



MEDIA RELEASE

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Window dressing by the O'Farrell Government and AGL

Gloucester Council has asked for expressions of interest from members of the Gloucester community to join a state government/AGL/Gloucester Council committee described as the Gloucester Dialogue. Groundswell Gloucester considers this committee to be nothing but a piece of window dressing by the government and AGL.

Groundswell Gloucester Chair Julie Lyford said recently:

"The fact is that both the state government and AGL have spent the past few years not providing full information to our community when they have had every opportunity to do so. How can anyone have any confidence that this is anything but a public relations exercise. It is interesting that the wording of the advertisement is that it is to "ensure that there is clear, accurate and understandable information available to the community." It says nothing about providing "full and comprehensive information."

What is also startling is that of the 3 AGL representatives on the committee, two of them are public relations people whose job it is and has been to portray AGL in the best light. It is unclear what possible role they could possibly play on such a committee other than as public relations people.

I think it very unlikely that this committee will be given full and frank information by either AGL or the government in the light of the history. Some examples are:

- *A damning Environmental Protection Authority letter about the irrigation trial was never made public and had to be leaked 2 years after it was written.*
- *The Office of Coal Seam Gas (OCSG) has never explained why that EPA report was ignored*
- *OCSG has refused to provide a South Australian experts report which it commissioned in relation to the Waukivory Pilot.*
- *AGL and the government have refused to provide bore hole records in relation to the 4 Waukivory bore holes*
- *An FOI application seeking material relating to the Waukivory Pilot project was refused by government.*
- *The government will not include zoning R5 in its exclusion zone and will not apply it to stage 1. This means that such estates as Forbesdale, Thunderbolts and the Meadows are not protected*
- *The government has done nothing to stop stage 1 work even though AGL appears not to hold the relevant licence from the EPA.*



- *AGL seems determined to pursue the Waukivory fracking pilot project even though 3 water studies are on foot and when there are obvious environmental risks.*
- *The OCSG has not even had the courtesy to reply to solicitor's letters written on behalf of myself pointing out that a full environmental impact statement should be required for the Waukivory pilot project.*
- *The government has given stages 2 and 3 special status and the tone of the letter from the minister to Michael Fraser of AGL is clearly one which shows the government will bend over backwards to see they get approval.*
- *AGL has refused to release the full survey that they use for their PR. "*

The committee's meetings will not be open to the public to observe proceedings and committee members must agree to a confidentiality clause. So much for letting the community know what is going on. It is also noted that no undertaking has apparently been given by AGL or the government that full information will be provided to the committee.

The committee will be chaired by a government official and not by some independent person which is clearly unsatisfactory and the EPA is not a member of the committee. This omission adds to the widespread perception that the EPA is often sidelined by the government when it comes to mining issues.

It is Groundswell Gloucester's view that this committee can only be seen as a public relations exercise and not as a genuine attempt to inform the community. Such a committee has never been needed and both AGL and the state government have had plenty of opportunities in the past to provide full and open material.

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