

# GRIP Newsletter

## November 2009.

### An invitation to an important community event – Sunday 6th December – from a group of concerned Gloucester and Hunter Valley citizens

*If more coal mines are proposed for Gloucester Shire,  
the residents need to be informed of the health risks.*

#### **Dr Dick van Steenis to visit Gloucester**

A group of residents has invited Dr Dick van Steenis to visit Gloucester, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Quirindi and other towns in the Hunter to give a talk about these health risks.

Dr Dick van Steenis, MBBS, is a retired General Practitioner, public health medical scientist and public educator based in the United Kingdom. He has extensive experience and knowledge about public health issues relating to air pollution caused by emissions from industry.

His work has included studying the effects of emissions from open cut coal mining on schoolchildren living nearby.

He has been an expert witness in many court cases in the UK and US involving coal dust, incinerators, power stations and diesel exhaust inhalation.

#### **Why is Dr van Steenis visiting Gloucester?**

There are negative health effects of living close to open cut coal mining and its activities. This talk will

provide an opportunity for members of the community to ask questions about how coal mine emissions might affect them where they live, where they work, and where their children go to school.

His talk will include valuable information for parents, teachers, doctors, health professionals, council officials and the general public.

If you cannot attend you can send questions to Dr Van Steenis by email. [coaldoctor@gmail.com](mailto:coaldoctor@gmail.com)  
The emails can be anonymous.

#### **Time and Place**

**Sunday 6th December – 2.30pm – Gloucester  
Airfield (turnoff signposted to the right approx  
2.5 km along Jacks Road)  
Sausage sizzle and refreshments.**

Please inform all the people you know about this presentation.

GRIP will give more details as soon as possible.

### BEAUTIFUL GRIP CHRISTMAS CARDS

Thank you to those supporters who have already ordered and/or paid for their cards.

The cards are for sale at \$10 for a pack of ten. From Wednesday 11th they will be available at Posh Hairdressing, MyLady Hairdressing, Chantelle's Hairdressers at the old squash courts in Queen St and at Kerryb's (the ex Playful Platypus) in between Blakey's and Garners.



We will also arrange another sales and collection day at the Gallery.

For those people who have placed orders,



we will contact you to organise collection or delivery.



**ORDERS ACCEPTED BY RETURN EMAIL**

## LET'S DANCE

Saturday night, 13th February 2010, at the Gloucester Soldiers Club, will be a BIG night, with a Valentines theme and dancing and fun.

Starting at 7.00pm there will be professional demonstration dances, Gloucester 'celebrities' dancing, and lots of time for joining in.



**Please keep this date free.  
All proceeds to GRIP**

## **Letter to Gloucester Shire Councillors from GRIP**

Due to the recent developments with regard to the mayoral election, GRIP sent a letter to all councillors to clarify their personal position on mining in the Shire. Councillors Slack, Tersteeg, Shaw and Smith have replied. We will be following up replies from the other Councillors.

**Councillor Geoff Slack, Mayor, was sent the following questions.**

### **1. Clarification Of Your Exact Position On Exploration Licence Areas**

*Your comments in the Advocate of 7th October 2009 indicate that you are focusing your attention only on the Exploration Licence No EL 6523 as held by Gloucester Resources Limited, which directly abuts the town of Gloucester. You state that you will pressure the Government to exclude the area zoned as Scenic Protection or E3.*

**Question 1.A:** *Is it your intention to focus only on Exploration Licence EL6523, when you approach the State Government and the Opposition to prevent coal mining in the Gloucester Shire?*

**Question 1.B:** *Do you intend to lobby to stop coal mining in EL 6524 and EL 6563 or any other part of the Shire?*

### **2. Council Policy Change On Coal Exploration and Mining**

Council Policy on this issue includes all three Exploration Licences EL 2523, EL6524 and EL 6563.

**Question 2:** *Will you be activating or supporting a change in Council Policy?*

### **3. Public Health**

The negative health effects resulting from breathing the inevitable coal dust concern us greatly.

CSIRO research indicates that toxic gases with known adverse human health effects are measurable out to 5km from a blast site in open cut operations.

**Question 3:** *As you hold public office, you are accountable to the people. Do you support coal mining within 5km of any residential area of any town you represent in the Shire?*

**Using the same numbering Councillor Slack's reply is as follows.**

**1.A** Council has never resolved to prevent mining in the Gloucester Shire Council has consistently resolved to request the State Government to not renew the licences of Gloucester Resources Ltd and I believe it is the intention of the Council to continue to pursue this policy. It is certainly my intention. The area surrounding town is just one of these issues and there may be some hope of success in that area if we can convince the Government (and the Opposition) that it is a special case worthy of being dealt with on its own merits.

**1B** As I understand it, your group's objective is solely for the purpose of "the permanent removal of the three Exploration Licences 6523, 6524, 6563 (held by Gloucester Resources Ltd) and no coal mining in those areas ever."

Council has focused on non renewal of the three exploration licences. I believe it will continue to do so. Council has never lobbied to stop coal mining in other parts of the Shire. If your group is now expanding its objectives, then I would be very pleased to be informed of such changes.

**2.** No. Your members should be aware that the first resolution of Council relating to the exploration licences of Gloucester Resources was passed in February 2008, a considerable time before GRIP existed. You should also note that the Motion was moved by myself and Reads:-

"RESOLVED that Council requests the Minister for Primary Industries-Mineral Resources that the Exploration Licences for Gloucester Resources not be renewed."

The motion was moved by Cr G Slack, seconded Cr J Lyford and I believe, was carried unanimously.

**3.** I find this question quite misleading. It is true that Councillors are accountable to the people but only for matters within their powers. You will appreciate that such powers are very limited. In the context of your question you are seeking to widen such responsibility. The responsibility in this matter is clearly with the State Government and I would suggest that you direct this question to the Premier and the Minister responsible."

**GRIP notes that the Council Policy for Mining/ Petroleum extraction as of 21 May 2008 is as follows:**

*Councillor Slack, Shaw and Ryan declared an interest and left the meeting.*

18/1/08 MOVED by Councillor Rosenbaum and SECONDED by Councillor Lyford that Council's policy in relation to mining/petroleum extraction be:

Council recognises the economic benefits and responsible environmental management of past and current mining operations within the Shire, however, despite economic benefits, any extension or new mining proposals will not be supported:

Unless stringent environmental and social expectations are met

Unless extensive community consultation has taken place

If the aesthetics of the Shire are compromised in any way

If the proposal is located in a State Conservation Area

The MOTION was PUT and CARRIED

#### **Letter to Councillors**

**The questions to other councillors were slightly different in wording but were the same in content and meaning.**

#### **Reply from Councillor Tony Tersteeg's**

"I have been concerned for some time that some councillors have been paying lip service to ratepayers concerns in regard to the three exploration licences although I was shocked as many people were when Julie Lyford was dumped as mayor. While there are many issues that a Gloucester councillor must address, the main reason that I stood in the election was my concern with the Gloucester Resources Exploration Leases and my willingness to support Julie L. and John R. in these issues.

In answer to your questions I state the following:

I am opposed to all three exploration licences as is the present Council Policy and I will oppose any changes to water down this policy and intend to

lobby to support the existing policy. I believe however, that I am in the minority. In answer to question 3, I do not support coal mining within 5km from the town of Gloucester or any residential area within the Shire. I would like to add that I am not totally against coal mining within the shire but mining has impacts and there are areas where there should be no mining and where there is mining it should be controlled so as not be detrimental to the people and the environment where they live. I take umbrage with the people that label myself and some of my supporters as "greenies or lefties et al" when we have exactly the same goals as the GRIP membership. The enemy of my enemy is my friend. Let's throw out the neanderthal labels and work together for the common goal. Cr. Tony Tersteeg"

#### **Reply from Councillor Ian Shaw**

"Gloucester Shire Council has been consistent in its response to the issue of Exploration Licences over recent years. Resolutions of Council in:- February 2008 and May 2008 strongly mirrored the stance your organisation took in December 2008 and earlier this year by requesting of the Minister that they not renew the EL's you refer to. I excluded myself from the May 2008 resolution because it incorporated Petroleum Extraction which is the industry I work in. A similar resolution to the May item was again moved in August 2008 and again in December 2008 which was followed by a deputation to the Minister for Mineral Resources.

A Forward Planning Committee meeting in January this year also moved a motion that went to and was accepted by the Mine Related Councils regarding this issue as well. I again excluded myself due to the mention of gas extraction.

In February 2009 Council again sought and received the support of the Mine Related Councils to exclude mining from the Environmental Protection Zones within the Gloucester LGA. In March 2009 a resolution was passed to again exclude mining from Scenic Protection Zones.

All of the resolutions I have referred to have been most emphatic in attempting to have coal mining excluded from the areas surrounding the Gloucester township and have had my support even if unable to vote due to mentions within some of the resolutions of petroleum extraction.

Part B of your question does not have my full support as the current mining operations within Gloucester Shire have been carried out without affecting the visual amenity of the area and have provided significant employment.

I believe your second question has been covered in the preceding comments.

Your third question needs qualification as the State Government has already approved mining within 5kms of some of the villages within our Shire however I do not support mining within 5kms of the Gloucester Township as it would be against previous resolutions of Council which I have supported.

I believe we need to work as a community to ensure the resolutions referred to above are strongly supported and that emphasis must be placed on a community response when Development Applications are lodged for coal mining especially in the vicinity of the Gloucester township."

#### **Reply from Councillor Katheryn Smith**

"The topic of Coal, and the exploration licences is alarming, I would hate to see our beautiful township turn into a coal mining town with multiple coal mines, either that be open cut or underground.

Minister Ian MacDonald has renewed exploration Licence 6563, 6523 and 6524 on 11 August 2009, even though council opposed of the renewal. I did not approve of the renewal and I still don't approve of the renewal.

The health allegations are a worry, and I would hate to see Gloucester's township forced to suffer the effects of mining.

Everyone has their own opinion on coal mining including the workers and families from the industry, I hope everyone can respect others opinion and appreciate all views on this topic. .

Don't let your right to have an opinion get in the way of you being friends with your neighbour.

Health concerns are a worry to me, not only within the 5km's radius, but also of the people who work there."

## **Water Monitoring**

GRIP is participating with other groups in the monitoring of water in the Avon. We believe this will assist in creating benchmark information if any problems arise at a later date.

## **Free Workshop**

Manning, Great Lakes Waterwatch – Water Quality Monitoring

You're Invited: farmers, community groups, and anyone interested in learning more about their waterways.

#### **The workshop covers:**

- Basic water testing training: Temperature, pH, electrical conductivity and turbidity
- Macro invertebrate sampling
- Learn about factors which impact on stream health, and some solutions

**When:** 16 November, 2009

10 am – 12 pm, to be followed by a light lunch

**Where:** On Avon River at property of Ed and Tina Robinson, 124 Jacks Rd, Gloucester

**Who:** Kirsty Hughes, Manning Great Lakes Waterwatch coordinator.

## Nationals Response To Our Request To Visit Gloucester.

GRIP sent the letter below to Mr Andrew Stoner, Nationals Leader, Mr Adrian Piccoli, Nationals Deputy Leader, The Hon George Souris and Mr Duncan Gay, Nationals Senator with regard to the Safeguarding Food Producing Lands Bill.

"This is a formal invitation from Gloucester Residents in Partnership (GRIP) and its 300 members, to you Mr Gay, to come to our town and present your party's views.

Recently, Senator Lee Rhiannon visited Gloucester to address the community with regard to the Greens' amendment to the mining Bill which was defeated in the Upper House. Many people were impressed with her presentation and appreciative of her support.

The Nationals supported the Bill and several of our members have received replies from you with regard to the Nationals' Safeguarding Food Producing Lands Bill, which you advised will be presented in November.

As Gloucester is a Nationals seat, it is vital that The Nationals represent our community by appearing before us, in person, to outline their policies on this issue. The residents want to know what the Nationals will be doing to protect our farms and town from mining should you succeed in winning the next election."

### Reply from Mr Piccoli

*"Your invitation to Mr Piccoli has been received and will be replied to as soon as it is possible."*

A further letter was sent without reply.

### Reply from The Hon. George Souris

*"I have every intention of addressing the residents of my Electorate. Your invitation of 29th Sept arrives after a long winter break and the day before the commencement of Sittings through to Christmas. However I do intend to accept your invitation."*

### Reply from Mr Duncan Gay,

*"Thank you for your kind invitation to visit Gloucester, I have visited on many occasions, I think*

*around ten, in the last few years. I have met with residents concerned about mining on several of those visits. My problem at the moment is time, I want to visit and I will visit, but it cant be until at least December.*

*The cause of my problem is the very,very tight timetable between now and when Parliament rises for the year , probably at the end of November. I am sure you would guess at the magnitude of the task of developing new legislation as important and controversial as this in such a limited time span. I need to get it right and into Parliament this year."*

### Reply from Mr Andrew Stoner

*"Thank you for your invitation to visit Gloucester in relation to the Mining Amendment (Safeguarding Agricultural Land and Water) Bill 2009 and the Nationals subsequent Bill.*

*I have visited Gloucester several times in recent years and am familiar with how important agricultural land is to the community of Gloucester.*

*I understand Duncan Gay MLC is currently preparing the Bill for introduction to the NSW Parliament and aims to introduce it before Parliament rises towards the end of the year.*

*I am in constant contact with Mr Gay on this issue and the development of the Bill. I can assure you every effort is being made to represent the best interests of the Gloucester community and we will keep you updated on its progress."*

To our knowledge the Bill is yet to be presented. GRIP will be sending invitations to all of the Nationals above to request their attendance at the Dr van Steenis presentation.

In representing Gloucester Shire, they need to be made aware of the health hazards of increased mining and the implications of inaction.

# GRIP

Gloucester Residents in Partnership Inc

[www.grip.org.au](http://www.grip.org.au)

GRIP CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY

# GRIP

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## JOINING PROCEDURE

- Applicants are asked to complete the application form below.
- The current joining fee is \$2 (or additional donation). Cheques payable to GRIP or payment in postage stamps.
- A current financial member, who knows you, will sign your application form and present it to the committee. Once accepted, you will receive the GRIP newsletter and other GRIP communications. This will be your confirmation of membership.

### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF GLOUCESTER RESIDENTS IN PARTNERSHIP INCORPORATED (GRIP)

I, (full name of applicant) \_\_\_\_\_

of (address) \_\_\_\_\_

(email) \_\_\_\_\_ (phone) \_\_\_\_\_

hereby apply to become a member of the abovenamed incorporated association. In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules of the association for the time being in force.

(signature) \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to be actively involved in GRIP YES / NO

I, a member of the association, nominate the applicant, who is personally known to me, for membership of the association.

(signature of proposer) \_\_\_\_\_

(name of proposer) \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_

Please send completed application and joining fee to: Member Liaison, 736 Waukivory Road, Gloucester 2422

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