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Queensland's coal seam gas (CSG) industry is a great Australian success story

Statement from APPEA Chief Executive Dr Malcolm Roberts

The CSG industry is not just an economic success, creating thousands of jobs and billions in exports. It is also a successful example of developing a new industry alongside established rural industries.

While sudden changes can create tensions and even conflict, the overwhelming fact is that the growth of the CSG industry has been achieved through co-operation and compromise between the industry, land owners and the community.

The result has been more jobs, revitalisation of country towns and more resilient, diversified regional economies. As all Australians rely on natural gas – for energy and for the products made using natural gas (e.g. glass, fertilisers and bricks) – all Australians benefit from a growing CSG industry.

APPEA does not deny that there have been individual cases of conflict between landowners and the industry. Companies strive to make development work for both the industry and landowners, but mistakes and misunderstandings, on both sides, can still happen. Dishonest scare campaigns by activists have not helped.

Nevertheless, the facts speak for themselves:

- More than 5,000 land access agreements negotiated to the satisfaction of land owners and the industry; and
- \$238 million paid to land owners to June 2015.

Land access in Queensland

In countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom and Canada, the community owns the resources – i.e. minerals, natural gas – below the surface.

Developing these resources is in the public interest but must also be done in a way which respects the existing land uses.

In Queensland, land access is governed by well-established rules refined over time in consultation with the agriculture and resources industries.

Information on Queensland's Land Access Code can be found [here](#).

Until a land access agreement has been negotiated, resource companies cannot enter a property.

Companies, government agencies, legal firms, the Queensland Gasfields Commission and the state's peak farming body AgForce all make information available to land owners to help them understand and protect their interests in land access negotiations.

Companies pay land owners for their costs of legal representation.



Access agreements are negotiated with the aim of minimising the impacts of gas infrastructure on private land – the companies have a strong incentive to minimise these effects because they must compensate land owners for any impacts.

Agriculture and gas work side by side

The performance of Queensland's agricultural sector has not been harmed by the expansion of the state's gas industry.

According to the Queensland Department of Agriculture, in 2014-15, at the peak of construction for CSG infrastructure, Queensland's beef and by-products industry achieved a record \$4.9 billion in meat exports.

And according to the Queensland Government Statistician's Office, the largest increase in the value of non-confidential Queensland commodity exports for the year ending April 2016 was recorded in crops – increasing by \$924.9 million.

Helping regional communities

Last financial year, Queensland's gas industry contributed \$10.6 billion to Gross Regional Product, supporting some 3,500 businesses across the state.

Since 2011, gas companies have contributed \$177 million towards hundreds of community projects in regional Queensland – from charity work and sporting club upgrades, to hospital services and public amenities.

For example, the industry funds aeromedical Careflight services out of Toowoomba, Gladstone and Roma along with a multi-million upgrade to Roma's airport.

Community attitudes

Numerous independent studies published in recent years report significant positive regional socio-economic benefits from the industry.

The CSIRO reported in 2013 that the CSG industry is contributing to poverty reduction, increasing employment and family incomes, and that there is a growing youth population in regions.

A 2014 report released by CSIRO found most of the community in Tara, Chinchilla, Miles and Dalby accepts, approves or embraces the industry with only a small minority rejecting it.

Conclusion

The development of Queensland's natural gas resources cannot be achieved without the support of landholders and communities.

The industry will always strive to make these relationships positive for everyone – landowners, local people and the wider community – because natural gas is an essential commodity for modern Australia.

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