



Don Harwin

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Resources
Minister for Energy and Utilities
Minister for the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW CHAIR FOR STRATEGIC RELEASE ADVISORY BODY

Minister for Resources Don Harwin has announced senior executive Mark Darras to head a body overseeing the release of areas for new gas exploration.

A former Deputy and Acting Chairman of Australia Post, Mr Darras will be the new chair of the Advisory Body for Strategic Release from early next year, playing an important part in supporting safe, sustainable development of the local gas industry.

The body advises on whether exploration is appropriate following consultation with the community while seeking to avoid land use conflict.

The Advisory Body is already assessing two areas in the Far West of NSW that show good potential for conventional gas resources.

The Strategic Release process is the final action in the NSW Gas Plan which was developed to restore community confidence and improve transparency.

Mr Darras brings significant executive experience to the role having held a number of senior board roles, including Director and Co-Chair of the Forestry Corporation of South Australia, and Deputy Chairman, John Holland Engineering.

Minister for Resources Don Harwin welcomed the appointment of Mr Darras, who was the successful candidate selected from a strong pool of nine applicants.

“In selecting Mark Darras the NSW Government has demonstrated its commitment to the independence of the strategic release process,” Mr Harwin said.

“Mr Darras clearly understands natural resource management and community engagement and will be a truly independent Chair.”

Minister Harwin paid tribute to the interim Chair, NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer Mary O’Kane, who oversaw the start of the evaluation process while Government was seeking expressions of interest.