

GRIP Newsletter

This newsletter contains the latest information from the Community Consultative Committee meeting of 25th May. There is other information to hand which should be of interest to all Gloucester residents.

Many properties have now been sold to GRL.

They are mainly along Fairbairns Road.

Keith Ross, the General Manager of GRL, has outlined the plan, verbally, to people of where the mine will be located. At the meeting of the 30th June we will have a detailed map to view of these proposed plans.

E Warriors

Thank you to those people who have elected to become E Warriors. It is wonderful to know that we are not doing this on our own. Becoming an E Warrior means you can comment on news articles just by filling in the comments section at the bottom of the articles. It is very easy.

Thirty eight people commented on the article on Jan Tresidder in the Newcastle Herald which we sent to you by email. All but three were supportive. This is a wonderful example of how we can get the message of Gloucester out into the community.

How you can help

We need more E Warriors. **We also need help with events.** If you can spare any time to assist at the 'Chill Out Festival' or the 'Glorious Gloucester Gardens on Show' in October (information below) please let us know by return email or ringing Dianne on 6558 3052.

The time to sit back and watch to see what happens is over.

Premier Keneally, will these words come back to haunt you?????

In referring to the Government's decision to not allow the new mine at Bickham, Premier Keneally stated that....."this mine is simply not compatible

with the unique rural characteristics of this locality, including the horse breeding industry."

Anyone got any (expensive) race horses we can dot about the countryside of Gloucester????

Renewal of Membership

You can now deposit your renewal directly into the National Bank in Gloucester as below.

Please make sure that you write your name on the deposit so we know who has renewed.

National Australia Bank, Gloucester:

BSB No. 082 595

Account No. 83254 5310

Gloucester Residents In Partnership

Report from the Community Representatives of the CCC Meeting 25th May

Brian Wingett has resigned as Managing Director of GRL but is still on the Board. The company now in control consists of: LD Operations P/L Singleton (Peter Ross, Keith Ross' son, MD); Graham Holley – Creek Explorations P/L; Ross family Trust (Keith Ross and wife) and AMCI (some kind of Trust to be decided).

How close to town will the mine be?

Keith Ross has clarified his previous statements.

"Where we are able to mine depends on the Environmental Approvals and our ability to comply". Keith Ross believes the town is the Post Office so it doesn't matter where the residents, businesses are situated. All the company has to do is state where the mine will be and comply with the Environmental Approvals. They intend to concentrate on what he calls "Berrico", the name of the rail siding they intend to use, (but it's more like the Forbesdale area).

Company in a hurry to mine

GRL are not following the usual process of finding

out first if mining is feasible. They are doing the drilling parallel with the Environmental Assessment and baseline studies so they can make an application to mine as soon as possible. They have gone further at this stage than they would have normally as they want to clear up misunderstandings and expectations of property owners.

Drilling starts in July

Explorations – The drilling program will be at a stage two level but GRL intends to go straight to Stage 3 and apply for exploration “tick” from the appropriate Department. They will lodge in mid-June. It is a 2-3 week process. They have a verbal agreement with a drilling contractor from Quirindi to start drilling in Forbesdale – Waukivory Creek area in July.

Not waiting for AGL Seismic study results

AGL will do 3D seismic studies on GRL land but the results will not be ready until September. AGL have Environmental Approvals and signed agreements. Their 3D seismic studies will show up coal seam and faults but GRL do not want to wait until then so will start drilling before.

They will be drilling mostly on their properties but are happy to drill on other people’s properties. This is still a high risk project with multi-seams and banded seams and there is no correlation between drill holes that have been put down over the years. A request was made to follow correct procedure when approaching land owners. It was noted that Gloucester Coal has just been turning up on people’s doorsteps with a 4 page agreement to be signed.

Assessments commencing 2nd week of June

Environmental – RW Corkery & Co. Pty Ltd, Geological and Environmental Consultants will do noise levels, archaeological, plants, animals, etc surveys and GRL will engage expert subcontractors to do water, dust, ecology, aboriginal heritage studies. This will commence 2nd week of June.

Asthma problems in Singleton not attributable to mining, according to Keith Ross

Keith Ross said the asthma problems in Singleton and Upper Hunter cannot be contributed to mining because the NE Highway runs through the town with cars and trucks belching exhaust fumes. Steve Robinson advised that the emissions from coal mines and power stations present different health problems.

GRIP’s comment

These conclusions from Keith Ross appear to be at odds with the State’s air quality expert. “Senior manager of Environ Australia, Damon Roddis, who completed a study into the cumulative dust impacts on Camberwell, said that 85 per cent of the particulate matter that was emitted into the atmosphere in Singleton was due to coal mining activity” Ref. below

<http://www.singletonargus.com.au/news/local/news/general/dust-linked-to-health-problems/1599140.aspx>

Planning – GRL don’t know if there is a “resource” yet but an engineer is engaged and is happy to talk to land owners. They are doing a study on ground water in June and appointing a Project Manager who will be here within the next month. They are also negotiating with someone, who will be based in Gloucester, to go and talk to land owners about environmental concerns. Norm Hennessy looks after the cattle and they are doing up the “Wilsons property” house and may use this as a base.

Buffer Zone 1km (not 5km, as Council want)

Buffer Zone (purchase of affected properties) – may be 1 km or so from the mine. Where it is “touch and go” with noise/dust problems, any resident who feels they can’t put up with the mine can say so and GRL will buy them out

The GRL representatives were questioned as to their knowledge of the new policy on mining being formulated by Gloucester Council. As Mr Ross and

Mr Holley were unaware of it Glen Wilcox, Director of Planning and Environment, Gloucester council gave a brief outline and referred members to the council website where a complete copy of the document is available.

Mining in the Central and Southern Sections. EL6524 & EL6563, Exploration Licence Areas

Keith Ross advised that GRL will do some exploration within the next 12 months. He intends to look at the area in the near future with a view to assessing whether rail access is possible west of Bucketts Way).

It's okay the mine workers will want to buy your property

Reply to the comment that no one will want to buy land near the mine, Keith Ross advised that mine workers are always looking to buy local properties so they don't have to travel. Glen Wilcox advised that in Singleton property values have actually risen because there is a scarcity of residential properties for workers to buy.

GRIP's comment. This is not what studies show. Singleton is a large town with many resources so workers might want to live there. With small towns like Gloucester the workers prefer to live away in larger towns. Half of the Gloucester Coal workforce live away from Gloucester. When property prices are inflated due to scarcity the locals have to leave because they cannot afford the new costs. The miners can afford the prices but not the other workers on lower wages.

GRL, not an agricultural company

Keith Ross said his preferred modus operandi in an exploration project was to negotiate for access, and if exploration shows up potential for mining then they negotiate an option with the land holder. They would take up the option if and when they intended to go ahead with mining. He said many more options with property owners had been negotiated than they were aware of at the last CCC meeting which has caused a lot of angst. Some property owners had gone down the track of buying alternate properties. John Woodford said that GRL

did not have a legal obligation to complete these negotiations but they did have a moral obligation. Keith Ross said the previous management had deemed the properties were required but he considered their judgement may have been wrong. "We are not an agricultural company". When asked whether GRL intended buying Maslen's dairy farm, Keith Ross said he was not about to get into details of any negotiations.

The GRIP committee believes it is important for the CCC to hear from concerned residents. We urge members to write, either directly to Mr Terence Healey, Chairman terlough@bigpond.com or to GRIP with your questions/concerns, which we will pass onto a community representative.

GRIP – 'Glorious Gloucester Gardens on Show'

Saturday 9 October and Sunday 10 October 2010

Please mark in your diary/calendar the above dates. The committee is busy planning this event to raise money and also give out information. We will need plenty of support from members especially on that particular weekend. The event will showcase Gloucester (as it is at present) and visitors will be able to wander through the many gardens - both town and country that will be on show. The community has been very supportive with some wonderful diverse gardens/properties 'coming on board'. There will be many and varied small jobs to be filled - e.g. selling tickets, assisting with teas and lunches, putting up signs etc. Tickets should be ready for sale in August so keep watching our newsletters for updates.

Contact Terry on 6558 8104 or Andrea on 6558 9960 if you wish to volunteer for this exciting event.

Meeting with Mr Robert Oakeshott, Federal Independent Member for Lyne

Thank you to the 50 members who attended the meeting with Robert Oakeshott on 5th May. It was a very successful meeting culminating in several press interviews from Robert supporting our stand

in requesting that Gloucester be included in the dust monitoring program in the Hunter. Robert is championing our case in Federal Parliament and will speak to Ministers in the NSW Government. An interview with GRIP was shown on Prime News.

Meeting with Dr David Gillespie, Federal National Candidate for Lyne

This was another successful meeting on the 26th May, with 25 in attendance. Dr Gillespie was sensitive to our views and will approach the NSW Minister George Souris and Senator Duncan Gay with a report of our concerns. Steve Robinson's report from the Singleton Committee on dust monitoring

Steve Robinson's report of the health committee in Singleton (in brief)

Steve attended a meeting with the NSW Chief Health officer, Dr Kerry Chant and the Singleton committee at Singleton. He also met at Newcastle with a small group of academics who wanted to show support and make suggestions about possibilities.

The committee consists of Dr Kerry Chant, three other medicos, an asthma specialist, a cancer specialist and a toxicology specialist. They will be commenting on and making recommendations about future air monitoring and will be considering the records they already have. Whether they will perform any new studies wasn't clear. Whilst the exercise undoubtedly contains an element of the Govt. showing belated interest the number of experts lined up suggests a bit more than political posturing will take place - but it remains to be seen. The four 'experts' all heard hundreds of facets of life under the influence of coal mines and power stations that they clearly knew nothing about prior to the meeting, so it was productive. Steve argued for Gloucester to be included but it was clear this was not a negotiable issue in their eyes. He left Dr Chant with a letter pointing out research indicates all coal communities are probably having their health damaged and the coal mines can well afford to pay for every community to have up to date PM2.5 monitoring.

Attached is a letter from the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water advising that Gloucester will not be part of the dust monitoring study in the Upper Hunter.

This letter can be challenged, according to a report done by the Coal Association 2003

It shows that the smallest and most dangerous dust particles are travelling - staying up in the air for people to breathe. People don't live at the source of the emissions (ie the coalface), they live away from it, and thus the particle distribution at a distance is actually far more relevant than the statistics quoted in the letter. These dust particles are going to travel with the wind.

In Gloucester's case the wind in the afternoon, the majority of the time, gusts up from the south/east straight over the town.

Is this familiar?

Below are two links from the Mudgee local press. The residents are going through exactly the same process that has been happening here for a year.

<http://www.mudgeeguardian.com.au/news/local/news/environment/residents-muted-divided-in-tears/1847213.aspx?storypage=2>

<http://www.mudgeeguardian.com.au/news/local/news/general/moolarben-mine-regrets-water-pollution/1847181.aspx>

GRIP

Gloucester Residents in Partnership Inc

www.grip.org.au