



Saturday, 20 June 2020

LNP's CSG infrastructure initiative potential game changer

A joint statement by AgForce, the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) and the Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA)

Queensland's peak agriculture bodies AgForce and Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) have joined the Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA) in praising an initiative by the State Opposition that would return unused CSG infrastructure to landholders.

Comments attributable to:

- AgForce CEO Michael Guerin,
- QFF CEO Dr Georgina Davis, and
- APPEA Queensland director Georgy Mayo

It makes no sense for gas companies to deconstruct and remove infrastructure like dams, roads, pipelines, fences, hard stand areas, and cattle grids as part of rehabilitation if landowners can make good use of it.

Around a billion dollars of high-quality infrastructure could become a significant asset for landholders after gas industry operations have concluded – it could be a potential game-changer for regional Queensland.

We fully endorse the LNP's proposal to offer landholders ownership of quality, well-maintained CSG assets if they so choose when the infrastructure is no longer required by the gas industry and call on the Government to commit to the program.

This is the sort of lateral thinking that the agriculture and resources sectors need if they are to lead Australia out of the post-COVID economic recovery.

AgForce, QFF and APPEA have made a joint submission to the State Government requesting support for this approach to ongoing infrastructure use.

Currently, State Government regulation prevents transfer of ownership without the surrender or partial surrender of the overlying tenure and environmental authority.

Well-maintained CSG infrastructure could offer landholders who host mining operations a positive, long-term legacy.

Given the construction quality of many of these assets which are built to commercial resources standards, they are potentially very useful and valuable to landholders.

Of course, the transfer of these assets must be transparent and ensure that farmers are aware of any associated obligations as well as any residual risk that the environmental regulator may impose.

That said, there are great opportunities for all parties and now is the time for some common sense on a win-win opportunity.