



JEFF SEENEY

Deputy Premier

Minister for State Development, Infrastructure & Planning



Member for Callide

19 June 2014

Landmark laws resolve disputes

Farming families and resource companies now have an easier method of resolving land disputes after the commencement of landmark laws.

Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning Jeff Seeney said the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* introduced a clear process to assess mining and gas developments, creating certainty for the agriculture and resource industries and delivering on a key election promise.

"The new process restores balance, creates an incentive for agreements to be reached and a disincentive for court action," Mr Seeney said.

"Labor's inaction created an environment where there were widespread land use conflicts between the agricultural and resources sectors.

"Landholders felt threatened, resource companies felt restrained and local councils were caught in the crossfire of conflicts over emerging projects that needn't have happened.

"Labor was happy to reap the financial benefits from the emerging gas sector, but took no responsibility to ensure proper planning processes were in place to manage the expansion.

"At the election we promised to deliver better infrastructure and better planning and delivering a new, practical planning law for regional Queensland to reduce land use conflicts has achieved just that.

"Our strong plan also includes a promise to grow agriculture and resources and we are delivering a brighter future for them and all Queenslanders.

"This law, which came into effect this week, was the culmination of commitment and persistence from agricultural and resource groups and landholders in both Central Queensland and the Darling Downs. I thank all these parties for their input."

The new Regulation that underpins the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* is now available online at www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/RPIAct

Proponents can now apply for a Regional Interests Development Approval.

The Act implements the policies included in the Statutory Regional Plans across some areas of Queensland, with plans for Central Queensland and the Darling Downs already in place, and the Cape York Regional Plan to be finalised shortly.

The Regional Plans focused on economic development and will be rolled out across the State. They recognise and protect the following four areas of 'regional interest':

- Priority Agricultural Areas
- Priority Living Areas
- Strategic Environmental Areas
- Strategic Cropping Areas (formerly Strategic Cropping Land).

Under the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014*, proponents of resource activities who can reach agreement with the landowner may not need to apply for a Regional Interests Development Approval.

"The assessment process has been developed to restore the balance of power between rural producers and resource companies," he said.

"It provides the strongest incentive yet for resource proponents to reach agreement with landholders about how best to configure their activities on a property.

"Resource companies can no longer gain access to the property by proceeding directly to the Land Court after 40 days, should a landholder in a Priority Agricultural Area or Strategic Cropping Area not agree to a proposed activity.

"And where an agreement cannot be reached, the largest imposition the State will make on landholders, in order to access resources beneath the land for the benefit of the community, is two per cent in Priority Agricultural Areas or Strategic Cropping Areas.

"The Regulation also prepares for the repeal of the Wild Rivers Act as it prescribes Strategic Environmental Areas for Cape York, Channel Country, Gulf Rivers, Fraser Island, and Hinchinbrook Island.

"The Wild Rivers policy objective to protect these special environmental areas can be more effectively implemented through this new Act. We have the strong support of the Cape York Regional Planning Committee for this approach."