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Natural coal seam gas benefits becoming clear

The optimism of small business owners in parts of Queensland benefitting from surging natural gas production continues to soar in the years ahead, according to the latest small business survey of the affected regions.

Of the 100 small businesses in Toowoomba, Roma, Chinchilla, Dalby and Gladstone, who took part in the APPEA commissioned survey:

- 85 per cent believe the gas industry will generate more business and economic activity over the next five years – an upward trend of 10 per cent on last year’s survey;
- 80 per cent find current business conditions favourable as they did in 2012;
- 99 per cent believe the area needs a diverse range of industries to sustain the town’s small businesses – an upward trend of 6 per cent on last year;
- 76 per cent believe natural CSG operations will help local business conditions – an upward trend of 10 per cent on last year;

APPEA Chief Operating Officer Eastern Region, Rick Wilkinson, said: “Small business operators in areas of Queensland where natural gas production is at its strongest are clearly buoyed by current economic conditions.

“Gas companies continue to diversify local economies by sourcing local goods and services in the areas where they operate.

“The gas industry has created more than 27,000 jobs in Queensland for many professions and trades including engineers, earth movers, environmental scientists and electricians.

“All companies have a commitment to sourcing local goods and services where practical. That commitment continues to strengthen rural towns and regional economies.”

Mr Wilkinson said the survey of small businesses in natural gas areas stands in stark contrast to the last Sensis Business Index* quarterly survey which found more broadly across all Queensland, small business enterprises recorded their lowest confidence levels since August 2011.

*Sensis Business Index March 2013 <http://about.sensis.com.au/News/Media-Releases/?ItemID=1209&count=1>

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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.