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BUSINESS LEADER WHO STARTED OUT AS A GAS FITTER APPOINTED APPEA NT DIRECTOR

A respected business leader who began his career as an apprentice gas fitter is the new voice of the Northern Territory's oil and gas industry, reaffirming the sector's commitment to delivering economic benefits and energy security for the region.

David Slama has been appointed Darwin-based NT Director for the Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA), representing offshore and onshore members including those progressing efforts to unlock gas in the Beetaloo Basin.

Mr Slama most recently served as Executive Director of the South Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry after a career in government and business starting out as an apprentice gas fitter with the SAGASCO (now Origin Energy) in the 1990s.

Mr Slama said he was excited to take on the role at such an exciting time as work around the Beetaloo Basin soon moved into issuing production licences, giving the NT the chance to build one of the nation's great resources regions.

"It's great to be back in the Territory after a couple of years away and I am keen to work with our members and deliver more of the economic benefits Territorians know well," he said.

"Gas is in my veins. I've still got my gas fitter licence, I've worked at the supply end, the infrastructure end, the drilling end and the retail end.

"With gas already so crucial to the NT economy – employing 11,000 workers along the supply chain, enabling about \$19 billion of economic activity annually and driving future economic growth – we can deliver more jobs and growth as we positively shape the region's future.

"The NT Government's recognition of gas as an ally of renewables as recently as last week when it completed 13 more Pepper Inquiry recommendations is very welcome.

"It shows a fundamental understanding of the energy changes occurring globally and how they can be applied to this important area of Australia.

"Like the great resources regions of Queensland and Western Australia, the Beetaloo Basin has the potential to be just as important to the NT's economy, creating up to 6,300 jobs and delivering billions in revenues to governments within the next two decades.

"My focus will be listening to our members and stakeholders to understand their needs and priorities so we can all deliver the best outcome for Territorians. One in 11 workers up here are involved in the gas supply chain and I want to talk to those people."

APPEA Chief Executive Samantha McCulloch said the appointment highlighted the commitment of the industry to the Territory.

“David’s strong voice in the Northern Territory will be critical to our work and his experience in business, government, policy and advocacy will serve our members well,” she said.

“David has extensive experience working in member-based organisations and has government experience in Darwin as the Executive Director of the Major Projects team in the then NT Department of Trade Business and Innovation, working across a raft of different industries on major projects including helping secure Sun Cable.

“He has learnt the industry from the bottom up, having started his career with a TAFE Engineering Trade Certificate in Gas, Water & Mechanical Services while doing his apprenticeship.

“His diverse experience is a boost to our industry’s focus on growing the NT economy, creating jobs and working with stakeholders to deliver these benefits in an environmentally safe way.”

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