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Gas policy farce – greens say “no” to proven cleaner energy

The Greens announcement that their new natural gas ‘policy’ is for “no new coal seam gas and empowering land holders to say no to coal seam gas” shows the party has a very loose grip on reality and a very poor understanding of Australia’s energy market and existing regulation.

The fact that Australia’s natural coal seam gas industry has operated safely for almost 20 years and today provides one-third of Eastern Australia’s gas supply, with a workforce of almost 30,000 people in Queensland alone, suggests the Greens are either very slow off the mark, or excessively cynical in an election year.

Is the Greens policy to turn our gas taps off and sack these tens of thousands of Australians?

Or is there policy just to stop the \$60 billion worth of export projects currently under construction? These projects are expected to pay around \$1 billion per annum in taxes to help fund the new schools, nurses, roads and infrastructure the Greens say they desire.

These gas projects will also provide around 25 million tonnes of cleaner energy every year. As has been the example in the USA in recent years – where increased gas consumption has driven down greenhouse emissions to their lowest levels since 1994 – developing and exporting natural gas is arguably Australia’s most meaningful contribution to the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions, a cause on which the Greens are fond of lecturing others.

With regard to farmers’ rights, landholders in Queensland and NSW have so far signed 3,800 co-existence agreements with companies and the fact that not one single matter has been before the courts for resolution informs APPEA’s view that the arrangements in place are of mutual benefit. Of course, a farmer who wants new infrastructure, new roads, new fences, or the increased productivity gained with increased water supply, can see the benefits associated with such arrangements.

All resource companies undertaking exploration and development activities in Queensland must comply with conditions set out in the Land Access Code or face the full force and effect of the law. The recently announced land access regime in NSW for resources contains the strongest protections for landholders of any jurisdiction in Australia.

The question the Greens continue to dodge, is do they agree that a farmer has the right to say yes?

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The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association represents the upstream oil and gas industry in Australia. APPEA member companies produce around 98 per cent of Australia’s oil and gas.