



The Hon Anthony Roberts MP

Minister for Resources and Energy

Special Minister of State

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 16 April 2014

PEL APPLICATIONS REFUSED IN THE NORTHERN RIVERS

Minister for Resources and Energy Anthony Roberts has announced two Petroleum Exploration Licence Applications (PELAs) in the Northern Rivers have been refused.

“The Office of Coal Seam Gas (OCSG) has advised me of a lack of financial viability for the applicant concerning PELAs 127 and 128 at Coraki and Woodburn,” Mr Roberts said.

“Mr Tito Trapuzzano is the sole applicant for the PELAs, he has no known petroleum exploration history and no Australian financial records or reports have been identified.

“Mr Trapuzzano’s application did propose the use of experienced Australian petroleum consultants but the application significantly under-estimated the costs involved in completing the necessary exploratory work, ensuring adequate security bonds are held if approved and undertaking sufficient community consultation.

“Companies with applications that don’t stack up should not be surprised when the Government refuses their applications.

“Three weeks ago, the NSW Government announced a freeze on the processing of new Petroleum Exploration Licence Applications and an audit of existing Petroleum Exploration Licences. The freeze will run until 26 September 2014 and allow time to put in place a more comprehensive application process.

“The application fee for Petroleum Exploration Titles has also been raised from \$1,000 to \$50,000.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will only accept applications that measure up to the best practice standards.

“Under Labor, small companies, even two dollar shelf companies, flourished and were granted licences that blanketed New South Wales. Labor’s legacy of 39 PELs granted without due scrutiny and oversight is responsible for considerable stress across many communities in our State.

“This Government has put in place the most comprehensive regulation of the industry in Australia, including:

- a two kilometre exclusion zone around residential and village areas.
- banned the use of harmful BTEX chemicals.
- banned evaporation ponds.
- introduced the Aquifer Interference Policy; and
- a Code of Practice for Well Integrity.

“The Government is working to ensure that there is a comprehensive assessment process to increase participation by professional, capable and experienced companies,” Mr Roberts said.