

# GRIP Newsletter

## August 2010.

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GRIP is coming under increasing pressure to cease its opposition to the expansion of mining around Gloucester. We are viewed by some in the community as 'blow ins' and 'a small noisy minority' or even 'a disruptive rabble'. The fact that many of us are new to the Shire is seen as a reason why we should not contribute vocally to any changes in the Shire.

I think it is very sad that long term residents view us this way. My understanding of new arrivals to Gloucester is that we are people who have chosen to live here because we love the place they have helped to create. Surely this is a positive attribute and one which should bring us together not split us apart.

Dianne Montague  
President

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**GRL – Drilling submission to the DPI (complete with maps of area to be drilled)**  
Attached is GRL's drilling submission to the DPI (now known as Department of Industry and Investment.) It is a very important document detailing the area where GRL are going to drill. It lies between Jacks Road and Fairbairns Road. Please send this on to anyone you think might be interested.

Fundraiser for GRIP – Purchase of a PM 2.5 Dust Monitor for Gloucester

## **Glorious Gloucester – Gardens on Show –** Saturday 9th & Sunday 10th October 2010 – 9am to 4pm

**buy your tickets at the Growers Market Community Stall**

Choose your own ramble through a diverse collection of 13 out-of-the-ordinary gardens .... beautiful, sustainable, organic, food & wine producing, native bird attracting, riverside and rainforest .... while enjoying the beauty of our town, countryside and clean, unpolluted rivers.

Single and one and two day passes on sale at Gloucester Farmers Market Community Stall – Gloucester Health Foods – Visitor Information Centre

For more details contact Andrea 6558 9960 [normandy@skymesh.com.au](mailto:normandy@skymesh.com.au)  
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### **Health damage and cumulative effects of mining**

Attached is an article by Dr van Steenis with this opening. "My work has been peer reviewed by professors in the UK and USA and describes just a small portion of the health damage and cumulative effects caused by opencast mining." In Australia we refer to 'opencast' as 'opencut mining'.

#### **The Heat is on:Coal (excerpt)**

The Australian 10/7/2010

David Shearman is emeritus professor of medicine, a practising physician and honorary secretary of Doctors for the Environment Australia.

**JAMES Hansen, the respected NASA scientist, said: "Coal-fired power stations are death factories. Close them." The medical profession has failed to address this serious health message.**

**An urgent transition from coal to renewable energy will provide important health and economic benefits.**

*Research in the US has shown coal pollutants affect all body organ systems and contribute to four of the five leading causes of mortality in the US: heart disease, cancer, stroke and chronic respiratory disease. Each step of the coal life cycle -- mining, transportation, washing, combustion and disposing of post-combustion wastes -- affects human health. In Australia, research is lacking but there is no reason to believe similar effects are not occurring in coal communities here. To deny it would be akin to holding smoking causes lung cancer in the US but doesn't in Australia.*

*The health burden of coal in Australia is estimated conservatively at \$2.6 billion a year. There are also economic losses due to land pollution and degradation and the open mining of good agricultural land in the face of the projected world food crisis.*

*For a wealthy country to fail to take necessary measures and to wait for others to do so can be seen as amoral. Communities in many mining*

regions are worried about pollution. They write to us expressing concern about their children's asthma.

There are a number of pollutants released from fossil fuel combustion. These include nitrous oxide and sulphur dioxide, and fine particles measuring 2.5 micrometres or less, which penetrate more deeply into lung tissue than larger particles and are considered particularly hazardous to health.

In the US, exposure to these particles has been shown to reduce life expectancy. Their monitoring in Australia, especially in the areas where pollution is generated, is patchy or non-existent.

Environmental injustice can be defined as the disproportionate exposure of socially vulnerable groups to pollution and its associated effects on health and the environment, as well as the unequal environmental protection provided through laws, regulations and their enforcement. However, incomes in some coal and electricity generation townships are higher than the national average and the injustice relates not to poverty but to health inequality caused by government inaction.

For state governments to disregard pleas for action by parents whose children are suffering from pollution is a denial of their fundamental obligations to public welfare. Many in the medical profession have expressed support for the federal government's intent to improve and reorganise medical services.

The Upper Hunter region in NSW has been identified as an area where residents, civil society and local government groups struggle with corporations and state government over the burden of ill-health caused by air pollution. There is ample evidence of inaction by state authorities. There is regulatory inertia and denial of public requested air monitoring, which has extended to mines where air pollution is of concern to local communities.

Mines cannot be closed precipitously, for unemployment has personal and family health impacts. However, Doctors for the Environment Australia, in its energy policy (available at [www.dea.org.au](http://www.dea.org.au); click on Policy on main menu) opposes any

new mines, particularly those ravaging good food-producing land.

For existing mines we recognise the inevitable in terms of our future national and international commitments, and urge planning for the rapid introduction of renewable energy industries into coal mining regions.

Renewable energy industries create more jobs than coalmining; they are generally safer and much healthier for workers and communities. They will offer sustainable economic development in an area where Australia already trails other developed nations.

We ask why, in a wealthy, developed country like Australia, which reaps billions of dollars from the export of coal, are we neglecting the health and wellbeing of entire mining communities? Where are the health impact studies?

This is environmental injustice, with inhabitants being disproportionately exposed to pollution and its associated effects on health and their environment.

Thank you to all our supporters. Please remember to buy your tickets for the Garden show it will be a wonderful weekend.

# **GRIP**

**Gloucester Residents in Partnership Inc**

[www.grip.org.au](http://www.grip.org.au)