



PORTFOLIO PLAN 2013-14

Improving coexistence



1 July 2013

COMMISSION OVERVIEW



OUR OBJECTIVE

The GasFields Commission Queensland exists to manage and improve sustainable coexistence among rural landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry in Queensland.

The Commission recognises both agriculture and the onshore gas industries are vital to Queensland's economy and together contribute to our food, fibre and energy needs.

OUR POWERS + FUNCTION

The Commission's role, powers and functions are enshrined in the *Gasfields Commission Act 2013* which commenced on 1 July 2013.

These include:

- reviewing legislation and regulation
- obtaining and publishing factual information
- identifying and advising on coexistence issues
- facilitating better relationships and resolving issues
- promoting scientific research to address knowledge gaps
- making recommendations to government and industry.

OUR ACTIVITIES

The easiest way to stay up-to-date with Commission activities is to sign up to receive its regular e-newsletter.

To subscribe, visit www.gfcq.org.au/what-s-happening/subscribe-to-our-newsletter.html

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



The establishment of the GasFields Commission and my appointment as the inaugural chair was announced by the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning Jeff Seeney in Toowoomba on 19 April 2012.

Since then, the appointment of six fellow Commissioners and the development and passage of the legislation to enshrine the Commission's powers and functions has been successfully completed, thanks in large part to the wide-ranging community interest and input.

The Commission has worked hard to engage and build trust with rural landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry, and I have been heartened by the level of genuine goodwill in seeking to resolve coexistence issues as they have arisen.

The Commission has established six portfolio areas for improving coexistence and much has already been achieved. This plan outlines these coexistence portfolios, our priorities and key actions for 2013-14.

Upstream gas field development and pipeline construction in Queensland will continue to ramp up over the coming months and with it the need for greater mutual respect, trust and communication among all parties.

On behalf of my fellow Commissioners, we look forward to engaging with you and playing our part to help manage and improve sustainable coexistence in Queensland.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Cotter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JOHN COTTER
GasFields Commission Chairman

COMMISSIONERS' PORTFOLIOS



Shane Charles

Community and Business

Mr Charles is a qualified lawyer and business manager and currently leads Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise.



Ray Brown

Local Government and Infrastructure

Mr Brown has been an agricultural producer for 35 years and is Mayor of Western Downs Regional Council.



Rick Wilkinson

Gas Industry Development

Mr Wilkinson began working in the petroleum industry 34 years ago and is Chief Operating Officer - Eastern Australia for the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA), the peak industry body for the upstream petroleum industry.



Steven Raine

Science and Research

Mr Raine is a leading academic and soil scientist. He is presently Acting Dean for the Faculty of Engineering and Surveying at the University of Southern Queensland.



Don Stiller

Land Access

Mr Stiller is a beef producer and feedlot owner and has served in local government for a total of 23 years, 11 as Taroom Shire Council Mayor.



Ian Hayllor

Water and Salt Management

Mr Hayllor is a Darling Downs cotton and grain grower who has a reputation as an industry leader, formerly chairing Basin Sustainability Alliance and being involved with Darling Downs Cotton Growers and Central Downs Irrigators.



COMMUNITY + BUSINESS

PURPOSE

To improve the long term sustainability of regional communities through analysis of the social impacts of onshore gas industry development and maximising opportunities for local businesses and communities wherever possible.

GOALS

- To establish working partnerships with stakeholders in regional communities, business groups, government and industry
- To be a recognised and effective advocate for regional communities and local business

KEY ACTIONS 2013-14

- Establish and support the operation of the GasFields Commission Community Leaders Councils (South and North) as a formal mechanism for regional engagement
- Establish an ongoing program of engagement with representatives of State government, peak bodies and industry with a focus on regional communities and business
- Regular contact with regional chambers of commerce and industry to seek their feedback and advice on impacts and opportunities from the onshore gas industry for local businesses
- Engage and invite input from major regional community and social groups introducing the Commission and inviting them to contact it about any relevant issues



GAS INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE

To promote greater transparency about the onshore gas industry's activities and to ensure there are comprehensive standards and codes governing all aspects of the industry's performance.

GOALS

- To improve the two-way flow of information between industry and the community about onshore gas industry activities, governance and responsibilities
- To identify any areas of communication, governance and reporting of onshore gas industry activities from exploration to export where further work may be needed and make appropriate recommendations to government

KEY ACTIONS 2013-14

- Research, evaluate and report on existing industry standards and codes of practice and consult with relevant stakeholders on any areas where further work is needed and make recommendations to government
- Undertake a research project to identify the key data about the onshore gas industry sought by landholders with a view to advising government/industry of the demand for a user-friendly coal seam gas (CSG) geographical information system (GIS) portal on the internet
- Promote the development in government of a regular snapshot of industry performance to date with detail on what level of compliance and/or non-compliance has occurred
- Collate and publish data from industry on actual figures for key areas such as well numbers, employment and water production, to provide an authoritative source to take the place of estimates and forecasts



LAND ACCESS

PURPOSE

To level the playing field in land access and compensation negotiations and ensure professional conduct is carried out by onshore gas industry workers while on private property.

GOALS

- Work closely with landholders and gas companies to identify and address systemic land access issues relevant to the onshore gas industry
- Establish and share information on best practice in land access conduct and compensation and promote mutual respect before, during and after the construction of infrastructure

KEY ACTIONS 2013-14

- Facilitate the establishment of a confidential database of Conduct and Compensation Agreements (CCAs) reached between landholders and gas companies and extract relevant information to provide a more factual baseline and case studies on the nature of CCAs across a range of gas production areas and land use types
- Develop a simple land access checklist and provide guidance for landholders who are newly exposed to the negotiation of conduct and compensation agreements with gas companies
- Promote detailed forward planning of proposed infrastructure development at the property level to ensure that landholders have the level of detail required to properly assess the level of impact upon their business and property
- Provide oversight and guidance to the government in its implementation of the six point action plan for land access improvement



LOCAL GOVERNMENT + INFRASTRUCTURE

PURPOSE

To assist local governments to better plan and manage potential impacts to services and infrastructure, and take advantage of relevant opportunities, through improved information and communication with the onshore gas industry.

GOALS

- To become a recognised and effective advocate and support for local governments in dealing with the development of the onshore gas industry
- To develop a good understanding of the issues local governments face, ascertaining local authority information needs and initiating or brokering contacts that can meet those needs

KEY ACTIONS 2013-14

- Establish a program of engagement between the onshore gas industry, relevant state government agencies, and the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) to canvass broader local government and infrastructure issues
- Create a package of introductory information about the onshore gas industry and the Commission, tailored for the needs of local government
- Identify local government areas where onshore gas industry is increasing its exploration activities and visit to share information and establish working links
- Establish ongoing program of engagement with local government contacts to identify trends and broker contacts or escalate issues to help achieve solutions



SCIENCE + RESEARCH

PURPOSE

To establish working relationships with relevant research agencies to identify and share knowledge and help direct future scientific research and activities that pertain to the onshore gas industry including groundwater, gas emissions and land management.

GOALS

- Ensure that policy and legislation development pertaining to the onshore gas industry takes into consideration the results of relevant science and research activities
- Ensure that relevant scientific research and studies are communicated to assist the broader community understanding of the onshore gas industry and its associated impacts
- Establish working relationships with the relevant agencies, at both Federal and State levels

KEY ACTIONS 2013-14

- Work together with Queensland's Chief Scientist and key stakeholders to ensure that future scientific research and activities are targeted toward identified coexistence issues
- Collaborating with the Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment to ensure that research plans on interconnectivity between aquifers and targeted coal seams includes relevant input from stakeholders and addresses identified areas of focus
- Establish working relationships with the Federal Government's Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Coal Mining and the Office of Water Science, providing input and advice as required
- Undertake collations of various existing and planned science and research activities pertaining to the onshore gas industry in Queensland



WATER + SALT MANAGEMENT

PURPOSE

To ensure the quantity and quality of groundwater is not compromised, including monitoring of make good arrangements. To promote the beneficial use of produced water and salt as a resource for landholders and the community.

GOALS

- Ensure that the regulatory framework for underground water, CSG produced water and salt/brine management addresses key issues that have the potential to impact coexistence
- Promote beneficial use and the efficient and effective use of CSG associated water as a valuable resource rather than a waste product

KEY ACTIONS 2013-14

- Promote the dissemination of accurate and factual information pertaining to underground water, produced water and salt, and the conversion of gas exploration wells to water bores
- Work with stakeholders to protect the rights of underground water users and ensure the effective implementation and ongoing monitoring of make good arrangements
- Undertake a 12 month review of the performance and effectiveness of the Coal Seam Gas Water Management Policy (December 2013)
- Provide advice to Government in the review of the regulatory framework relating to the management of underground water (Chapter 3 of the *Water Act 2000*)
- Facilitate the development and delivery of region specific information packages on coal seam gas water management and underground water information
- Work with industry to provide open and transparent communication of CSG water related information such as water production statistics and location of wells



HOW WE ENGAGE

The GasFields Commission Queensland recognises that effective communication and engagement is the key to achieving our desired outcome of improving sustainable coexistence.

As outlined in each portfolio, Commissioners will engage with a wide range of stakeholders on a variety of issues relevant to coexistence. In addition, there will be a number of specific actions that the Commission will undertake in this area including to:

- Identify and seek to address areas of key community concerns, issues and the potential effects of policy decisions while promoting opportunities in regional areas
- Ensure that landholders and communities benefit from the experience and learnings of those further developed coexistence areas in other parts of the State.

KEY ACTIONS 2013-14

- Convene six monthly meetings of the GasFields Community Leaders Councils (South and North) to ensure community input to the GasFields Commission and to assist in identifying emerging community concerns and opportunities
- Actively engage with regions across the state that are experiencing, or likely to experience, an increase in onshore gas related activity (such as new exploration areas) in an effort to ensure that landholders and communities benefit from the experience and learnings of those further developed areas in other parts of the State
- Actively engage and attend relevant stakeholder meetings to maintain open lines of communication between the Commission, community, industry and landholders at a local and regional level
- Coordinate community input on specific topics, identifying common key issues and concerns across regional Queensland which can then inform policy and legislation development by relevant government departments
- Establish the Commission website as a source of credible information providing links to information, research and relevant sites to enable the community to make informed decisions



The GasFields Commission Queensland produced the *Portfolio Plan 2013-14* for general information only. Although we endeavour to provide accurate and timely information, there can be no guarantee that such information is accurate as of 1 July 2013 or that it will continue to be accurate in the future. No one should act on such information without appropriate professional advice after a thorough examination of the particular situation.

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