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## More acreage welcome but Cooper Basin access essential

Queensland's gas industry has welcomed comments by the Minister for State Development, Natural Resources and Mines, Dr Anthony Lynham, that a re-elected State Labor Government would release more land for natural gas exploration and production.

APPEA Queensland Director Rhys Turner said the State Government's commitment to the safe and responsible development of natural gas had been critical in addressing the east coast supply challenge.

Mr Turner said while the Minister's comments about future acreage releases were positive, the industry remained concerned about the threat to ban gas operations in parts of the Cooper Basin in far-western Queensland.

"The commitment to release new acreage for exploration and production is welcome, but the Cooper has hosted gas operations for more than 40 years, producing 14 per cent of Queensland's gas last year," Mr Turner said.

"In recent weeks, several of Dr Lynham's colleagues have failed to rule out imposing exploration and production bans on the Cooper.

"Banning gas operations from a thriving gas field just to appease activists will cost Queensland jobs and investment and drive up energy prices.

"Unlike other states, Queensland is in the enviable position where it produces enough natural gas to supply all of its domestic needs and support a successful export industry.

"When it comes to reliable energy, manufacturing and home heating and cooking, there is no substitute for gas. Restricting supply will have drastic consequences as we have seen in southern states.

"The Government must rule out restricting access in the Cooper once and for all."

Mr Turner said that the Queensland gas industry was an economic powerhouse with 2016 industry data showing that through direct, indirect and consumption based activities the industry supported **60,582** jobs across the state and generated economic activity valued at approximately **\$12.8 billion**.

"The 2017-18 Queensland Budget estimates that the State will collect **\$885 million** in petroleum royalties over the next four years. This revenue will help pay for schools, hospitals and other essential services," Mr Turner said.

"Open access to the Cooper is essential to ensuring the industry continues to play its role in supporting jobs and supplying energy to all Queenslanders."

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