Media Release

David Tollner
Minister for Mines and Energy

Labor’s bizarre tactic of opposing gas regulation fails in NT Assembly

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The Country Liberals Government has passed a technical amendment to the Petroleum Act which will allow the Minister for Mines and Energy to strengthen the level of regulation of the onshore gas drilling process.

Mines and Energy Minister David Tollner said Labor’s bizarre stunt of opposing greater regulation of the gas industry failed and the successful vote will now allow the Government to improve the transparency and quality of regulations for onshore gas drilling.

“If this amendment had not passed, then these regulations could still have been introduced as a schedule to the act,” he said.

Schedules are weaker forms of regulations with less parliamentary and cabinet oversight, and do not need to be drafted by parliamentary counsel.

Ministers can change schedules very easily and with the ability to make regulations, greater rigour and enforceability can be brought to bear on the onshore gas drilling process.

“It is bizarre that this amendment was opposed by the Labor party,” Mr Tollner said.

“As a stunt, Labor opposed greater regulation of the onshore gas industry and opposed raising the standard of environmental protections for the gas drilling process.”

The draft regulations were put out for public consultation and incorporate best practice from other Australian and international jurisdictions. The regulations deliver on the relevant recommendations and findings by Dr Allan Hawke AC and Dr Tina Hunter.

“The draft regulations require that approved environment management plans must be in place for all onshore oil and gas activities that have an environmental impact,” Mr Tollner said.

“Further regulations will be drafted with public consultation and expert input to regulate other aspects such as drilling.

“The Country Liberals Government is determined to implement the world’s best practice environmental regulation, particularly the protection of our water supply and assets,” Mr Tollner said.
To read the draft regulations and Dr Hunter’s full report and the Northern Territory Government’s response to the twelve recommendations please go to www.onshoregas.nt.gov.au

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