

Event to Oppose Coal Seam Gas Mining in the Illawarra

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The revelation that the Keneally government gave the go-ahead to CSG mines in the Illawarra has outraged many. Fifteen CSG wells were recently approved for development in the Northern Illawarra, under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, and APEX has an additional well application before the NSW Department of Planning. These wells are in and around the Sydney Water Catchment, and pose a direct threat to our water supply.

Concerned residents have organised a screening of Gasland, followed by community discussion about opposing coal seam gas mining and fracking, for 6pm this Saturday, March 5, at the Thirroul District Community Centre.

Jess Moore, event organiser, stated: “Our concerns include possible physical damage to the environment, groundwater loss, groundwater and surface contamination, toxic chemical use, untreatable 'produced water', leaky wells, increased risk of bush fires and gas explosions.

“The most well known — and unpopular — method is hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Both Labor and the Coalition in NSW now acknowledge the harmful chemicals used in this process, though they have not been banned. Fracking chemicals are associated with cancer, liver and kidney problems, and damage to the immune and nervous systems.

“All CSG methods result in ‘produced water’ that can contain toxins that are impossible to remove.

“Traces of toxic chemicals have already been found at several drill sites in Queensland.”

In the case of the Illawarra bores, the NSW Department of Mineral Resources requested that the 2009 Local Environment Plan rezone Sydney Catchment Authority lands west of the escarpment to permit CSG mining. The unelected, state government-appointed administrators at Wollongong City Council complied.

“Apart from some Darkes Forest land owners, whose approval on leases was required, the community was not consulted or even contacted. If CSG is safe, why have plans been kept secret?”

“The government has put mining industry profits ahead of the needs of community, and the environment that supports us. Opposition from the community is the only thing that will turn this around.”

Peter Turner added: “Apex plans uncovered by local residents In September 2010 show proposals for 26 additional sites in 7 zones around the Metropolitan Mine workings.”

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