



Speech by


## Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Wednesday, 22 August 2012

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### MINES LEGISLATION (STREAMLINING) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (4.24 pm): As the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, I am pleased to stand here today in support of the Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill 2012 and to commend the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines for bringing it to this House. I do so because this bill provides benefits not only for the communities of Queensland, for industry and for us as a government but also for the state's environment.

When I travel out into regions that are experiencing the great boom within the coal seam gas industry in particular—and it was a great pleasure to travel with the previous speaker, the member for Pumicestone, as recently as last Thursday and Friday to Roma and Chinchilla where we had an opportunity to talk particularly with landholders and council representatives out at Maranoa and also with QMDC and AgForce—the questions that are raised with me pertain largely to the management and treatment of the water that is related to the coal seam gas industry and subsequently the brine. Apart from wanting to know how the treatment process works, they also raise the impacts of multiple storage ponds, the overdevelopment of certain sites and the impact on vegetation and local habitats. All of those are very important.

Under the current legislative framework, CSG and LNG operators are not able to aggregate field developments or centralise their CSG water and gas gathering networks across tenures. These amendments will allow that to happen which means less impact on landholders and the environment, and that is a win-win situation. The changes introduced by this bill also provide both the community and industry with rules about how CSG sites can more effectively manage their water and brine. As a result of these amendments, industry will be able to reduce the number of CSG water processing facilities needed. I think the assistant minister and the minister visited one such amalgamated site out at QGC Kenya. It is quite breathtaking to see the scale of the project and to also know that through that they are able to treat a significant amount of CSG water and ultimately, hopefully, look to use that in a beneficial way for the surrounding community.

This amendment will mean that companies will be able to reduce the many storage ponds dotted around the landscape so that we end up with more consolidated situations, like the Kenya arrangement I just mentioned. They will now be allowed to build combined water processing facilities which can service multiple sites. These larger treatment plants provide economies of scale and will also reduce the impacts posed by these multiple smaller facilities. Consolidation of the wastewater processing facilities means that, overall, the infrastructure footprint is reduced. This is a practical, sensible approach that will work. Another benefit will be that fewer landholders will be affected, and ultimately there will be less impact on surrounding vegetation and the local habitat.

Over the past few years as the high-vis army has moved into regional Queensland, communities have begun to want more from the CSG industry to better leverage greater community benefits from their local resources. The introduction of larger storage facilities in regional Queensland means that we are also creating an opportunity for new industries through the commercialisation of salt waste from CSG water

treatment. In addition to the attraction of new industries, water pipelines that will be constructed as part of the new arrangements will support regional Queensland's other main resource—the agricultural sector. The water pipelines to be constructed as part of the new arrangements will also allow for greater support of the state's agricultural sector, increasing treated water transportation between processing facilities and agricultural sites, including those that particularly are normally dry.

Another initiative that I welcome under these amendments is the requirement for CSG proponents to lodge infrastructure reports that outline the location and type of gas field infrastructure. This will enable the government to maintain a comprehensive record of activities authorised in the gas fields. All activities authorised will still be required to hold a relevant environmental authority. This will also apply to activities that a proponent conducts off tenure.

Further, the easement provisions will ensure greater transparency for land buyers by creating a public record of easement. All field development and activities will require CSG-LNG proponents to enter into conduct and compensation agreements with landholders and will still be bound by the land access code, providing further protection for landholders' rights. It is important to point out that when we went to the election with the LNP policy around coal seam gas, in particular our focus was on ensuring landholders' rights. Again, I commend the minister for bringing this legislation forward to help continue and increase those rights in legislation.

I am pleased that both the Queensland Resources Council and the four leading CSG-LNG proponents are supportive of these amendments. I, too, commend the bill to the House.