



The Hon Chris Hartcher

Minister for Resources and Energy

Special Minister of State

Minister for the Central Coast

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT IMPOSES HOLD ON CSG ACTIVITIES TO PROTECT SYDNEY WATER CATCHMENT

The NSW Government has implemented a hold on exploration and extraction of natural gas from coal seams in the 'Special Areas' zone within Sydney's drinking water catchment effective immediately.

Resources Minister Chris Hartcher said the NSW Government supports the principle of restricting activities in the Special Areas until there is greater understanding of potential impacts of exploration and extraction of natural gas from coal seams.

"The NSW Government recognises community concern that accessing and performing drilling in these pristine areas may have an effect on the drinking water supplies to Sydney and the Illawarra," he said.

"Designated Special Areas in the Catchment are recognised due to their topography and importance in filtering surface waters that flow in to the catchment's dams.

"No activities should occur in these areas if they are detrimental to the quality and supply of water to the large population of Sydney and the Illawarra.

"Accordingly, the NSW Government has imposed an immediate hold which will stop any activities under the Petroleum Onshore Act related to the commercial exploration or extraction of natural gas from coal seams within the Special Areas.

"The community has expectations that certain areas remain off-limits to the exploration and extraction of natural gas from coal seams until there is an evidence-based understanding of the impacts of activities in these areas on water quality and quantity."

While there are no existing approvals in place for drilling in the Special Areas, all previous drilling in these areas occurred under consents provided by the previous government.

The hold will be imposed pending an investigation by the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer into the impact of coal seam gas activities and other contributing factors on water in the Special Areas.

This study will supplement the Chief Scientist's current coal seam gas Review which includes an in-depth, State-wide analysis paper into potential concerns relating to exploration and extraction of natural gas from coal seams on water.

Mr Hartcher commended the hard work of MPs Jai Rowell, Lee Evans, Bryan Doyle and Gareth Ward who have expressed concern on behalf of their constituents at exploration and extraction of natural gas from coal seams in the Catchment.

“The NSW Government has listened to the community, has listened to representations from MPs and has enacted this hold to build on what are already the toughest controls on the extraction and exploration of natural gas from coal seams in the country.”

For information on existing regulations covering coal seam gas visit:
www.csg.nsw.gov.au.