

2 December 2014

Mr Mathew Jones  
A/Executive Director - Community  
and Stakeholder Engagement  
NSW Department of Planning & Environment  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Jones,

***State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (Gas Exploration and Mining) 2014.***

The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA) is the national peak body representing the oil and gas exploration and production industry. APPEA's members account for around 98 per cent of Australia's oil and gas production. In NSW, APPEA actively supports our members in their pursuit of exploration and natural gas production.

We welcome the opportunity to provide comment in relation to the proposed amendment to *the State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (Gas Exploration and Mining)*. APPEA appreciates the commitment to consultation by the NSW Government on issues related to natural gas exploration and production given the important of secure supply to households, businesses and industry.

As highlighted in the recent report delivered by the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, the natural gas industry has a proven track record in NSW that is underpinned by science, world-leading technology, professional standards and expertise. One of the industry's greatest challenges is the level of regulatory burden. Unnecessary restrictions and red tape placed on explorers will continue to impede resource development and hamper further investment.

We submit that the amendments to the State Environmental Planning Policies are a positive move to address this regulatory burden by streamlining approvals which will enable much-needed gas to be developed for NSW customers without compromising environmental protection. In particular, we welcome the assessment of coal seam gas activity using Part 5 of the environmental assessment regime as it provides sufficient rigour to deal with exploration activities.

APPEA submits that efforts to clarify the existing policy and regulatory frameworks, while maintaining its integrity and robustness, should be welcomed. This proposed *State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (Gas Exploration and Mining)* provides a policy setting that affords certainty for industry to explore and produce much needed natural gas in NSW. APPEA and our members are committed to ensuring that the industry provides more gas for consumers and business in NSW while operating within policy parameters safely, as it has done for over a decade.

Yours sincerely



**Paul Fennelly**  
**Chief Operating Officer – Eastern Australia**