03 May 2002

NT Government lobbying wins national support

A major breakthrough in the push to bring Timor gas on shore has been accomplished with state leaders throwing their support behind the NT Government, Minister for Resource Development Paul Henderson said today.

"This is a major step in the process for getting Timor gas onshore in Darwin, and the NT Government's persistent lobbying seems to have taken a major leap forward," Mr Henderson said.

"The Chief Minister's meetings this week with state leaders to discuss the NT's push to attract gas developments to Darwin has been successful, with all Premiers backing for a special COAG meeting to develop a national gas policy.

"This also adds weight to our argument that there is a domestic customer base in Australia."

Mr Henderson said the Victorian, New South Wales, South Australian and Tasmanian Premiers had enlisted their support for the Council of Australian Governments to address the country's expected energy shortages.

"The NT Government has said all along that the support of state leaders was vital in securing a strong argument to bring Timor Sea gas onshore.

"This has now been accomplished. Our argument that it is in the interest of all Australians to have gas brought onshore rather than be exported overseas has been accepted by all state leaders. This gives us a better chance of getting the issue of energy on the COAG agenda.

"This is a great day for Territorians, and indeed all Australians, and the NT Government will continue to fight for a resource that is rightly ours."