

## Media Release

16 January 2014

### **O'Farrell Government begins to investigate CSG risk to the Gloucester community in AGL's plans to frack**

Serious legal, environmental and health matters concerning AGL's proposed Coal Seam Gas fracking in Gloucester will be discussed in Gloucester next week when the EPA, Office of Coal Seam Gas (OCSG) and the Land and Water Commissioner, Jock Laurie, participate in a round table discussion.

The discussion follows several meetings with Groundswell Gloucester's reference group and senior government officials in Sydney.

Up for discussion:

- Why, when AGL lodged their REF (application to frack), didn't the OCSG direct AGL to conduct a transparent EIS (Environmental Impact Statement)? A letter was sent to the NSW Department of Trade and Investment on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013 regarding this issue. After phone calls and requests for this matter to be addressed there has been no response. A verbal comment from an OCSG spokesperson was that it was with their legal department and offering no further comment.
- A full EIS should be required because there are existing CSG wells within 3km of the fracking site. One of these gas wells, proven to be productive, has been capped and abandoned since the above-mentioned letter was received by the OCSG. The timing of that action by AGL is interesting.
- Major flaws, contradictory AGL statements, research and serious repercussions for the catchment and communities detailed in Groundswell Gloucester's well -researched "[Exposing the Risks](#)" document. There is an issue of culpability for determining authorities if they approve any development in this area despite awareness of the unacceptable risks exposed in this document.
- AGL's Tiedmans water irrigation trial – now the fodder grown in this trial may be in the food chain key questions remain unanswered regarding the possibility of contamination from the produced coal seam gas water and the long term viability of dumping thousands of tonnes of salt and contaminants in the Avon catchment.
- Health issues which no one wants to address. AGL's application to frack contains no plans to monitor emissions at family homes, some only 600m from gas wells. We have asked consistently through Department of Health, the Minister for Health, Local Area Health for information regarding coal seam gas exposure during flaring and other operations and are continually flicked from one department to another with no answers. Once again it appears to be up to the community to do the research.

Groundswell Gloucester hopes to gain some answers at the round table discussion – these are fundamental issues affecting the health of our catchments and the living environments which support the lives of over 75,000 people.

There is no social or scientific licence for the coal seam gas industry to proceed in the Gloucester Valley. That the Government is finally listening is encouraging, but will they act in the best interests of the communities they serve and the people whose health and welfare is at stake?

Ends

**Further information:**

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