



DUNCAN GAY MLC

Shadow Minister for Primary Industries & Energy

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NSW LIBERALS & NATIONALS ANNOUNCE STRATEGIC REGIONAL LAND USE POLICY

A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government today announced a *Strategic Regional Land Use* policy which will see greater caution in the granting of new exploration licences and the removal of major upfront cash payments at the exploration stage, Shadow Minister for Primary Industries Duncan Gay said today.

Mr Gay said this is the first major step forward in nearly two decades.

"This is process-driven rather than politically-driven," Mr Gay said.

"It's about putting the proper checks and balances where they should be in the process – up front."

Duncan Gay announced the NSW Liberals & Nationals plans in Tamworth today with Nationals candidate for Tamworth Kevin Anderson, Member for the Upper Hunter George Souris and Member for Barwon Kevin Humphries.

"After 16 years of inaction from the NSW Labor Government, the NSW Liberals & Nationals have done the hard work to help bring about a fairer balance between mining and agriculture production in NSW," he said.

"We recognise there is an urgent need to strengthen the assessment of the impact of mining and coal seam gas extraction and that's why we will immediately implement a tougher process, taking a precautionary approach."

The NSW Liberals & Nationals *Strategic Regional Land Use* policy contains a **'transition period'** which will include:

- 1) Greater caution in granting exploration licences** – a precautionary approach will be implemented to consider the appropriateness of an area for future mining;
- 2) Explicit agriculture impact assessments** – all new mining and petroleum applicants (during this period and on an on-going basis) will be required to undertake explicit agricultural productivity impact assessments as part of their environmental impact statement;
- 3) Introduction of the Aquifer Interference Regulation** – whereby all development applications will be required to adhere to this Regulation.

"This is about taking a **triple bottom line** approach to development, which will recognise strategic agricultural land as a finite resource that must be preserved into the future," said Mr Gay.

"Whilst this will apply to all new Exploration Licences (ELs) and all new mining and petroleum project applications, **the policy will also take into account all existing ELs which have not yet applied for a Mining Licence.**"

Mr Gay said the *Strategic Regional Land Use* policy will also see the **removal of major upfront cash payments at the exploration stage.**

"Acknowledging community concern, I am very proud to announce that the NSW Liberals & Nationals will ensure major fees in relation to the project will only be paid if the project passes our tough assessment requirements and obtains a Mining Licence," said Mr Gay.

"Our strategic plan will provide certainty to local communities that **cumulative impacts are being taken into account** and about how close mining will come to their towns and the effect that proximity will have," he said.

Mr Gay said the NSW Liberals & Nationals will prepare strategic land use plans for the State on a regional basis using a multi-layered approach.

"Ahead of the granting of an EL, strategic land use planning is the process that will be used to identify and define land use priorities for different areas of land within a region," he said.

"In addition to this, we will also **ban the use of B-TEX chemicals** in all NSW mining operations. This group of chemicals are said to be cancer causing and there is no place for them in the mining industry in NSW," said Mr Gay.

Mr Gay said the NSW Liberals & Nationals are also **committed to food security.**

"As part of a NSW Liberals & Nationals government, an independent section within the Department of Primary Industries will be dedicated to agricultural sustainability and food security," said Mr Gay.

"We have firm policy initiatives, with a **timeline of implementation to get the job done.**

"The NSW Liberals & Nationals plan is a positive step forward in the strategic land use planning process which will identify strategic agricultural land and associated water to ensure that it is protected from the impacts of mining and coal seam gas development.

"Only the NSW Liberals & Nationals believe in the real potential of regional NSW, and regional NSW will play a central role in our plan to Make NSW Number One Again."

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