

4th November 2013



SUBMISSION ON CSG EXCLUSION ZONES

On behalf of STOP Coal Seam Gas Sydney Water Catchment I thank you for the opportunity to have input into the proposed amendment to the State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) 2007 and the implementation of coal seam gas exclusion zones.

Stop CSG Sydney Water Catchment welcomes the New South Wales Government's decision to protect residential zones from coal seam gas development. However the 2 km exclusion zone is arbitrary and has not been confirmed by any scientific study. It is very likely gas developments may have health effects many kilometres from any well site.

If we are worried about coal seam gas mining in residential zones you would have to ask why you would risk this industry in water catchments, particularly Sydney's Water Catchment which supplies fresh drinking water to in excess of 4.5 million people. As recently as this week an article in the Australian referred to a survey which stated that most professionals in the water industry believe that coal-seam gas exploitation poses a risk to groundwater and therefore will affect our catchments ability to function.

[*http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/csg-a-risk-to-water-industry-pros/story-e6frg9df-1226752387801](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/csg-a-risk-to-water-industry-pros/story-e6frg9df-1226752387801)

It fails also to alleviate the concerns of the food producing industry as the Gateway process does not have the power to stop a mining project from proceeding. It may only impose conditions.

How is it that rural residents do not receive the same protection as people in residential zones? This is particularly highlighted if you consider rural schools, which could have CSG wells drilled up to the school boundary, where children spend the best part of their week.

This amendment allows local councils to opt out of the exclusion zone. While none have opted to date, this is a very worrying change which leaves the council open to undue lobbying and the potential for corruption.

Critical Industry Clusters only confined to vineyards and horse Studs, it is inconceivable that these industries would be protected but not food producing industries for example cropping, horticulture or dairy.

At this time it appears to many observers and participants of this issue that there is almost now a stalemate situation where no one is happy:

Mining companies do not have a stable legislative framework to plan their businesses; farmers need the security to know they can grow our food without interference; residents are still worried that this industry will be forced upon them despite the exclusion zones and residents are also entitled to be confident that their drinking water is not under threat.

Many experts tell us that the answer, to all of the above, is to **slow down** this resource is not going anywhere and will become even more valuable in the future. There may well be a place for a coal seam gas industry in New South Wales but common sense would dictate never in water catchments. It is time the NSW Government called all the stakeholders together including mining companies, elected government representatives, farmers, residents, local councils and environmental groups to decide if and where we can proceed with this industry.

Will D'Arcy

Stop CSG Sydney Water Catchment