

29 January 2014

Media Release

FLAWS IN AGL'S GLOUCESTER GAS PROJECT REF PROCESS EXPOSED

Last Friday, 24 January 2014, a large contingent of officers from a number of NSW government agencies, including the Environment Protection Authority, the Office of Coal Seam Gas, the Division of Resources and Energy and the Office of Water met in Gloucester with members of the Groundswell Gloucester Reference Group.

The meeting was convened to present the community's concerns about AGL's application to 'frack' four pilot CSG wells, three of which are located on the Avon River floodplain. Each of the agencies represented has a role in the approval process.

This was the first occasion that representatives from each of these agencies have come together "in the field" to hear at first hand the views of a community. Discussion was willing and questions searching as these key government officers were left in no doubt as to the veracity of Groundswell Gloucester's "Exposing the Risks" document.

Groundswell Gloucester President, Julie Lyford said, "the officers voiced appreciation for being able to hear at first hand from the local people as it gives them valuable context in which to assess the application. We are deeply appreciative of the efforts of Chief Environmental Regulator, Mark Gifford, in bringing the various agencies together."

"What was said at the meeting by the officers from the various agencies underlined the fact that the process by which AGL is seeking approval to 'frack' four wells close to Gloucester is far from transparent, open and fair. It demonstrated once again why Groundswell Gloucester has been calling for a full Environmental Impact Statement from AGL and full disclosure of all the documents and facts."

The NSW Land and Water Commissioner, Mr Jock Laurie, whose role includes providing guidance for communities and to respond to concerns raised in relation to determinations on exploration activity, attended but did not contribute to the discussion.

Groundswell Gloucester is calling for the current REF not to be approved and no licences issued to AGL until the following actions are completed:

- comprehensive EIS for the Waukivory Pilot Program;
- AGL has a proven method for disposal of produced water;

- detailed review of compliance with State Environmental Protection Policies, Codes of Practice and State & Federal project approval conditions;
- the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer's Review of CSG;
- the Federal Government's Gloucester Bioregional Assessment and Review of CSG by the Independent Expert Panel;
- the Gloucester Water Study project (including detailed Avon River flood study, desktop review of options for produced water disposal and peer review of AGL's recent groundwater studies by the expert hydrogeologist currently under contract to Gloucester Shire Council); and
- comprehensive and integrated cumulative surface and groundwater modelling and assessment of the entire Gloucester Basin.

Ends

Further information:

Julie Lyford, President Groundswell Gloucester - 02 6558 1995 / 0424 269 784