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Western Sydney councils welcome freeze on fracking

The President of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) has welcomed the NSW Energy Minister's decision to extend the freeze on new coal seam gas operations.

The extension means that applications for gas exploration licences and prospecting authority applications will remain on hold until September 2015, until after the next NSW state election.

WSROC President, Cllr Tony Hadchiti said WSROC was keen to ensure that proper controls were in place to prevent potential environmental damage resulting from coal seam gas exploration and mining.

“Many of these coal seam gas proposals are located in areas earmarked for major growth, especially in Sydney's south-west. We need to see more research on the potential health and environmental impacts on residents in Western Sydney and in other areas affected by fracking.

“We cannot afford to put our communities at risk by rushing through decisions on this important issue, no matter how loud the voices of mining and energy companies.

“Deferring the decision is the right thing to do, given we are expecting the NSW Chief Scientist, Mary Kane to release her report into the issue soon. It would be irresponsible of the government to grant these licences before we know what the true impacts will be.

Cllr Hadchiti said residents had made their concerns very clear to their councils in regard to health and environmental problems associated with fracking and developers were also worried about the potential for subsidence under new land release areas.

“Local councils are very close to their communities and hear them loud and clear. We share their concerns and would urge the Government to work closely with councils and the community before making any decisions,” Cllr Hadchiti said.

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About WSROC:

Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) represents 10 local councils in Western Sydney and provides a strong regional voice on behalf of its residents and member councils.

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