments until the completion of a strategic plan with the following requirements:

"A strategic plan should consider a transparent approval process, independent monitoring of mining and gas industries, and aquifer protection".

As there are coal exploration licences that surround Gloucester and cover much of the Gloucester Valley, the strategic plan that is developed will have a critical impact on the Gloucester Shire and its residents and accordingly we request that Gloucester Council

1. Obtain details of the Strategic plan referred to by State Government in their announcement, as the Strategy was due for release in outline by October 2010.

2. Support the NSW Farmers association in their call for a moratorium on all coal and CSG developments, until such time as a suitable strategic plan is developed, in order to give certainty to all of the residents and stakeholders in the Gloucester Valley.

It should be noted that the "New Approach" to coal mining in New South Wales as developed by Gloucester Council is similar in purpose to the proposed Strategy in seeking to avoid, or minimise land use conflicts with other significant industries and residential land use.

The GRIP Executive believe that the issues stated are of the utmost importance therefore we request that this letter be distributed to all the Councillors. We await your written reply on our proposals.

Yours sincerely

The Gloucester Residents in Partnership Executive
Per Dianne Montague
President

Mudgee and the Mid-Western regional council support the moratorium

Article – Mudgee Guardian – 29th October 2010

"NSW Farmers' Association Mudgee branch president John Webb has backed the group's call for a moratorium on new mining or coal seam gas developments across the state.

Mr Webb said the association was not opposed to mining but was looking for greater transparency in the approval process. He said from a farmer's view, he was concerned about the potential loss of good agricultural land but understood mining was good for the economy.

"What we need is a balance," he said.

"The agricultural industry will feed the world forever, whereas coal won't.

"If you travel the length and breadth of this land you will see our best farming land is also in areas with higher rainfall and we do not want this lost to mining."

Mr Webb also questioned the mines' land use after mining.

"They say they will return the land in a better shape than previous but who will they return it to?"

Mr Webb said as a Mid-Western Regional Councillor and local farmer, he believed the cumulative impacts of the mines should be taken into consideration.

"It's not just one mine or the other," he said.

"There are a whole heap together.

The Mid-Western regional council has also backed a moratorium on mining within the region, earlier this year calling for a halt to State Government approvals until a strategic plan was put in place. "



Glorious Gloucester Gardens on show



This weekend was a huge success, with promotion of GRIP's purpose, having an enjoyable weekend and raising money. Below is the article that appeared in the Advocate.



Glorious Gardens on Show in the rain



When GRIP organised the Glorious Gloucester Garden Show for the weekend of the 9th and 10th October, we knew that it needed to be fine. Who wants to wander around looking at gardens in the rain? It appears that 220 people were happy to, as the rain did not deter them at all. The 12 Gloucester garden owners had been working hard on their gardens for weeks and were delighted with the results and the positive comments from the garden admirers.

They came from as far away as Sydney, Newcastle, Dubbo, Taree, Wingham, Forster and of course many from our local area. The Maitland Garden Club filled a bus with 27 people who were supplied lunch by the unsuspecting John and Helen Tugwood of Mograni Creek Road. On Saturday, 11 mature-aged visitors who travelled from Taree by car and then proceeded around Gloucester on their bicycles, braved the showery weather to arrive at Forbesdale just as the Heaven's opened. They enjoyed their afternoon tea in the gazebo until the showers passed then rambled around the garden.

The Community Bus had an adventurous day on the Sunday visit to Berrico Creek Road, which has 13 creek crossings. The last four crossings do not have fords and the last section of the road had recently been graded by the property owners. Needless to say directly after the grading it rained and the road turned to mud. The eager garden viewers were ferried in and out by four wheel drive while the bus waited a distance away. On return the bus was unable to negotiate the steep hill, so everyone got

out and the bus was pulled up the hill by Chris Russell and his Troopy. All arrived safely at the Forbesdale Garden of the Besier's with their tales of adventure.

GRIP raised \$2,500 which will go towards a PM2.5 dust monitor for Gloucester. The GRIP Committee wishes to sincerely thank all the Garden owners and helpers, the Visitors Information Centre, the Community Stall at the Grower's Market and Gloucester Health Foods. We particularly wish to thank Andrea Sage and Terry Hardwick for their hard work and enthusiasm. GRIP hopes this will be an annual event.

Letter to Mr Keith Ross, Chairman, Gloucester Resources Limited

GRIP and The Alliance sent a joint letter to Mr Keith Ross, Chairman, Gloucester Resources Limited, asking them to take responsibility for the health impacts that an open-cut coal mine will have on the people of Gloucester.

Mr Ross has replied stating, **"Contrary to your assertion, my enquiries have assured me that there is not sustainable evidence or research that cancers, lung diseases etc. are directly caused by air and water borne coal dust."** He refutes the suggestion that the people of Gloucester will suffer health problems from any coal mine.

The GRIP committee challenge the above statement.

Below is an article from the Sydney Morning Herald with statements from **Dr Peter Lewis**, the Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Director claiming that, **"Any increased exposure to particulate pollution is associated with increased adverse health outcomes, even if the levels are below the current guidelines."**

A SENIOR NSW health official says exposure to coal dust particulates can harm people's health, even if the pollution is within state guidelines.

Community lobby group The Australian Coal Alliance said the comment was a "bombshell that has major implications for the Hunter".

The Northern Sydney Central Coast area director for public health Peter Lewis made the submission to the Department of Planning about a South Korean company's plan for the Wallarah No 2 mine in the Wyong Shire.

"Any increased exposure to particulate pollution is associated with increased adverse health outcomes, even if the levels are below the current guidelines," Dr Lewis wrote.

Dr Lewis said increased particulate exposure could cause deaths, require hospital admission, and make children have more chest colds, night-time coughs and trips to the doctor.

Coal alliance spokesman Mike Campbell slammed the state government for not making the document public.

Mr Campbell said the government must review air pollution limits.

"It is a big step forward from a government official to say 'yes there are problems within the current guidelines'," Mr Campbell said.

Dr Lewis's submission said mines on the scale of the Wallarah 2 plan "must be considered in the context of the whole region, not as a stand-alone development".

Mr Campbell said many Hunter coalmines were similar in size to the Wallarah 2 plan.

He said he asked the department for a copy of Dr Lewis's submission but was told "we don't have a copy here, I'll get back to you".

"I had to get it off the author himself," Mr Campbell said.

A Department of Planning spokesman said that before July 1, 2010, major project submissions were not made public.

But the policy had been changed so submissions made after July 1 would be available on the department's website, he said.

Dr Lewis's submission was made on June 9.

"Issues raised in all submissions, including from the health service, will be carefully considered as part of the department's assessment of the [Wyong mine] proposal," the department spokesman said.

The GRIP committee has requested a copy of the submission by Dr Lewis from the Health Minister Carmel Tebbutt.

Renewal of Membership – Please renew your membership – we need the support

Your membership is needed for the committee to continue with the work.

Only \$5. Send cheque to GRIP PO Box 440 Gloucester 2422 or direct deposit.

Please put your name on the deposit form so we know you have renewed.

National Australia Bank, Gloucester:

BSB No. 082 595

Account No. 83254 5310

Gloucester Residents In Partnership

New Members

If you want to become a member the cost is \$2 to join and \$5 for the year. The application form is on our website www.grip.org.au or you can return email and a form will be sent out to you.

Once again thank you for the support.

The GRIP Committee work tirelessly on behalf of all our members and the residents of Gloucester.

We take our responsibility seriously.

Di Montague

President

GRIP

Gloucester Residents in Partnership Inc

www.grip.org.au