

Frequently Asked Questions Coal Seam Gas exclusion zones expanded

WHAT HAS THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED?

- The NSW Government has announced expanded coal seam gas (CSG) exclusion zones as part of its commitment to make residential areas and Critical Industry Clusters off-limits to CSG activity.
- The new exclusion zones - combined with those implemented in October 2013 - mean an estimated 95 per cent of NSW dwellings covered by current petroleum licences are now protected from CSG exploration and development.
- In October 2013, the NSW Government prohibited coal seam gas activity in existing residential zones in all 152 local government areas in NSW and future residential growth areas in the North West and South West Growth Centres of Sydney. CSG exploration and extraction were also banned in 2km buffers around these zones.
- The additional CSG exclusion zones now being adopted - which were publicly exhibited in October and November 2013 - cover seven additional village areas, future residential growth areas across NSW and Critical Industry Clusters (CICs) in the Upper Hunter.
- Coal seam gas exclusion zones now apply to 2.7 million hectares across NSW.
- The zones have come into effect via an amendment to the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007* (the Mining SEPP).

WHY HAVE EXCLUSION ZONES BEEN IMPLEMENTED FOR ADDITIONAL VILLAGE AREAS?

- The Department of Planning & Infrastructure (DP&I) identified places that could be considered villages, but because of their zoning did not qualify for CSG exclusion zones.
- The department invited councils to nominate areas that met defined 'village' criteria for inclusion in the exclusion zones.
- The criteria (developed by DP&I, in consultation with the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, and Local Government NSW) were:
 - the area must contain a mix of land uses
 - the zone must apply to a settlement that is long established and has some historic association with the district, region and/or rural hinterland
 - the area must have a mix of lot sizes, including an average lot size up to 4,000 sq/m.

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- The DP&I Local Environmental Plan Review Panel conducted a review of council nominated areas against the criteria. This panel includes local government and DP&I representatives.
- Seven villages were found to have met these criteria:
 - part of Goonengerry in the Byron Local Government Area
 - parts of Broke and Bulga, and all of Camberwell and Jerrys Plains, in the Singleton Local Government Area
 - all of Modanville in the Lismore Local Government Area
 - all of Sutton Forrest in the Wingecarribee Local Government Area.
- In addition, around half of the council nominated areas not accepted are already completely within the 2km buffer of other residential zones and a further one fifth of the nominated areas are partially within the 2km buffer of other residential zones. This means they are already safeguarded from CSG activity.

HOW ARE EXCLUSION ZONES BEING APPLIED TO FUTURE RESIDENTIAL GROWTH AREAS?

- The exclusion zones prohibit new CSG exploration and development in future residential growth areas across the state (see full list of local government areas online at: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/srlup)
- New CSG exploration and development are also banned in a 2km buffer around these areas.
- To qualify as a future residential area, these locations needed to be identified in planning instruments (eg council LEPs) or Government endorsed planning strategies.
- The DP&I consulted with councils to ensure the maps reflected the future residential growth areas.

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THE CRITICAL INDUSTRY CLUSTERS IN THE UPPER HUNTER REGION?

- Critical industry clusters (CICs) are significant agricultural industries potentially affected by coal seam gas or mining development.
- Two CICs - for the equine and viticulture critical industries - were identified and mapped in the 2012 Strategic Regional Land Use Plan – Upper Hunter.
- Revised maps showing the clusters were publicly exhibited in October and November 2013.

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- After making changes to the maps following the exhibition process, the Government has implemented the CICs via an amendment to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007 (the Mining SEPP).
- New CSG activity is now banned in the mapped areas. State significant mining in the mapped areas will be subjected to the Gateway process - an independent, upfront and scientific assessment of the land and water impacts of the proposal.
- For more information, see the FAQ on Critical Industry Clusters.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE AFFECTED BY THE COAL SEAM GAS EXCLUSION ZONES?

- All new coal seam gas activities are banned in the coal seam gas exclusion zones.
- Pipelines associated with CSG development are now also banned within the exclusion zones, but are permitted within the 2km buffer zones, subject to development approval.

HOW HAVE THE EXCLUSION ZONES CHANGED AS A RESULT OF THE PUBLIC EXHIBITION?

- The public exhibition resulted in 255 submissions – 189 from individuals, 31 from local government, 28 from interest groups and seven from the resource industry.
- As a result of the consultation, five additional future residential growth areas were included: Forresters Beach on the Central Coast and Nabiliac, Forster, Tea Gardens, Hawks Nest and Bulahdelah on the Mid North Coast.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- To find out more about the Strategic Regional Land Use Policy visit:

Department of Planning & Infrastructure website:

www.planning.nsw.gov.au/srlup

Coal Seam Gas website:

www.csq.nsw.gov.au

NSW Government Strategic Regional Land Use website:

www.nsw.gov.au/strategicregionallanduse