

# Preamble to the Constitution of Groundswell Gloucester Inc

## **‘Empowering our communities for a sustainable future’**

Groundswell Gloucester was initially formed as an umbrella organisation in October 2012 to convene the inaugural NSW Coal and CSG Community Conference. The conference brought together communities from across NSW and beyond, to discuss how we could work together for a sustainable future.

We are residents of the Gloucester and Stroud valley in NSW, a beautiful region in the foothills of the World Heritage Barrington Tops. The traditional custodians of these lands are the Biripi and Worimi Aboriginal peoples and we respect their cultural heritage and history.

The essence of Gloucester – the things we value and cherish – is based on the peaceful, rural character of the region. Food production, agriculture, service industries, tourism and rural lifestyle are of paramount importance to our economy and sustainable future.

Like many similar rural communities around NSW, our agricultural, cultural and environmental heritage is under threat from external industrial and political interests.

Decision-making powers have been taken from communities and their locally elected representatives and these powers are increasingly being exercised by State and Federal Governments.

Unwanted and unwelcome developments are being imposed on communities and this is creating division, conflict and lack of trust in government process. This is most commonly seen in the increasing conflict over land and water use between agriculture, water users and the resource extraction industries. It is also reflected in wider planning issues in general. Many communities are left feeling alienated and powerless.

At the heart of our vibrant community life is the voluntary involvement of many of the valley’s residents who support a variety of community organisations. Groundswell Gloucester is one such organisation that seeks to join this long-standing tradition of residents’ involvement in progressive community development and to work together as strong advocates for our community’s values and future.

- We want recognition of the right to maintain the character of our valley for the present and to be able to pass it on to generations to come. This includes protecting its environment, ecosystems, heritage, air and water quality.
- Our valley should be safe and secure. We must be able to sustain and to grow its agricultural and horticultural capacity so that we may enjoy food and water security in a healthy environment now and in the future.
- There should be real inclusive community involvement in government decisions affecting our community at all levels through open processes, mutual respect and integrity.