

SUBMISSION: GASFIELDS COMMISSION BILL 2012

AgForce is the peak rural lobby group representing the interests of the cattle, sheep and wool and grain growers in Queensland. The rapid development of the minerals and coal seam gas sectors in the State is one of the most pressing issues facing our members. The overlay of the resources sector across a traditional grazing and farming sector which has operated in for two hundred years has led to some serious economic, environmental and social issues.

The State Government has a huge task to stay abreast of the regulatory and other activities needed to ensure the co-existence of these sectors can be achieved. A raft of continual policy and practical outcomes are needed to assist this process. AgForce sees the establishment of the Gasfields Commission (via the Gasfields Commission Bill 2012) as a positive move forward.

AgForce believes that the Commission can play a pivotal role in assisting Government and the sectors to overcome problems by collectively working together. In terms of the Bill itself AgForce believes it provides the necessary framework to allow the Commission to undertake the role planned for it. In terms of the Bill itself our comments are limited to below:

- (a) We believe s6 adequately covers the Commissions functions but it maybe prudent to add: “and other functions as agreed to by the Minister” This will ensure flexibility for the Commission to undertake roles as they are required as some developments may occur which may not be forseen now;
- (b) The issue of confidentiality of information gathered from primary producers is very important to AgForce. Our preference would be that it was compulsory for the consent of the person who provided information to be gained before that information could be used;
- (c) In relation to Gasfields Community leaders council (s 27) there is reference to “a committee” being developed. AgForce believes that needs to be plural. AgForce believes the Surat Basin group will have differing needs to the development of the minerals and gas industries in the Bowen and Galilee Basins therefore there should be an ability to have separate community leaders councils to feed information into the Commission.

Apart from the above three issues AgForce sees no further key issues with the Gasfields Commission Bill 2012.

Sue Dillon

AgForce Project Manager

18th January 2013.