



Andrew Stoner MP
Deputy Premier of NSW

Anthony Roberts MP
Minister for Resources and Energy

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 21 February 2014

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON NARRABRI GAS PROJECT

The NSW Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Santos Ltd for the proposed Narrabri Gas Project, Acting Premier Andrew Stoner, Minister for Resources and Energy Anthony Roberts and Minister for Western NSW Kevin Humphries said today.

Under the MoU, the NSW Government will ensure the highest standard of independent environmental assessment, and provide whole-of-government co-ordination for all relevant agencies involved in the decision-making process.

In accordance with NSW regulations, Santos Ltd will provide baseline monitoring of water level and quality as well as a high-quality Environmental Assessment and a risk assessment of the potential impacts of the project. They will also conduct a comprehensive consultation with the local community and stakeholders on the project.

“Energy affordability and supply, as well as its impact on the cost of living, is a key concern to the NSW Government,” Mr Stoner said.

“That is why the NSW Government has designated the Narrabri Gas Project as a Strategic Energy Project given its capacity to directly supply up to 25 to 50 per cent of the State’s natural gas needs.

“The purpose of the MoU is to demonstrate to potential investors across all sectors that the state’s rigorous environmental planning and assessment process can deliver timely decisions if proponents are willing to work with Government to deliver high-quality community consultation and environmental risk assessments.

“Importantly the agreement does not pre-judge or bypass the State’s rigorous assessment processes for projects of this nature.

“The Government has already introduced a series of safeguards, such as the Code of Practice for Well Integrity and the Aquifer Interference Policy, to ensure Coal Seam Gas projects do not compromise our water and land resources.

“This MoU provides certainty of process, not certainty of outcome.”

Resources and Energy Minister Anthony Roberts said the Narrabri Gas Project has the potential to play an important role in reducing the impact of energy prices on the cost of living in NSW.

“Developing a sustainable and safe natural gas industry in NSW will ensure an affordable and secure energy supply for households and businesses,” Mr Roberts said.

“The Narrabri Gas Project, including its purpose built pipeline heading south to supply NSW customers, is of strategic importance to the State given its potential to meet our energy needs.

“The Narrabri Gas Project will only be approved should it pass the Government’s stringent assessment processes including all the necessary internal and external approvals, and is carried out in accordance with the State’s regulations and guidelines.”

Minister for Western NSW and Member for Barwon Kevin Humphries said the Government had introduced measures through the Strategic Regional Land Use policy to safeguard land and water resources.

“The Narrabri Gas Project has the potential to drive development and job creation in the region, should it satisfy the tough safety requirements introduced by the NSW Government,” Mr Humphries said.

“If these stringent safety requirements are met, the project will see Narrabri play an extremely important role in meeting the state’s energy demands.

“I also welcome Santos’ commitment to independent baseline water monitoring and comprehensively consulting with the community on the project,” he said.