Peter Styles
Minister for Business

Call for bi-partisan support for Territory onshore gas

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Deputy Chief Minister and Business Minister Peter Styles has called on Labor Opposition leader Michael Gunner to abandon his reckless policy position and join with the Government to provide bi-partisan support to the onshore gas industry and the prosperity and thousands of jobs that it guarantees.

Mr Styles said that the Chief Minister and he will meet with the Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders to examine the Chamber’s recommendation that government consider providing additional funding for the NT to Queensland gas pipeline.

"The Giles Government is determined to ensure the future of the onshore industry for the benefit of Territorians and provide a clear signal to industry that it has a future in the NT," Mr Styles said.

"NT Labor’s threats that it will ban onshore gas if it ever gets to govern the Territory is directly destroying the Territory’s future and the CLP is determined to ensure its success.

"The successful bidder of the Tennant Creek to Mt Isa pipeline and other gas industry representatives have made it clear that statements made by the Labor Opposition Leader proposing a ban to onshore gas have had a direct impact on the business plans of potential investors.

"They have made it clear that Territory Labor’s continued support for a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing is bad news for the oil and gas industry and those who would benefit from its planned near-term investment of more than $1 billion in developing the Northern Territory’s onshore gas resources.

"Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association Director South Australia/NT Matthew Doman said planned investment of more than $1 billion between now and 2020 could not proceed with a fracking ban in place.

"The CLP provided complete bi-partisan support for the Inpex project when Labor was in Government and Michael Gunner should do likewise with an onshore gas industry that previous Labor governments supported. Rather than showing the strength and leadership that Clare Martin and Paul Henderson did he has shown himself to be clueless and inept opting for small minded point scoring that will sacrifice more than 6000 jobs."
"Commonsense tells you that Michael Gunner’s claims that he needs to see the science is weak given that the science on fracking is already in. Michael Gunner just needs to read it. He needs to explain why he refuses to do so. The facts have been confirmed time and time again by independent, scientific inquiries – from the Australian Council of Learned Academies, the NSW Chief Scientist, the UK’s Royal Society, the US EPA, to the Hawke inquiry here in the NT.

“Australia’s Chief Scientist has said: ‘the evidence is that, if properly regulated, it’s completely safe.’

"Already hundreds NT workers have been sacked, a $1 billion in direct investment in the next four years is at risk and now millions in education royalties have been lost.

"Straight after Labor and Michael Gunner announced the ban, local NT firms sacked more than 140 workers and several large companies stopped their plans to invest in the industry.

"The Chief Minister has announced that all royalties from onshore gas will go directly to fund job skills training and university education for citizens of the NT. This could be nearly $1 billion directly to NT education.

"This would provide a massive boost to our education system and provide a strong platform to enhance our population growth and keep our children in the NT with better education and diverse and sustainable jobs."

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