

Media Release

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“The announcement by AGL that they will now use Reverse Osmosis to purify produced water from CSG wells is saying nothing new” said Julie Lyford, the Chair of Groundswell Gloucester.

“This method was promoted by Lucas-Molopo in their original proposal for the project six years ago. AGL has since tried to get way with the much cheaper option of spraying the polluted salty water, diluted with river water, on to pasture. This pasture was sold and fed to cattle in the district.

“It is important to realise that having gained approval in principle for the project, the evaluation of the disposal of produced water has been removed from public influence.”

Regardless of the ‘exhibition’ or ‘consultation’ foreshadowed by AGL, the matter will be settled by government agencies with no avenue of merits appeal. These same agencies would not speak out against the flawed irrigation solution.

The only logical reason to abandon irrigation now is that the State agencies have at last accepted the scientific advice from Groundswell Gloucester's "Exposing The Risks" document, that irrigation was a highly polluting solution and not acceptable.

With desalination, removing the dissolved solids from the polluted water is far from making the whole project environmentally friendly. There are still the problems with keeping dams full of dirty water and fracking fluids on the flood plain in a dairying and beef area. There are still the unknown risks of leaks directly from fracked strata and wells into the environment.

“The most important problem with the RO desalination scheme is what will they do with the salt and pollutants that are removed from the water? AGL say it will go to an approved facility. This means the tonnes of toxic sludge will be buried somewhere? Who will take this waste?

“A toxic waste dump isn’t a solution. It is a time bomb being set for future generations to deal with.

“Groundswell Gloucester is determined to protect the Gloucester valley from Coal Seam Gas extraction, as the risks are too great for our people, health, water, land and the future of our dairy and beef industries” said Ms Lyford.

The Gloucester community awaits the release of AGL’s water management strategy for public input.

Further information:

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