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Inquiry risks damaging SA's investment reputation

The South Australian Liberal Party risks damaging investor and public confidence in the natural gas industry by moving to establish a Parliamentary inquiry into hydraulic fracturing – an industry practice that has been used safely in the State for many decades.

APPEA's Chief Operating Officer Western Region, Stedman Ellis, said the inquiry proposed by the Member for Mt Gambier had little basis in science.

Mr Ellis said the South Australian Parliament needed to be wary that it did not provide a megaphone for people who want to undermine the industry and the investment and jobs it provided.

"South Australia has consistently been ranked in international surveys as the most attractive Australian state for oil and gas investment," Mr Ellis said.

"But this hard-earned reputation will be at risk if groups ideologically opposed to the industry are given a platform to spread fear and misinformation.

"The reality is that numerous investigations and studies here in Australia and overseas have already clearly demonstrated that hydraulic fracturing, when properly regulated, poses minimal risk of environmental harm.

"This is also confirmed by the industry's strong safety record here in South Australia where more than 700 wells have been 'fraced' in the Cooper Basin without any adverse impact."

Mr Ellis said the industry was committed to genuine consultation with communities in South-East South Australia and to providing fact-based information to people who had genuine concerns.

But a recent investigation in Western Australia which found that claims made in advertising by anti-gas activists had been "deceptive and misleading" showed that some green groups were not interested in facts.

"These are the same groups who will be lining up to appear before a Parliamentary inquiry," Mr Ellis said.

"MPs need to think carefully before giving them a licence to damage an industry that is important to the future of South Australia."

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