

Member Newsletter

17 February 2014

Hello to our Groundswell Gloucester members.

Since our last newsletter we have been busy and have a lot to tell you. Whilst we would love to be getting on to doing great positive things for the community we have found that all our energy is having to be directed into influencing decision makers in State and Federal governments to do the right thing by Gloucester.

Our new website

One of the first things we wanted to tell you about is our new website groundswellgloucester.com. Please take a look around it and share it with family and friends. Check out the News page for all our resources and publications as well as our media releases.

News

This Wednesday 19 February the Planning Assessment Commission will be meeting at the Soldiers Club to hear submissions regarding the proposed Stratford mine extension. The meeting is open to the public so we encourage you to come along and show your support for those who have been working hard to reduce the impact the mine will have on Stratford residents. The meeting commences at 9.30 am.

Our Reference Group has been busy writing a number of important documents and attending meetings with senior government figures regarding the AGL gas project. Our "Exposing the Risks" document highlights the shortcomings in AGL's application to frack 4 CSG wells in the Waukivory Pilot Project and the document "Problems with AGL's Irrigation Trial" dispels the claims of AGL in regard to its produced water irrigation trial on the Tiedman property. Both these documents are available for download on the website.

Meetings have been held with staff from the NSW Dept of Energy and Resources, Environment Protection Authority, Office of Coal Seam Gas and the Land and Water Commissioner. These individual meetings resulted in a large round-table meeting here in Gloucester attended by our Reference Group and representatives from all these government bodies, as well as representatives from the Office of Water. The NSW government is taking our "Exposing the Risks" document seriously. The question we ask is why does the community need to do the government's work?

On our behalf the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) has raised some legal issues regarding AGL's application to frack - with the result that AGL is being placed under greater scrutiny and they have not yet received approval to proceed. AGL did want to frack before Christmas and as a consequence of the delay they have been using all avenues at their disposal to gain the approval. This is a good sign that what we are doing is making a difference.

We have been active in the media, gaining exposure on radio and TV. Groundswell Gloucester President Julie Lyford has been interviewed on a number of radio programs and Prime 7 news recently covered the news about Gloucester not being protected from Stage 1 of the AGL gas project with the 2km exclusion zone enjoyed by most of the State.

The recent announcement about extensions to the exclusion zones provides hope that Gloucester township, Barrington and Stratford will be protected from future CSG projects but we are seeking further information to confirm this, and also to clarify the situation with rural residential land and very small communities. So stay tuned.

Something easy to do

If you would like to take a small action with a big impact there are a number of divestment campaigns happening (not run by Groundswell Gloucester). One is being run by [Marketforces](#) and it encourages people who bank with ANZ, Westpac - and other banks which invest in fossil fuels - to change their bank to one which doesn't. This can be a very powerful action, so don't underestimate your ability to make a difference. The Marketforces website lists all the banks which invest in fossil fuels and it also has a handy guide to changing your bank. You may also wish to lobby your super fund about its investment choices.

Opportunities to be part of the action

If you would like to support Groundswell Gloucester's work there are many small ways you can help. Do you have a skill that you would be willing to donate? Are you an organiser; a letter writer; or a fundraiser? Would you like to volunteer at our shop in the Majestic Arcade?

We are especially seeking members who would be willing to donate an hour or so a week writing letters – you could do this from the comfort of your own home and you will be guided every step of the way.

Big or small, it doesn't matter. Everyone has something to contribute and it all helps. If you would like to be involved, email us at info@groundswellgloucester.com

Julie Lyford
President