



Anthony Roberts

Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy

Mark Speakman

Minister for the Environment

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 15 October 2015

NSW GOVERNMENT DELIVERING THE ACTIONS OF THE NSW GAS PLAN

Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, Anthony Roberts and Environment Minister Mark Speakman, today said the NSW Government has taken a major step in delivering the recommendations of the independent NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer around coal seam gas and the NSW Gas Plan, with the introduction of new legislation into State Parliament.

Mr Roberts said the new laws build on the reforms already introduced by the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government to better regulate the state's resources sector.

"This Government has made a priority of resetting the regulation of the resources sector and we are delivering," Mr Roberts said.

"We needed to do this to ensure that we have the safe, sustainable and secure access to the state's natural resources."

Environment Minister Mark Speakman said on 1 July 2015, the EPA became responsible for compliance with and enforcement of conditions of approval for gas activities in NSW (excluding work health and safety matters).

"As the sole independent regulator of gas activities in NSW, the EPA will provide effective and robust regulation of the gas industry," Mr Speakman said.

"The Bills provide clearer guidance for communities and industry, help reduce land use conflict, provide upfront community consultation and better recognition of the true value of resources," Mr Roberts said.

"They also provide a vastly enhanced level of transparency and accountability and serve as the first stage in delivering a single resources Act for the state, as recommended by the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane."

The new frameworks proposed in the Bills include:

1. **Strategic Release Framework**— Restores confidence in the NSW coal and gas exploration sectors through the use of strategic release and competitive allocation of exploration licences and assessment leases. This will ensure

economic, environmental and social factors are considered, with community consultation conducted upfront, before a proposed exploration area is released for a competitive process.

2. **Land access negotiations** – A fairer, more efficient, consistent and transparent land access arbitration for both landholders and explorers, as recommended by Mr Bret Walker SC.
3. **Legislative harmonisation** – Provides greater clarity by bringing the *Mining Act 1992* and the *Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991* into closer alignment. It also offers a wider range of enforcement tools, including new directions powers, enforceable undertakings and a broader range of penalty notice offences.
4. **Workplace health and safety (WHS)** – A new framework promoting best practice risk-based WHS standards in the petroleum and mining sectors.
5. **Environment Protection Authority (EPA) as lead regulator** – The Bill enshrines the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) as the State's lead regulator for compliance and enforcement of all non-work, health and safety consent conditions for gas exploration and production.

The five Bills submitted to Parliament today will join the recently introduced *Improved Management of Exploration Regulation* (IMER) framework in providing an integrated approach to ensuring the efficient, competitive and transparent allocation and the safe use of the state's natural resources.

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