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# MEDIA RELEASE

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## NSW Govt. & opposition must take action on mining and Coal Seam Gas rating issues

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The Association of Mining Related Councils (AMRC) is the peak representative body for mining affected councils in NSW. At its meeting in Sydney last Friday, the Association voted unanimously to call on the NSW Government and Opposition to better legislate councils' capacity to benefit from mining, including Coal Seam Gas (CSG).

"We want the State Government to amend the Local Government ACT, to enable local government to charge rates on CSG operations and associated infrastructure. Rates should be on a production basis (not on the small land size or value, generally involved)," AMRC Chair and Wollondilly Shire Mayor, Col Mitchell said.

"We also want the Local Government Act amended so that the rating of mine sites is under a separate category and is not subject to rate pegging," he said.

Councils currently receive revenue through the collection of special rates for mine sites. There are no provisions within the Local Government Act regarding CSG.

The CSG industry has expanded rapidly throughout the State. In his presentation to the meeting, Liberal MLC Scot Macdonald acknowledged that the NSW Government has been playing legislation catch-up. "The Queensland Government has made a lot of mistakes. We've learnt from that, as we've introduced a lot of regulations in a short space of time," he said.

The AMRC comprises 22 councils in NSW, from Wollongong to the Hunter, the Central West, west to Cobar and Broken Hill and North West to Narrabri. They have been told by relevant departmental leaders of how the NSW Government is (belatedly) working towards greater levels of consultation, communication and license condition compliance policing. The establishment of the NSW Office of CSG is indicative of how seriously the NSW Government now views the industry. AMRC members feel that the Local Government Act is another legislative arena which needs to account for CSG immediately. A submission will be made to the Local Government Task Force and the AMRC is hoping for prompt, responsive action from the State Government.

NSW Opposition Leader, John Robertson attended the AMRC meeting. He is also the Shadow Minister for Western Sydney and Shadow Minister for the Illawarra. Both areas have been directly exposed to CSG exploration. Yet, Mr Robertson would not commit support to the AMRC CSG rating proposal. "This idea warrants serious consideration. I will discuss it with my Shadow Ministers. We will look at the opportunities but also examine the consequences. Any policy we take to the 2015 election must be evidence-based and be in the best long-term interests of local communities and the State," he said.

### **Caption:**

AMRC Executive Officer, Don Tydd; Shadow Minister for Resources and Primary Industry, the Hon. Steven Whan MLC; the Hon. John Robertson, NSW Opposition Leader, Shadow Minister for Western Sydney and Shadow Minister for the Illawarra; AMRC Chair and Wollondilly Shire Mayor, Cr Col Mitchell and Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon. Mick Veitch MLC.

For further information on the AMRC, please go to: <http://www.miningrelatedcouncils.asn.au/>

*For further information, contact AMRC Executive Officer, Don Tydd: 02 6775 3844 or 0418 681 320.*



## Members



Bland Shire Council  
[blandshire.nsw.gov.au](http://blandshire.nsw.gov.au)



Blayney Shire Council  
[blayney.local-e.nsw.gov.au](http://blayney.local-e.nsw.gov.au)



Broken Hill City Council  
[brokenhill.nsw.gov.au](http://brokenhill.nsw.gov.au)



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[cabonne.nsw.gov.au](http://cabonne.nsw.gov.au)



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[campbelltown.nsw.gov.au](http://campbelltown.nsw.gov.au)



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[cessnock.nsw.gov.au](http://cessnock.nsw.gov.au)



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[cobar.nsw.gov.au](http://cobar.nsw.gov.au)



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[gloucester.nsw.gov.au](http://gloucester.nsw.gov.au)



Gunnedah Shire Council  
[infogunnedah.com.au](http://infogunnedah.com.au)



Lachlan Shire Council  
[lachlan.nsw.gov.au](http://lachlan.nsw.gov.au)



Lithgow City Council  
[council.lithgow.com](http://council.lithgow.com)



Liverpool Plains Shire Council  
[lpsc.nsw.gov.au/](http://lpsc.nsw.gov.au/)

**Association of Mining  
Related Councils Inc.**



Narrabri Shire Council  
[narrabri.local-e.nsw.gov.au](http://narrabri.local-e.nsw.gov.au)



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[narromine.nsw.gov.au](http://narromine.nsw.gov.au)



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[ncc.nsw.gov.au](http://ncc.nsw.gov.au)



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[orange.nsw.gov.au](http://orange.nsw.gov.au)



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[parkes.nsw.gov.au](http://parkes.nsw.gov.au)



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Wollongong City Council  
[wollongong.nsw.gov.au](http://wollongong.nsw.gov.au)