

GRIP Newsletter

April 2010.

The chance of having a coal mine on the outskirts of Gloucester is now a greater possibility.

Read about the changes to GRL below.

Do you want to help GRIP to stop this mine? The committee is working hard but we are only eight people. We need more members to assist and more funds to do our work. Please contact us if you believe you can help in any way and please renew your membership. Your \$5 is vital to us. Just send your cheque with your name to GRIP PO Box 440 Gloucester. If you wish to contact us you can reply to this email or ring the President on 6558 3052.

GRIP committee enters its second year.
Details from the AGM.

The following people were elected to the committee for 2010.

President – Dianne Montague

Vice President – Murray Pakes

Secretary – Robin Besier

Assistant Secretary – Melissa Seale

Treasurer – Ed Robinson

Committee Members – Rod Besier, Michael Bowman and Norm Sage

Welcome to the new members and the members who have nominated to stand for another year. Thank you to all the outgoing committee members and all the members who have helped during the previous year.

A lot of concerns were raised at the meeting, many relating to land acquisition by GRL and the continued uncertainty of the possibility of a coal mine. The cumulative health effects were also highlighted and this area is one which the GRIP committee believes has particular impact for the community.

The following information is of the utmost importance for all the community

Gloucester Resources Ltd. Community Consultative Committee – Community Representatives Report.

New Chairman for GRL.

Gloucester Resources Limited Community Consultative Committee was held on Friday March 26, chaired by Mr Terrence Healey. Your community representatives Terry Hardwick, John Hughes, Gerald McCalden, Steve Robinson, Trevor Sansom and John Woodford attended. Just before the meeting committee members were informed by Mr Brian Wingett that a change of shareholders and directorships had occurred within GRL. The interests of Mr Victor Tadros and the late Greg Gardner have been replaced by other interests including Mr Keith Ross who is now chairman designate of Gloucester Resources Limited.

Mr Keith Ross, miner since he was 16 and coal trader, new chairman of GRL.

Mr Ross was formerly Managing Director of Whitehaven Coal and was responsible for its establishment. Although still a shareholder he is no longer a member of the Whitehaven Coal Board. The makeup of the GRL board will be Mr Keith Ross, his son Peter, a colleague Mr Graeme Holley and interests of a private company AMCI, represented by Mr Hans Mende. AMCI is owned by Mr Mende and his brother, of German nationality living in the US. Mr Brian Wingett remains as Managing Director and retains a third share in the company with the other members owning the remainder.

Mr Ian Kortlang no longer needed.

Mr Ross also advised that from now on he will be managing the Company's public relations and that Mr Ian Kortlang is no longer engaged in any capacity by GRL.

GRL focusing on the Forbesdale area.

Mr Ross advised that he wished to follow the same type of relationship with Gloucester and its surrounding towns as he had in Gunnedah with Whitehaven. He also stated that he wants all their activities to be transparent and with the new structure and board he hoped it would mark a new era for the activities of GRL. He indicated they would be concentrating their efforts in the Forbesdale area and hoped drilling would start in the next two months.

Two million tons of coal expected from the first pit.

He stated that the coal is in steep seams up to 45 degrees which quickly get too deep for open cut mines. He believes that they should get 2 million tonnes from the first pit. He said that over time they would meet their exploration commitments in all exploration areas held by GRL.

Mr Keith Ross believes there will be a mine. We will know in six months.

Whilst the process of proving the viability of a mine is in train, GRL, will undertake environmental investigations, mine planning, transport, drainage, access to ports etc. so that they can proceed to a production licence. With the expectation that there will be a mine, this preliminary work needs to be done now. He stated that they hoped within six months to know the broad scope of what they will be doing.

Affected property owners fall into three groups.

In dealings with affected landowners Mr Ross said they tended to fall into three groups.
Those who want to stay no matter what
Those who want to leave as quickly as possible
The largest group, those who are not sure what they want to do but want the option to sell if they can't live with a mine.

Mr Ross said he would deal with all affected landowners personally when he returns from overseas in late April. This would include those landowners who had an expectation that GRL would buy their properties and which were expected to settle in January 2010.

Land acquisition not a favoured approach by new board.

Mr Ross thought that GRL's property purchases were made too early in the process and said he was reluctant to put capital into farms. However, GRL's agricultural interests remain part of the GRL operation. An independent appraisal will be made to assess the cattle business. Mr John Hannaford who usually reports on the activities of GRL's agricultural pursuits was not present at the meeting. Mr Ross said that Mr Hannaford was not a member of the GRL Board and did not speak on behalf of the company.

Does Gloucester want a mine three kilometres away?

When questioned about the proximity of mining activities to Gloucester Township areas Mr Ross gave the example of Werris Creek where the mine is within 3 kilometres of the town. Apparently they had no problems there with farmers whose properties were located between the mine and the town. As far as he could see at present he had no intention of the mine being that close to Gloucester township. When asked of the long term future Mr Ross stating that he could work with farmers.

Community Reps. concerned that there will be a mine.

A summary of feeling from the meeting was that with a miner, and significant coal trader, in charge of the company, the exploration activity levels will increase and probably be more visible and directed. This at least should be easier to follow from a community perspective but many concerns remain now that Mr Ross believes a mine is very likely.

Gloucester residents with concerns or enquiries should address letters to Mr Terrence Healey, Chairperson, GRL Community Consultative Committee, Ada Chambers, Level 1/370 Pitt Street, Sydney 2000 and/or contact one of the Community Representatives.

The next meeting will be held on Friday 28th May 2010.

Speculation gone, reality sets in.

The GRIP committee have real concerns about the new controllers of GRL. Research into the board members and the company AMCI have shown that they are seasoned miners and entrepreneurs with

long associations in setting up and controlling coal mines. We believe that the assumptions and speculations surrounding GRL have largely been debunked but we will have to wait, once again, until Mr Ross returns from overseas this month to find out the next instalment.

While it is a relief to hopefully see the end to the land acquisition and the uncertainty that created, it is now appearing more likely that we will have a coal mine in the valley south, east of Gloucester.

The GRIP committee is stepping up its campaign of letter writing and agitation. Once a Development Application goes in there is very little chance that the mine will be rejected. As Mr George Souris stated in his letter to the Newcastle Herald, only one application has been rejected in the past 25 years in NSW.

Contact Mr Ross for information.

Mr Keith Ross has advised that he is available to talk to anyone as he likes to deal with people personally. His phone number is 0419 658 268. Mr Ross is overseas until after 20th April.

Let's not be fooled by their cooperative, friendly manner.

Mr Graham Holley, one of the Directors of GRL has a track record in mining.

Werris Creek Coal and Mr Holley, a director, were fined by The Land and Environment Court for breaching the conditions of its environment and protection license. The State Government constantly maintains that mining companies are heavily regulated but they fail to also advise that mining companies constantly breach those regulations.

The fines imposed for these breaches are tiny and make little impact on the company's finances. We could even be bold enough to say that the companies choose to breach the regulations as this involves far less loss of income than losing time in production. This, of course, is just speculation.

How you can help...

More than ever before we need your help to write letters to politicians stating your opposition to the proposed coal mine.

The contacts for politicians are attached with points you can use in your letter.

Four Corners investigates the impact of coal mines.

The ABC Four Corners program highlighted the huge burden the Upper Hunter community is paying for the financial benefit of the State. The incidence of respiratory problems, cancer and other illnesses are far higher in the area compared to the rest of NSW.

(See articles attached for further information)

Rally to support the Singleton and Upper Hunter residents.

Following the Four Corners report, three members of the GRIP committee attended a rally convened by Greens Senator Ms Lee Rhiannon outside Ms Jodie McKay's office in Newcastle. The Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group is calling for a Coal Health Study to be implemented by the NSW Government to gauge the cumulative health impacts of coal mines on the people of the Upper Hunter.

The GRIP committee is concerned for the health of the people of Gloucester.

What is happening in Singleton, Muswellbrook and Camberwell can and will happen here if further coal mining occurs. We will support all groups who are calling for greater accountability by coal companies and the NSW Government.

The NSW Government is failing in its Duty of Care to the people of this region by approving mining expansion and the possibility of further coal mines without investigating the cumulative impacts of coal pollution on the residents.

The Government and mining companies have little regard for the community.

Last Friday the NSW Lands Department handed over the Camberwell Common to Ashton Mining Company. (See attached article)

Coming up in the May newsletter more on the cumulative impacts of coal mines on our health.

GRIP

Gloucester Residents in Partnership Inc

www.grip.org.au

Useful information for sending a letter to politicians

Politicians give personal letters serious consideration. They accept that for every letter received there are between 10 and 100 voters who hold similar views. So it's important that as many people as possible write at least one. What follows is only a guideline, to be changed as each writer sees fit. Handwritten letters have as much impact as ones that are typed. It is usual for a Member of Parliament to send a reply.

Setting Out a Letter

(Your address)

(The date)

(Name of Politician) (See contacts attached)

(Their Address)

Dear (Mr or Ms or Hon),

(It's best that you simply write what you feel. The following details may help. You could also use any of the information from the articles attached.)

(Gloucester Residents in Partnership has as its Objective: "That exploration licences 6523, 6524 and 6563 are permanently removed so that no coal mining occurs in those areas.")

You might wish to mention:

Effects of coal mining so close to town on health, through coal dust and contaminated water in rivers.

Noise and visual concerns. Movement of trucks and heavy equipment.

Heavy industry 24-7

Disruption to the flow of the Gloucester and Avon Rivers.

Decline in tourism, a major income earner for the district.

Effects on farming, including expanding organic production.

Decreasing property values, and difficulty attracting new residents.

Limited economic benefit of coal mining, as most mine workers do not live locally, increasing mechanisation means fewer employees needed, most equipment and supplies sourced elsewhere so little value for local business.

Short-term nature of coal mining – in a few years they move on, but the damage remains.)

(You may wish to mention the effects of coal burning on the environment.)

(What action you would like the Member of Parliament to take on your behalf?)

Yours sincerely,

..... (signature)

(print your name)

.....

The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP

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The Hon. Steve Whan MP

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The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt MP

Deputy Premier
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The Hon. Tony Kelly MLC

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The Hon. Frank Sartor MP

Minister for Climate Change and the Environment
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)
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The Hon. Jodi McKay MP

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