



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 – INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

Upper House reports published on mining in the Liverpool Plains and zombie petroleum exploration licences

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12 August 2021

An Upper House committee has published its reports this morning examining two bills seeking to prohibit mining for coal and gas in the Liverpool Plains region and to cancel zombie petroleum exploration licences.

The Coal and Gas Legislation Amendment (Liverpool Plains Prohibition) Bill 2021 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Cancellation of Zombie Petroleum Exploration Licences) Bill 2021 were introduced in the Upper House and then referred to Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Industry in May 2021.

The aim of the Liverpool Plains prohibition bill is to prohibit new mining operations in the Liverpool Plains region. The committee recommended that the Legislative Council proceed to debate the bill.

Chair of the committee, the Hon Mark Banasiak MLC said: "The committee heard evidence for and against the Liverpool Plains prohibition bill during the inquiry. Those who supported the bill emphasised the region's agricultural capacity, as well as its significant Indigenous heritage. On the other hand, industry stakeholders noted the importance of mining in NSW and how the bill represents a significant departure from the current policy and regulatory framework. The committee therefore recommends that the NSW Government address these issues during debate in the House."

The Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Cancellation of Zombie Petroleum Exploration Licences) Bill 2021 seeks to cancel expired and unused exploration licences located both in the Liverpool Plains and in other regions. The NSW Government published its Future of Gas Statement just three weeks before the committee was due to report. The Statement effectively rules out gas exploration under 8 of the 12 zombie petroleum exploration licences in the state, and reduces the remaining 4 to support the Narrabri gas project.

"Throughout our inquiry, the committee heard evidence on the government's delay in assessing renewal applications for the zombie petroleum exploration licences, causing uncertainty for the local communities. While the committee welcomes the NSW Government's announcement, it is unacceptable that it took this long to progress this issue when some of the zombie petroleum exploration licences have been expired for up to a decade. Going forward, we believe that the government should ensure that petroleum exploration licences, including their renewal applications, are dealt with efficiently and transparently," the Chair said.

Further information about the two inquiries, including links to the reports are available on the committee's [website](#).

-ENDS-

For further information please contact Committee Chair, Hon Mark Banasiak MLC, on 9230 2573.