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Mr Hartcher: Who do you work for?

This week, NSW Resources Minister Chris Hartcher accused campaigners against coal seam gas (CSG) of "quite massively" distorting facts, presenting information "[known] to be untrue" and only using the US documentary Gaslands – which he claimed does not relate to operations in Australia. He went on to encourage the CSG Industry to "get out there and sell the message." [1] Stop CSG Illawarra spokesperson Jess Moore commented:

"Enough. Mr Hartcher states that we are making false claims, yet fails to provide an example. We challenge the Minister to specify, or to cease making such claims.

"Toxic spills, gas leaks, fracking blow outs and groundwater loss have happened. And in Australia.

"CSG clearly poses risks and communities should not be put in a position where roll-out comes before research, as was the case with asbestos and thalidomide.

"Even Hartcher agrees. Or he did, before he was elected."

In 2005 Hartcher told NSW Parliament:

- "It is well-known that in the northern Pilliga forest, massive environmental damage was caused by Eastern Star Gas at its Bohena No. 2 drill site as a result of exploration practices. Experiences in the United States of America, and in the State of Wyoming especially, clearly demonstrate disastrous problems associated with this industry through groundwater loss, contamination and waste water.
- "The people of the Central Coast cannot be sacrificed on the altar of economic expediency. Their entitlement to clean, safe water must be paramount.
- "We on the Central Coast are entitled to satisfactory answers from the Government about our concern for our water supply." [2]

Moore commented:

"We ask Mr Hartcher: What's changed? Why are these practices now acceptable in our drinking water catchments?

"Stop CSG Illawarra calls for a freeze on the industry, for an investigation.

"A science first approach to CSG development is just plain common sense.

"Sensitive areas - including drinking water catchments - should be ruled out. Indeed, Mr Hartcher's government made a "no ifs, no buts" guarantee to do so, and has now broken that promise. [3]

"Stop CSG Illawarra calls on Mr Hartcher to stand with communities and demand real answers, rather than promote the CSG industry."

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[1] <http://www.mydailynews.com.au/news/csg-campaigners-accused-of-using-distorted-figures/1575685/>

[2] http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parliament/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LA20050503026?open&refNavID=HA8_1

[3] <http://vimeo.com/50130520> (@35 seconds)