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Queensland Government must clarify Cooper Basin position

The Queensland Government must urgently clarify its position on natural gas development in the resource-rich Cooper Basin.

Today's *The Australian* newspaper reports that the Government will not rule out reintroducing Wild Rivers-style legislation or regulatory instruments (now known as Pristine Rivers) to restrict gas activity in the Cooper Basin. This should concern every Queenslanders who values jobs and affordable energy.

APPEA's Queensland Director Rhys Turner said that the Cooper Basin accounts for 14.5% of Queensland's natural gas supply. Natural gas has been produced in the Cooper for 40 years without harming the environment.

Mr Turner said the report in *The Australian* was surprising given that the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines Dr Anthony Lynham had issued a media statement only 48 hours ago saying:

"A One Nation proposal to dramatically cut gas supplies in far south-west Queensland will push up electricity prices and cost jobs..."

"This proposal would deny Queensland industry and Queensland jobs almost decades of gas supply..."

"Cut off gas supply and two things will happen – electricity prices increase and Australian jobs go..."

(Queensland Government Media Release, 27 September 2017)

"The gas industry welcomed the Government's strong criticism of One Nation for planning to lock up the Cooper Basin for future gas activity," Mr Turner said.

"The Minister for Natural Resources and Mines Dr Anthony Lynham was right to warn that restricting gas development in the Cooper would push up electricity prices and cost jobs. But now the Government is refusing to rule out doing exactly that.

"The Government must come clean on its intentions. It must rule out imposing new restrictions on Cooper gas or risk imposing on Queensland the same gas supply problems that have impacted the southern states.

"Let's be clear – any efforts to restrict access to gas resources, particularly in a historically significant gas-producing region, will kill jobs and drive up energy prices."

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