

STATEMENT OF POSITION

Tabled by Barrington-Gloucester-Stroud Preservation Alliance at the Gloucester AGL Community Consultation Committee Meeting held 12/01/2012

Before any recommendations with regard to a peer review appointment are made, the following items should be addressed and satisfactorily resolved. These are based on documentation previously provided to the CCC members.

1. *The Reviewer is required to review the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports for Stage 1 of the project which are purported to cover hydrology (surface waters) and hydrogeology (ground waters).* However, the Phase 2 report has not yet been published is not available to GCCC members, and the Phase 1 report only covers limited factual data in respect of hydrogeology (no hydrology).

2. *The Phase 1 report includes recommendations for major, further, factual investigations.* There is no indication by AGL whether this work has been done, or will be done.

3. *The Document refers to "water resource protection" and "impacts to water resources" as being the key issues for the review, but nowhere defines what are the components that are the key drivers of the study that is to be reviewed.* Is the review to cover swamps, rivers, dams, floodplains, existing bores, potential groundwater resources, groundwater pressure regimes, groundwater chemistry, disposal of extracted contaminated water, baseflows to springs, creeks, rivers and ephemeral flows, impacts of surface water fauna and flora etc?.

Put another way: *The Document does not define the terms of the studies (Phase 1 and Phase 2) that are supposed to be reviewed - so it is impossible to select a reviewer with appropriate expertise.* Does the Reviewer need to be an expert in 3D groundwater modelling, or groundwater chemistry, or hydrology, or aquatic problems?

4. *The Reviewer is required to provide independent advice to the GCCC.* But the **GCCC has no authority** to make any decisions or recommendations

5. *The Reviewer is indicated as reporting to the Chairman of the GCCC,* but that **Chairman is paid by AGL, and is therefore potentially compromised.** This is unsatisfactory corporate governance and raises issues of probity.

6. *The Reviewer is required to determine whether the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports represent a "fair and reasonable" study.* This is impossible because the **scope and objectives of the Study are not defined anywhere** and therefore "fair and reasonable" has no meaning.

7. *The Review is required to be completed by 17 February 2012.* This is an impossibly short period if the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports are properly comprehensive - and if they are not then the exercise is not meaningful.

8. *The Document only refers to **quantities** of subsurface water* - it nowhere refers to **changes** to groundwater equipotentials, these changes are critical to bores and baseflow recharge of creeks, rivers and swamps

9. *The Document, and the Phase 1 report, nowhere refer to the **actual chemicals** that will be injected into the ground for hydrofracturing, but **only** in terms of types of chemical and quantities of chemicals - **yet these chemicals are one of the major concerns in respect to CSG extraction** (see Scientific American Nov 2011).*

10. *The Document states that it is "important that the Reviewer identifies any technical gaps and recommends any additional work programs... ". This is meaningless in the context where there is **no definition of the scope of the study** (see Point 3, above), and in any event the GCCC has no powers to ensure that such work is implemented - and there are no consequences if the work is not implemented.*

11. *From investigation and further advice that has been made available by practitioners in the field, **of the list of names proposed, three of the persons (at least) are compromised** according to the criteria that have been proposed by AGL.*

12. We are further aware that Gloucester Shire Council and Taree City Council, whose ratepayers are downstream users of water sourced from Gloucester Shire, **have resolved for a pause to CSG related activities until the completion of suitable scientific studies regarding Coal Seam Gas Exploration and Production.** In addition, both MidCoast Water (which is responsible for the provision of water services to over 80,000 people – including Gloucester) and Great Lakes Council have adopted Position Statements calling for the implementation of the **precautionary principle** with regard to any proposed CSG developments, **Those expressed views which reflect community concerns should be taken into account by GCCC members as they form their views of AGL's proposals.**

Given all of the above issues,

I move Mr Chairman:

That this meeting be adjourned until these matters have been addressed satisfactorily, point by point; and

That on future occasions, sufficient time be given for GCCC members to properly and fully acquaint themselves with adequate and necessary documentation and, where deemed necessary seek expert advice, before they are expected to provide any further input into recommendations associated with the Gloucester Gas Project.

(This concluded the statement as tabled).

In speaking to the motion I further added that

“To make a decision on a reviewer now is illogical, hasty, and ill-considered. For AGL this is a project in the hundreds of millions. Much is at stake. For the communities of Gloucester and Taree in particular and the wider adjoining LGAs as well. The deliberations here impact, amongst other things, their water supply and their livelihoods, now, and for generations to come. Much is at stake.”

This is a matter to be addressed carefully and with sufficient time and adequate resources. An extraordinary meeting like this, hastily convened, and with a paucity of suitable information, does not have the characteristics of a well thought through set of actions for a project of this size.

The motion was not supported. I felt that I could add no further value to a meeting that was, in my view, an AGL creature, and withdrew from the meeting.

John Dugas, BGSPA Representative on the GCCC. 0411-112072

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