



CSG Review Submission - Bruce GILBERT
Bruce Gilbert to: csg.review@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au

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History:

This message has been replied to and forwarded.

Dear Chief Scientist and Staff

Please find my CSG submission.

Good luck with the review.

Regards

Bruce Gilbert
Forbesdale, Gloucester, NSW



Chief Scientist CSG Review BG.pdf

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25 April 2013

NSW Chief Scientist
csg.review@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au

Review of CSG activities in NSW

I understand you are conducting a review of CSG activities throughout NSW with a focus on the impacts of these activities on human health and the environment.

I live in Forbesdale, a so-called rural/residential area just 7 km south of Gloucester CBD. The Forbesdale area, and other areas between it and Gloucester (eg, Bucketts Way South and the 2 rural/residential areas on Jacks Road) border and look into the Gloucester Valley. There are over 30 families living in Forbesdale, and many more on Bucketts Way South and the Jacks Road r/r estates. Stage 1 of the AGL CSG project is contained within the part of the Gloucester Valley which all these individual residences and estates overlook. It is understood that AGL have further stages for the area currently under consideration. The recently introduced NSW government's CSG 2 km exclusion zone for (Sydney) suburban residential areas does nothing to assist us for two reasons.

1. Our clusters of homes do not have a big enough population to meet the size deemed by the government to warrant protection. It is obvious to us that there are different rules for towns and cities and that small populations are deemed by our state government to be collateral damage. (Cynics might say that the recent government's exclusions zone is more about politics and votes rather than humans, young and old, healthy and less healthy!).
2. We are told that any exclusion zone would not apply to the AGL Gloucester project (Stage 1) because it has been approved – even though AGL still needs to meet a number of “conditions” before it is allowed free reign over our Valley.

The result is that the residents of Forbesdale and the other areas mentioned above will be forced to endure the multiple effects of an extensive CSG gas field well within 2 km from their homes.

These multiple effects include:

- Health impacts from air quality and noise pollution (see submission by Barrington Gloucester Stroud Preservation Alliance with comments by Dr Steve Robinson);
- Mental health impacts from having stressful living conditions thrust upon you and a loss of control over some aspects of your life;
- Financial implications such as reduced property value, or even a total inability to sell (which of course has a huge impact on mental health).

Additionally, there is concern for contamination of the Gloucester Valley/Taree water tables and down-stream water supplies as the proposed CSG field is on a geologically complex, multi-strata and fractured sub-terrain. Further, much of the proposed area is a floodplain.

Of course, governments seem not to want to consider cumulative impacts of industrialisation of the area, and are therefore simply not interested in the fact that the Forbesdale area is also the proposed site of an open cut coal mine (Rocky Hill Stages 1 and 2, with other

Stages to probably follow) just 900 metres from the nearest property. And there is also the Yancoal open cut mine at Stratford which is currently seeking to extend its mines with at least 3 new pits.

The cumulative impact of all these proposed developments will, without doubt, result in the slow and painful strangulation and ultimate demise of Forbesdale and other nearby residential areas. Further, approvals of mines and CSG projects will certainly sound the death-knell of a local 500-head dairy farm, as well that of other near-by smaller land-based businesses. Further, the local Gloucester Aerodrome, a declared government 'emergency' airfield, will also disappear. It was used for 3 full weeks by about 7 aircraft during the 2012 local RFS's S.44 declarations.

I would also like to draw to your attention that whilst there has been some protection for large communities from CSG wells and wind farms with a 2km exclusion zone, the exclusion zone for open cut coal mines is a mere 200 metres. Given the nearly unbearable burden of the huge impacts on people of open cut coal mines this situation is one which is in dire need of a review by the state and federal governments, but MUST be at least taken into consideration as part of your review.

The lack of scientific data in regard to fugitive emissions from CSG properties and wells is worrying, especially given that organisations such as APPEA are promoting CSG as a "green" fuel. In fact it could be that, if the CSG industry had to factor in the cost of fugitive emissions, then the industry would not be so "green" after all. And some of their projects may not be as financially viable as they had hoped. The possibility of a reasonably high percentage of gas well casing failures will also contribute to emissions, as well as water contamination.

I invite you to visit the Forbesdale, Jacks Road and Gloucester areas and meet with residents, see how much these areas will have to bear from AGL's operations.

Given that the industry (eg. APPEA) is busy lobbying to persuade people and the government that there is nothing wrong with CSG, I would like to request that you seek out or commission truly independent sources of information for your fact sheets. To rely on information given out by industry is not acceptable.

And if you could offer any advice as to how over 30 families can live with 330 CSG wells and an open cut coal mine within 2kms of their homes, we would all be very pleased to hear from you.

If AGL Stage 1 does not have a 2 km exclusion zone approved, then should the approval flood-gates open even wider for AGL Stages 2, 3, etc, in the future, Blind Billy will see that these subsequent stages WILL more than likely have exclusion zone conditions attached. If that is so, why not have AGL and other CSG companies be directed now to cease planning and operations in areas that are deemed by the government as being too close to residential areas.

In conclusion, I draw to your attention the telling and damning fact that AGL has undertaken a miniscule (believed to be <5%) investigation of water on its area of operations in the Gloucester Valley, and continues to espouse to the community, and government, the 'thoroughness' of its water studies.

I draw your attention to 2 meetings scheduled for Gloucester in early May.

Public Meeting - 2 May 2013

Residents are invited by Council to attend a Public Meeting on mining in the Gloucester Valley. The meeting will be held in the Gloucester Soldiers Club Auditorium on Thursday 2 May 2013, commencing at 7.30pm. The purpose of the meeting is to enable Council to provide an update to residents on what specific actions it has undertaken in response to operations of the extractive industries in our valley.

Public Meeting – Thursday 16 May 2013

On Thursday 16 May, at 7 pm., AGL will be speaking at a community meeting organised by Gloucester Council, also at Gloucester Soldier's Club.

Perhaps your staff could attend to observe first-hand the local feelings towards CSG and other extractive industries. I understand that these meetings may be 'tweeted'.

(signed)

Bruce Gilbert