



**Thursday, 19 April 2012**

## **Survey finds small businesses buoyed by gas industry activity**

Regional and rural small business owners in Gladstone, Toowoomba and the Surat Basin remain optimistic about the future and are bucking the state trend by reporting favourable business conditions, a survey has found.

The small business survey completed yesterday, will allow APPEA, the peak body for Australia's oil and gas industry, to better understand the views and opinion of local small business on the current and future economic conditions of their business.

Of the small businesses surveyed:

- 75% believe the coal seam gas industry will generate more business and economic activity over the next five years;
- 80% find current business conditions favourable;
- 93% believe the areas need a diverse range of industries to sustain the town's small businesses;
- 84% believe business conditions will improve in the next 12 months due to coal seam gas developments, mining and industry growth; and
- 73% would prefer farming and gas operations to exist side-by-side.

APPEA Chief Operating Officer Eastern Region, Rick Wilkinson said: "At a time of economic uncertainty it's pleasing to see that small businesses in and around the gas fields remain optimistic about their local economy and presence of the gas industry."

"Gas companies are diversifying local economies by sourcing local goods and services from the areas in which they operate.

"They are working hard to make sure places like Chinchilla, Roma, Dalby, Toowoomba and Gladstone benefit from their presence through active social responsibility programs, sponsorships and charitable donations.

"Figures released by APPEA last month show the industry now employs more than 12,000 people and has committed capital investment at a rate of more than \$30,000 a minute."

Mr Wilkinson said the survey results compare favourably to the most recent Sensis Business Index for March 2012 which shows four in 10 Queensland small and medium businesses are worried about their business prospects\*.

"Clearly the investment in LNG mega-projects underway in regional Queensland is flowing through to communities and businesses," he said.

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\*Sensis Business Index March 2012, [www.sensis.com.au](http://www.sensis.com.au)

The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association represents the upstream oil and gas industry in Australia. APPEA member companies produce around 98 per cent of Australia's oil and gas.