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Government acknowledges CSG risks, fails to protect catchments

This morning the NSW Government announced new coal seam gas (CSG) rules, including a ban on CSG development in residential areas and critical industry clusters, such as horse breeders and wine producers. They also stated this would only apply to new CSG exploration, assessment and production activities. Stop CSG spokesperson Jess Moore commented:

"This is good news – and a welcome announcement – but it does not protect the land and water of NSW communities. It does not rule out CSG development in drinking water catchments.

"This announcement acknowledges the risks posed by CSG, then states that existing approvals will go ahead; a contradictory position.

"The Apex Energy project – in and around the Woronora and Upper Nepean drinking water catchments – can still be approved, putting at risk the drinking water of two-thirds of people in NSW.

"But people who have been spared CSG on their door-step, under today's announcement, need clean drinking water too.

“The Premier has failed to rule-out CSG in drinking water catchment areas. These take up less than 2% of land in NSW, yet provide drinking water for 60% of people in the state.

"These are areas so protected that I can be fined up to $44,000 for walking there.

"The people of NSW need more than another Government investigation. We need a freeze on the industry for a Royal Commission; one that looks into the relationship between industry and Government, and operates transparently.

Much about the announcement also remains unclear. Moore continued:

"The two page announcement from the Government is short on details. Will this only apply to new development applications? Will this only apply to new licences? How will residential areas be defined?

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