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CONSULTATION REQUIRED OVER SAMUEL REVIEW RESPONSE

Australia's oil and gas industry has urged the Federal Government to consult with stakeholders over proposed changes to environmental laws following the Samuel Review.

The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA) today said the industry held concerns over some proposed measures in the government's response to the Independent Review of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

The Samuel Review found the existing framework does not deliver for business, community or the environment, with unnecessarily duplication of approvals that delay projects and add further costs.

APPEA Chief Executive Samantha McCulloch said: "The oil and gas industry supports effective, efficient and transparent regulation, based on sound science and research. We want to improve environmental standards and build business certainty, avoiding added costs to project approvals and delays at a time when bringing on new supply is so critical.

"The report found regulation is already cumbersome or duplicated, adding costs to business with little benefit to the environment."

Ms McCulloch said the industry welcomed the Government's position to reform environmental offset arrangements to ensure they delivered better environmental outcomes and reduced delays for project proponents.

But she added: "APPEA remains concerned that the expansion of a National Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to include environmental approvals goes beyond what was committed to prior to the federal election. This may adversely impact the industry's ability to bring much-needed gas supply to market, delivering energy security, emission reductions and economic returns.

"The sector will engage over the proposed expanded water trigger to ensure that it does not risk future projects through unnecessary duplication with state and territory water management systems."

Ms McCulloch said the right regulatory environment can allow business to flourish while lifting environmental standards.

"Gas enables almost \$500 billion of economic activity annually, employing over 160,000 people along the supply chain, powering millions of homes and businesses and facilitating economic growth," she said.

"Our industry continues to deliver huge economic benefits, helping deliver a better of quality of life for Australians. We need an environmental framework that will streamline approvals, reduce duplication and delays, while also enhancing environmental outcomes."

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