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Media Release: 1st October, 2013

CSG review highlights risks, unknowns and need for no-go zones

Last night the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane, released the final report on her review into coal seam gas (CSG) in NSW. The report confirms risks, notes many unknowns that remain and identifies that regulation of CSG by the NSW Government needs an overhaul. However, the recommendations from the review are framed by the terms of reference, and focus on how to develop the industry, not if or under what conditions development is safe. Stop CSG Illawarra spokesperson Jess Moore commented:

"The report confirms risks that community members have been talking about for years.

"It states that many unknowns remain and that regulation of CSG by the NSW Government needs an overhaul."

The report notes that "... it is inevitable that the CSG industry will have some unintended consequences, including as the result of accidents, human error, and natural disasters."

Moore continued: "But the recommendations from the review are framed by the terms of reference, and focus on how to develop the industry, not if or under what conditions development is safe.

"Stop CSG Illawarra does not support an approach of 'adapt when things go wrong'.

"The Government must legislate no-go zones where 'unintended consequences' are ruled out.

"We want the land in NSW that supplies our drinking water protected; areas the report labels 'particularly sensitive'.

"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. It involves damage to aquifers, methane leaks and industrial development that are incompatible with our drinking water catchments.

"A permanent ban on CSG in drinking water catchment areas is simply common sense."

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