



Anthony Roberts

Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy

Mark Speakman

Minister for the Environment

MEDIA RELEASE

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EPA LEADS REGULATION OF THE CSG INDUSTRY

Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, Anthony Roberts, said the independent Environment Protection Authority (EPA) began its new role as the State's sole authority responsible for compliance and enforcement of all non-work, health and safety consent conditions for gas exploration and production activities today.

Mr Roberts said the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government outlined the EPA's new lead role under Action 7 of the NSW Gas Plan.

"The EPA's new role will ensure effective, consistent and transparent regulation of gas exploration and production activities," Mr Roberts said.

"Individuals or communities now have one place to go should they believe violations of title, regulations or law are occurring."

Environment Minister, Mark Speakman, said \$6.8 million has been allocated in 2015-16 to support the EPA's new role.

"Communities, businesses and industry respect the EPA because it has a strong and trusted enforcement history," he said.

Mr Speakman said gas exploration and production projects would still be required to hold an Environment Protection Licence (EPL) issued by the EPA.

Action 1 of the NSW Gas Plan accepts all of the recommendations made by the independent NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane, in her *Final Report of the Independent Review of Coal Seam Gas Activities in NSW*.

Recommendation seven called for the establishment of a single independent regulator and recommended the "Government separate the process for allocation of rights... from the regulation of the activities."

In keeping with this recommendation, all gas exploration will be assessed and determined by the Minister for Resources and Energy and all gas production will be assessed and determined by the Minister for Planning or the independent Planning Assessment Commission (PAC). The EPA will then regulate and enforce consent conditions for all gas activity, with the exception of work health and safety issues.

From today, *Improved Mining Exploration Regulations* (IMER) will also be phased in for minerals, coal and petroleum explorers.

The new regulations build on world's best practice to provide a clear and transparent regulation process for exploration approvals, greater compliance and enforcement and the first ever codes in NSW for rehabilitation and environment management during the exploration phase.

For more information visit: www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au