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New policy breaks promises and fails to protect drinking water

The NSW government today released its Strategic Regional Land Use Policy; plans the public was told would protect land and water. Stop CSG Illawarra has described the plans released today as a disaster and a broken election promise; and one that fails to protect drinking water catchments. Spokesperson Jess Moore commented:

"The government promised to create no-go zones to protect water, agriculture and the environment from CSG.

"This policy breaks this promise. It facilitates ongoing development of the industry starting with renewal offers to CSG companies.

"No part of NSW – not the land where food is grown, not our water catchments – has been ruled out to CSG development."

Before the last state election, then NSW opposition leader Barry O'Farrell made a promise to ban CSG mining in NSW drinking water catchments. He said: "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."

Yet the NSW Government's new policy does not rule out CSG development in drinking water catchments. In fact, it does not even classify drinking water catchments as land of strategic importance. Moore continued:

"There is now more than enough evidence that CSG mining brings risks. Our drinking water catchments should be protected from these risks. Water is more important than gas.

"CSG mining involves land clearing, gas leaks, contaminated water and industrial development. It draws water to the surface that is saline, contains methane and can contain toxic and radioactive compounds and heavy metals. It should not be allowed in the drinking water catchment."

Moore concluded:

"The campaign to stop CSG, protect land and water and put science before development will continue.

"The campaign is supported by thousands in the Illawarra community, united in calling for this common-sense approach. And we will stand up until land, water and communities are protected by law.

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