



MEDIA RELEASE

NSW Government tough new rules not enough for the urban fringe of South Western Sydney

The Scenic Hills Association is pleased that the O'Farrell Government has finally accepted community and expert evidence from the 2011 NSW Upper House Inquiry that CSG mining carries environmental and health risks that have not been sufficiently researched.

However the Scenic Hills Association remains sceptical about the wording of the policy. Spokesperson, Jacqui Kirkby said, 'We're so used to the deception and spin put out by government and the CSG mining industry that we're always looking for the loopholes. The 2 km exclusion zone from **residential areas** for **new** petroleum exploration licences and **new** production leases hinges on definitions that haven't been supplied yet. What is **residential**; does it include settlements of five acre blocks? What does **new** apply to: AGL holds an existing production lease (PPL5) for half the Scenic Hills as far north as Raby Road in the South West Sydney Metropolitan Area, but it doesn't yet have development consent. (It was applying for that as part of Stage 3.) Does this mean this area is in or out? And what does the government mean when it applies the exclusion zone to **underground works**; does this mean that AGL could still draw water and gas from under people's homes as long as the well (however defined) terminates 2 kms away? If this were the case then the O'Farrell Government ban would be a Clayton's ban on CSG mining.'

'We also question whether the 2km zone is based on any science. Air and water impacts just don't stop at a wall 2km from the urban area. Campbelltown already has air pollution and associated health problems that could be associated with the coal seam gas mining that is already going on out here on the urban fringe. This needs to be investigated. How close is too close, really? We need to see the detail.'

Finally, while we don't want to appear ungrateful, we believe that this policy statement should have included a moratorium for the rest of the state until the science is settled. Out here on the urban fringe we all have friends and family living here who don't fall into the CSG mining exclusion zone. If it's unsafe for 150,000 people in urban areas why is it OK for a farmer and his family? CSG mining policy should be based on the science not on votes. A moratorium would at least give other parts of the Macarthur region a chance to halt the potential damage of 10 years of gas extraction while waiting for the research to catch up.'

Note: Jacqui Kirkby is also a member of the Community Consultative Committee for the Camden Gas Project.

Authorised by Jacqui Kirkby (0411873999) and Fr. Greg Burke (0421158067) on behalf of the Scenic Hills Association, 19th February 2013, www.scenichills.org.au