



17 April 2020

Ministers highlight industry role in COVID-19 challenges

Federal, State and Territory resources ministers have acknowledged the critical role the oil and gas industry is playing in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic –in terms of protecting the health of its workforce and host communities, and maintaining essential energy supplies to all Australians.

In a Ministerial digital roundtable, ministers reaffirmed the need to maintain a coordinated, national approach to manage the impacts of COVID-19 in the resources sector, and commended industry for taking a decisive and proactive stance in this crisis.

This has included dramatic reductions in the number of workers travelling to and from worksites, and the publication of a *National COVID-19 Response Protocol* [available here](#).

In a communique, resources ministers said the resources sector “remains essential in providing jobs, economic support, important commodities and energy supply to Australians.”

APPEA Chief Executive Andrew McConville thanked all ministers, who have maintained close contact with the industry in a collaborative approach to meeting the impacts of the crisis.

“The oil and gas industry is treating the operational challenges posed by COVID-19 very seriously, and we are committed to doing everything we can to continue to power Australian homes, businesses, hospitals, schools and other industries,” Mr McConville said.

“We are dedicated to working with the state and federal governments – as well as key industry stakeholders – to ensure security of energy supply and to maintain the industry as a key engine of economic stability.”

During yesterday’s meeting, ministers also agreed on:

- The need to maintain onshore and offshore exploration to the greatest degree possible during and post COVID-19.
- Taking all reasonable steps in line with expert medical opinion to keep the sector open for business, including to minimise disruptions to workforce mobility and supply chain.
- The domestic and international supply of energy is a priority.

Mr McConville said the industry would continue to work collaboratively with all levels of government to achieve these priorities – and ensure the industry played its part in supporting economic recovery.

“The economic contribution of Australia’s oil and gas industry is vital as other parts of the economy are severely constrained by the impacts of COVID-19,” Mr McConville said.

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