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Media Release: 21st August 2011

CSG Industry fails to address community concerns in heated forum

Today Stop CSG Illawarra hosted a community forum on coal seam gas, attended by over 200 residents. The forum featured a panel of expert speakers, including:

- **Tom Fontaine**, the Managing Director of Ormil Energy, one of the CSG mining companies with approval to drill locally;
- **Alan Lindsay**, a chemical engineer who has held senior executive positions within the oil industry in Australia and overseas, and the coal industry in the Hunter Valley;
- **Kirsty Ruddock**, principal solicitor with the NSW Environmental Defenders Office; and
- **Dr Helen Redmond**, from Doctors for the Environment Australia.

Stop CSG Illawarra spokesperson, Jess Moore, stated:

"Many residents have questions and concerns, given the mounting evidence about the impact of coal seam gas mining on drinking water, health and the environment.

"With most of the local approvals on Special Area catchment land, the contamination of drinking water is a major concern.

"Fontaine told the meeting waste water disposal would be sub contracted out.

"Stop CSG Illawarra called on Fontaine to enter into an agreement with the community, guaranteeing that no fracking would happen under the local licences. He turned us down.

"This begs the question: what if fracking proves profitable? Will it happen at the expense of our water, health and the environment?"

"This forum did not assuage the broad community concern about coal seam gas, yet recent government changes will not stop the local approvals from going ahead.

"We need an immediate moratorium on all CSG mining for an investigation to take place. The public has a right to know. Moreover, we have the right to say 'no' if the mounting evidence tells us it's not safe."

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