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Media Release: 30th April, 2013

Call to ban CSG in catchments

Tomorrow stop coal seam gas (CSG) groups from across greater Sydney will meet with MPs to discuss CSG and drinking water catchment areas. A group representing Stop CSG Illawarra, Stop CSG Sydney, Stop CSG Sydney Water Catchment, and the Southern Highlands Coal Action Group will meet with Chris Hartcher, Brad Hazard, Luke Foley and others. Stop CSG Illawarra spokesperson Jess Moore commented:

"We are calling on the NSW Government to ban all CSG exploration and mining in our drinking water catchments.

"CSG exploration and mining always involves unearthing water that is high in salt and methane, and can contain toxic and radioactive compounds and heavy metals. The risks are not theoretical. At CSG sites in NSW heavy metals and toxins have contaminated soil and water.

"The current legislation does not protect our catchments, and development is being pursued."

The NSW Government has recently renewed CSG licences over the Woronora, Upper Nepean and Shoalhaven catchments. A test well has been drilled in the Warragamba catchment. The Government has recommended re-approval of a 16 CSG well project in and around the Woronora and Upper Nepean catchments, and determination currently sits with the NSW Planning Assessment Commission. Moore commented:

"This is absurd! The drinking water of 60% of people in NSW comes from 2% of the land. CSG exploration and mining should be banned in these areas.

"Water is more important than gas."

Before the last State election, Barry O'Farrell promised such a ban: "The next Liberal/National Government will ensure that mining cannot occur... in any water catchment area, and will ensure that mining leases and mining exploration permits reflect that common sense; no ifs, no buts, a guarantee." Stop CSG Sydney Water Catchment spokesperson Brett Cottee commented:

"We expect O'Farrell to make good on his promise.

"CSG mining poses unacceptable risks to water catchment areas, and community opposition to such development is overwhelming.

"We will convey the concerns and expectations of our communities.

"The legislation must change, and our communities will fight this Government until it does."

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