



The Hon Chris Hartcher
Minister for Resources and Energy
Special Minister of State
Minister for the Central Coast

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 13 September 2012

**POKOLBIN VINEYARDS CANCELLED FROM
CSG EXPLORATION LICENCE**

The Pokolbin viticulture and tourism area will no longer be subject to coal seam gas exploration following the Government's requirement that 25% of a licence be relinquished upon renewal unless special circumstances have been demonstrated.

Resources Minister Chris Hartcher said the licence area relinquishments will see almost 2 million hectares from existing coal seam gas exploration licences cancelled across the State as the NSW Government continues to respond to community concern about the handling of the industry under Labor.

With the ongoing cancellation of licence areas upon renewal, the NSW Government anticipates that the area of NSW covered by coal seam gas exploration licences will drop from 23.7% in March 2011 to 21.3%, and expects it to drop below 20% next year.

As part of the Strategic Regional Land Use policy announcement, Mr Hartcher said that the NSW Government will commence the exploration licence renewals process by making offers of renewal to a number of CSG companies across the State, including AGL's Petroleum Exploration Licence 267.

"The offers of renewal follow a 16 month process where we've introduced stringent new controls to regulate the coal seam gas industry before renewing any licences and we've received feedback from the Strategic Regional Land Use consultation process," Mr Hartcher said.

"AGL's nomination of the Pokolbin area to be relinquished from its exploration licence demonstrates the company's commitment to ensuring that its activities have a low impact on the environment and the community.

"AGL has also consistently demonstrated its ability to co-exist with other land users, including viticulture and tourism.

"Since March 2011, the NSW Government has been working hard to arrive at the right balance between resource development and the protection of our valuable agricultural land, our water and our environment.

"We've also been working hard to ensure we deliver transparency at every stage of the licencing process and ensuring communities have a say.

"The Strategic Regional Land Use Policy released on Tuesday achieves that balance by protecting prime agricultural land and water resources while providing greater certainty for landholders and the resources industry."