




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gas Exploration

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.07 am): Queenslanders re-elected the Palaszczuk government to keep delivering our plan for economic recovery. That means keeping Queenslanders healthy, delivering infrastructure and supporting jobs. When it comes to domestic gas, Queensland is the place to be.

I am pleased to inform the House that my department has given approval for explorer Santos to find more gas in the resource rich Bowen and Surat basins. Santos will soon start exploring a 964-square-kilometre area of land. In more good news, a key condition is that all future gas from this land release will be solely for the domestic market. It has now been nearly three years since we first released land exclusively for gas for the domestic market in order to boost essential supply to the east coast, and the program has been a resounding success.

Since I became resources minister, the feedback to me from industry has been crystal clear: Queensland leads the nation when it comes to gas policy. Under the Palaszczuk government, we have released more than 20,000 square kilometres of land for gas exploration and production for the domestic market. In more good news, recently Senex Energy has agreed to further domestic gas sales agreement with power generator CleanCo for 2.55 petajoules of natural gas in 2022. This agreement will be supplied from Senex's Atlas project near Wandoan which, as I am sure many in this House are aware, was part of the Palaszczuk government's domestic gas policy.

Earlier this year we released 114 square kilometres of land in the Bowen and Surat basins to first-time junior explorer company AusGasCo as part of the Palaszczuk government's economic plan for recovery. This means that we have released more than 1,000 square kilometres of land for gas this year already.

The Palaszczuk government understands just how critical the gas sector will be in Queensland's plan for our economic recovery. Since 2015 the Palaszczuk government has released more than 80,000 square kilometres of land for gas exploration. There are thousands—thousands—of people already directly employed in our regional communities by the gas industry, but it also creates flow-on jobs and investment in the local communities in which they operate.

We have also committed \$5 million to investigate feasibility options for a new transmission pipeline, potentially 500 kilometres long, to connect currently stranded areas in the Bowen Basin in Central Queensland to the Australian east coast gas market. The Palaszczuk government continues to do the heavy lifting for the east coast gas market.