




Speech by

Howard Hobbs

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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WARREGO ELECTORATE, CSG INDUSTRY

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (11.56 am): The coal seam gas industry is a major industry in my electorate and I want to inform members of some of the major issues that have evolved and are evolving around that industry. It is a multibillion-dollar industry that basically grew without adequate legislative support by the previous state government. Members may not be aware, but there was a report done by Matrix in 2007 that in fact identified all of the issues that we are finding now in relation to the CSG industry in terms of access to land, impact on water and all of the sorts of things that these companies as well as the state government and landholders were trying to grapple with then. This report was done and nothing happened. It was given to an incompetent government which ran the CSG industry the same way it ran Queensland Health, which was hopeless. For example, prime agricultural land should have been excluded from use. In terms of residential land, companies should not have been allowed to go in and develop, mine and do CSG development in some of those close residential areas. There should also have been better land access processes. The industry was running on patched-up legislation that was happening after the event. We can see why the issues were difficult out there for not just the companies and the landholders but everyone concerned. It was just one hell of a mess that the government was trying to come to grips with but was always behind.

The companies were generally complying. However, they had a lack of skills as well. They were growing and they were trying to find people with the skills to talk to landholders and they could not always find those people. Some of the more established, older companies were good, particularly the ones further out west that had experience in the oil and gas industries in the past. They had a much better regime in place. They were able to manage things better and therefore it was a more smooth operation. However, it needs to be understood by everybody the impact on the tenure holders. For over 100 years existing land tenure holders operated their farming or grazing enterprise and then suddenly there is basically another tenure holder who wants to operate on the same land. This would not be dissimilar to somebody buying their dream home with a big backyard and then one day someone walks in with a wheelbarrow and the next week people start walking into their backyard with wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow. Those people with the wheelbarrows are entitled to do that under these rules and then eventually they would be entitled to put a steel post in the middle of the backyard where they play with the kids—that is, a well.

Or there would be a road that he would put in somewhere. Then he would get a little motor and he would have it running over on the boundary and it will run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They will say to you, 'That's okay. Don't worry about it. We'll just double glaze your windows.' But one day you have to go outside. Or on the weekend you would be having a barbecue or on a Sunday afternoon you would be soaking up some sun and four or five blokes would go past with wheelbarrows. That is exactly the same thing that is happening to landholders, where suddenly this second tenure has taken effect.

So, yes, there are a lot of issues that we have to try to manage. There is going to be conflict unless sound planning is done and cooperative arrangements are made. There has to be a partnership so that the CSG industry and farming can both operate—a partnership that works in practical terms and in financial terms. There are places where no mining or CSG should occur and no compensation could ever be paid to cover the amount of money that these people would need, because in some of those areas those activities

are just not suitable, particularly in those very good farming areas. That activity should not occur there and, under our policy, it will not occur.

The key is to operate under a very good partnership. A kid in their first year out of school earns more money in a year than what some of those farmers will earn from the gas industry. Yet they have to put up with all the roads, the wells, the dust, the camps across the road and everything else that goes with it. There has to be a far better working relationship—a partnership, a team. If we have that, we will have a better arrangement. The LNP has a good policy on CSG. It is setting up the gas fields commission and it will be building a framework around that policy. So I ask landholders to be patient while we commence the implementation of that policy. It will take some time, but we will do a good job and we will make sure that we have a good partnership.