

Media Release

1 October 2014

Chief Scientist's Report on CSG

Simple logic suggests that Minister Roberts must suspend AGL's approval to frack at Waukivory and take the necessary time to identify the gaps between AGL's plans and the Chief Scientist's recommendations. It makes no sense to allow AGL to proceed until all necessary improvements and upgraded regulations are in place.

Julie Lyford, Chair of Groundswell Gloucester, said "Surely issues of accountability will arise if Minister Roberts allows AGL to frack in the extremely risky Gloucester basin with lower standards of regulation and compliance than the Chief Scientist recommends. For the NSW government and AGL to push ahead before the Chief Scientist's recommendations are implemented would be extremely reckless."

AGL's imminent fracking plans fall far short of meeting the Chief Scientist's requirements.

The Chief Scientist calls for further research on mental and physical health impacts and for operators to collect effective, local baseline information on existing levels of airborne chemicals local climactic data before any project is considered. Yet, in their fracking application, instead of collecting a local baseline for damaging CSG emissions such as volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides or carbon monoxide, AGL used desktop data from remote locations such as Muswellbrook and Singleton. For climactic data, AGL used figures from Windermere, near Bulga. AGL is also missing a Trigger Action Response Plan and input on health assessment from the Ministry of Health.

"If the NSW government and AGL choose to ignore the Chief Scientist's recommendations and warnings about the uncertainty of health impacts it is like playing Russian roulette with the health of the 50 families living within 2km of the Waukivory wells", Mrs Lyford said.

The report states that some geological areas that are heavily faulted and complex are inappropriate for CSG. These sites carry increased risks of impacts and more severe impacts. The Gloucester basin is extremely complex, heavily faulted and folded and therefore a prime example of an inappropriate site for CSG. The risk remains high as AGL still has a high degree of uncertainty over high and low permeability zones and connections between coal seams, aquifers and soil structures.

"AGL should heed the Chief Scientist's warning that geology like the Gloucester basin is particularly risky and inappropriate for CSG. AGL should admit they bought a lemon and stop throwing shareholder's money at an impossibly risky project."

Further information:

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

Jenni O'Neill – 0432 144 338

David Hare-Scott – 02 4994 7277

www.groundswellgloucester.com