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Illawarra and catchments left out of NSW Government Plan

The NSW Government today released its long awaited Strategic Regional Land Use Plan and Aquifer Interference Policy; initiatives that the public was told would address concerns about the compatibility of coal seam gas (CSG) with other land uses, and protect water, health, agriculture and the environment. Stop CSG Illawarra has described the plans released today as a disaster and a broken election promise; and one that left out the Illawarra, and drinking water catchments. Spokesperson Jess Moore commented:

"The Government has ignored the Illawarra and failed to protect water catchments from the risks posed by CSG.

"The community has waited a long time for O'Farrell to take action and protect water, health, agriculture and the environment. These plans do not do this.

"They facilitate ongoing development of the industry.

"Despite a promise to rule out sensitive areas, no areas are off limits to CSG under the new plans; every part of NSW is still up for grabs.

"While the plans add a new assessment panel to the approval process for CSG mining on farmland, wineries and horse studs, our water catchments - astoundingly - don't even get a mention.

"Drilling and fracking are still allowed in NSW water catchments under the new plans; and approvals can still be granted without an independent scientific assessment.

"The Illawarra project can continue unimpeded, despite enormous public opposition.

"The fact remains: water resources are at risk and the Government is not stopping it.

"There is now more than enough evidence that CSG mining brings risks.

"The contamination of water systems and supplies and farmland show the need for an immediate moratorium on all CSG projects and a royal commission into the full impacts of the industry.

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