



Speech by


Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Thursday, 1 November 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

CSG Industry, Water Management

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (10.15 am): I am pleased to inform the House that this government has released a draft revised coal seam gas water management policy for the purpose of public consultation. We have within this calendar year acted decisively to better address issues surrounding coal seam gas water. A copy of the draft policy can be found on the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection website. We have committed to revising this policy by December this year to ensure that industry and communities have certainty and clarity about how CSG water should be managed. This government will assist industry in better managing water and will provide greater clarity for the broader community on CSG water related issues.

Appropriate management of CSG water is important to ensure that impacts on the environment are managed and to ensure the water is used in a way that reflects its value as a resource. The draft policy provides an outcome based approach by specifying three priority outcomes for the management of CSG water. As promised, the new environmental regulator is outcome focused and I aim to ensure that this will characterise my portfolio and its approach while I have the honour of being the responsible minister.

The first priority outcome for the management of CSG water is to ensure that appropriate plans are in place for mitigating short- and long-term impacts of CSG extraction on other water users and on the environment. It is important that impacts on private bores as a result of CSG operations are properly mitigated or compensated. The second priority outcome is to use CSG water for a purpose that is beneficial to existing water users and existing or new water dependent industries. After all other management options have been considered for using and managing the total volume of water to be produced, the third priority outcome is to treat and dispose of the CSG water in a way that protects the environment.

Given the importance of this policy, the government wants to ensure that industry and the broader community are given the opportunity to understand and comment on the draft revised policy. Public feedback is currently being sought on the draft revised policy and all feedback on the policy is welcomed. Following consultation, the draft revised policy will be reviewed and, if approved, it will then be finalised by December in line with the government's six-month action plan.