



**16 December 2021**

**Statement from APPEA Chief Executive Andrew McConville in response to today's announcement that there will be no exploration for gas off the coast between Port Stephens and Sydney.**

APPEA is disappointed with the decision taken by the Australian Government to not approve the application to extend the Petroleum Exploration Permit 11 (PEP-11).

Exploration plays a vital role in identifying and developing new energy resources that can create jobs and additional reliable supply that can keep gas prices at affordable levels. The best gas is the gas closest to customers.

Australia has an abundance of natural gas resources and operates under a comprehensive regulatory regime for titles administration, safety and environmental protection.

Decisions regarding exploration permits should always be made in accordance and within the framework of that regulatory regime.

A recent independent audit of the Environmental Regulator (NOPSEMA) by Australia's Chief Scientist Dr Alan Finkel AO, found *"NOPSEMA to be a highly skilled, professional and competent regulator. NOPSEMA has appropriate processes, guidance material and practices to ensure environment plans are assessed against relevant, sufficient and complete scientific and technical information referenced by titleholders."*

We support the established regulatory process for tenure administration, environmental and safety approvals.

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