

GRIP Christmas Newsletter December 2010

Dear Members

Throughout this year the GRIP committee has worked tirelessly to stop Gloucester Resources Limited from mining in the Gloucester Valley.

Thank you to, Rod and Robin Besier, Norm and Andrea Sage, Murray Pakes, Ed (and Tina) Robinson, Melissa Seale and Michael Bowman for their wonderful commitment and never ending support of our goal.

IMPORTANT – Attendance needed at Council Meeting Wednesday 15th December at 9.30am at Council Chambers.

Please read the letter below that GRIP sent to Gloucester Shire Council and the attached reply from Mr Allan Young. The GRIP executive are extremely disappointed with the response and assumes from this that our Council is not prepared to speak out openly about the threat to our valley from impending mine exploration.

The NSW Farmers Association has called for a moratorium on all new coal and coal seam gas exploration until further investigation is done, but our council do not support this stance. This moratorium is essential if we are to protect our farm and food producing land from the onslaught of the mining industry. In NSW alone there are approximately 30 new mines waiting for approval and many extensions to current mines (Stratford and Duralie being two).

The GRIP executive are alarmed by the trust our council places on the Ministers of the current NSW Government. The election for a new government is in March 2011. The 'Strategic Plan' proposed by the current Government has been postponed indefinitely. It is extremely unlikely that the Plan will be completed by the election and no approach has been made, to our knowledge, to the Opposition should it gain power.

At the next council meeting of the 15th December Mayor Slack is presenting a motion in reference to the above. Your presence at this meeting is imperative so we can silently voice our opposition to the council's inaction.

The residents of Gloucester need strong leaders who are active in protecting our farm land and towns from the takeover of mining interests. We do not have this from the majority of our Councillors.

**Coal, Gas and now Gold mining is here and more is coming
We have to be vocally active to stop it
GOLD MINING**

It appears that we have a new mining challenge on our doorstep. Just this week a property owner in Barrington East Road was approached by a gold mining company to enter his land for exploration. They are exploring for gold right under The Bucketts. The Exploration Licence covers The Bucketts and The Mograni ranges.

GAS MINING

Many of you would have seen the 'Gasland' film presented The Alliance. The NSW Government and AGL have assured the people of NSW and Gloucester that the destruction in America will not happen

here. **How can we believe them when we know that breaches of the mining conditions are happening in NSW and Queensland now?**

COAL MINING

HOW CLOSE IS TOO CLOSE

Thank you to all those people who signed the letters in our latest campaign. Thank you to the stores and businesses that supported us by having the clipboards. Thank you especially to the members who helped out in the campaign. The letters, opposing the Gloucester Resources Ltd exploration and impending coal mine are being sent individually to Premier Kristina Keneally and Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell.

As of today hundreds of letters have been signed. The exact number will be known shortly. We will inform Gloucester Shire Council of the result so they are aware of the number of people who oppose the expansion of coal mining in the valley.

Gloucester Shire Council response to mining in the Shire

Below is a copy of the letter GRIP sent to Mr Alan Young, General Manager of our Council and his reply.

Mr Allan 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;*
- *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 believes 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

The GRIP Committee wish all our members and their families a very Happy Christmas. Have a wonderful time over the holidays and New Year.

Best Wishes
Di Montague
President
Gloucester Residents in Partnership



Reference: LW Doc Id 17407.7

Contact: Allan Young

17 November, 2010

Mrs Dianne Montague
President
Gloucester Residents in Partnership Inc.
PO Box 440
GLOUCESTER NSW 2422

Dear Mrs Montague

Development of NSW Coal Mining Strategy

I refer to your letter dated 1 November 2010, emailed to Council by Mrs Robin Besier on 2 November 2010 at 1:14pm.

It is pleasing to note that GRIP recognises the efforts of Council through the "New Approach" document to work with the State Government to deal with coal exploration and mining issues. The elected representatives and staff feel that this co-operative approach to work with the politicians and government employees of the State has played an important role in the State Government's actions to commit to the development of the NSW Coal Mining Strategy. It is understood that this strategy will be prepared by the Ministerial Sub-Committee comprising the Minister for Planning, Infrastructure and Lands, Minister for Health, Minister for Mines, Minister for the Environment and the Treasurer.

In response to your first request I advise that your organisation is at liberty to ask the State Government to provide you with the details of their announced strategy and there is no need for council staff to act on your behalf in this matter. It is understood that the Minister for Planning, Infrastructure and Lands, the Hon. Tony Kelly MLC is the Chairperson of the Ministerial Sub-Committee. The Minister's contact details are:

Level 34 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Email: planning@lpma.nsw.gov.au

Alternatively, it may be appropriate for GRIP to seek the support and assistance on your questions relating to the State Government's development of the mining strategy from the Minister for the Hunter, the Hon Jodi McKay MP. Minister McKay's contact details are:

Level 31 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Email: Newcastle@parliament.nsw.gov.au

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In respect of this particular issue I recently read a media report (and GRIP may be aware of this article) that indicated that the State Government is lagging behind in its timetable for the development of this mining strategy. Regardless of the media statement, the State Government Minister's mentioned above will no doubt be able to give your organisation an up to date indication of where the development of the strategy is up to.

The second matter raised by your group related to the NSW Farmers Association's Executive Council resolution on a mining moratorium. One Councillor has already suggested that council staff circulate this article to elected representatives and has been informed that any individual or any member of a community interest group is at liberty to distribute this information to any member of the public and this includes Gloucester Shire Council elected representatives. Likewise, GRIP, as a lobbying entity, can also embark on a similar distribution regime. In this way if any Councillor feels strongly about this particular issue they may bring it forward through the appropriate formal processes for consideration.

The above commentary is provided, as requested, in response to GRIP's general enquiries and specific issues raised in the letter of 1 November 2010.

Yours faithfully



Allan Young
GENERAL MANAGER