



AgForce Projects

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## CSG sessions resolve growing community unease

Nearly 100 local landholders concerned about the potential negative impacts of coal seam gas (CSG) exploration had their concerns answered at CSG information sessions held in Millmerran, Moonie and Goondiwindi last week.

Cereal crop and cattle producer Rae Webster said she had been very anxious about the prospect of CSG exploration on the family's 9000 acre property, 'Kondar', north of Goondiwindi, before attending the AgForce Projects Landholder CSG Information Session in Goondiwindi on 14 April.

"For a long time I had been very nervous about CSG and had just hoped they wouldn't come; but after attending the CSG information session I feel better prepared for their arrival," Mrs Webster said.

"The session gave me an insight into the expansion of the industry and I now feel informed about CSG production and the importance of seeking legal and professional assistance to negotiate the best outcome to mitigate the effects of CSG on our property."

While AgForce continues to call for a moratorium on the CSG industry until comprehensive research into its collective impact on the environment is conducted, AgForce Projects Officer Daniel Phipps said the reality is that gas company tenures in the region are expanding.

"All landholders across the Surat Basin need to understand the importance of preparing themselves for any future negotiations with resource companies. The sessions provide landholders with independent information that will help them understand their rights and obligations under the current legislation and enable them to manage any potential risks to their property," Mr Phipps said.

Despite many attendees reporting they had not been contacted by the resource companies to date, many said they accepted the reality that the knock on the door was not far away.

Cattle and grain producers Lynelle and Warren Urquhart of 'Warrowa', west of Moonie, said the information sessions provided useful tools for navigating the very complex legislation surrounding the CSG industry.

"Before attending the AgForce Projects CSG session I considered the whole concept of CSG quite frightening and I didn't have a clue where to find out information about our rights if and when a gas company comes knocking on our door," Mrs Urquhart said at the session in Moonie last Wednesday.

"AgForce Projects put us in the right direction to find out who has a tenure over our property, who to contact when they knock on our door and to know what to ask for when in negotiations with the gas companies."

AgForce Projects CSG Project Manager Kate Dunn said many attendees are unaware of their rights, including the legal obligation of resource companies not to unreasonably interfere with the lawful activities of landholders.

“The important thing to take away is you do have some say in how CSG activities are conducted on your property. Under the new legislation, advanced activities cannot be undertaken until a Conduct and Compensation Agreement has been negotiated,” Ms Dunn said.

“We stress the importance of gathering and preparing information relating to your property before you begin negotiations to enable you to analyse the possible impacts to your business to assist in determining your compensation requirements,” she said.

Some of the considerations suggested by Ms Dunn include physical, financial and social impacts on properties and businesses.

**Upcoming CSG Landholder Information Sessions include**

Mitchell – Tuesday 3 May; Injune – Wednesday 4 May; Roma – Thursday 5 May; St George – Tuesday 17 May; Bollon – Wednesday 18 May; Dirranbandi – Thursday 19 May; Taroom – Tuesday 24 May; Wandoan – Wednesday 25 May; Surat – Thursday 26 May; Tara – Tuesday 21 June; Condamine – Wednesday 22 June; and Jandowae – Thursday 23 June.

Sessions are delivered through AgForward, an initiative of AgForce within its project department, funded by the Queensland Government.

Producers wishing to attend an information session can call (07) 3238 6048 or visit <http://www.agforward.org.au/calendar.htm>.

**For comment call Sue Dillon on (07) 3236 3100 or 0417 760 481 or Kate Dunn on (07) 3238 6043 or 0429 123 099.**

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