

# YourVoice

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## ➤ LETTERS

### Draw the line

**MOVES** by Shine Lawyers to hold local CSG forums beg the question on where the line is drawn between what is an information session and what is touting for business (Herald, Apr 19).

Shine Partner Peter Shannon's misguided claims about the erosion of landholder rights are not reflected by the large number of mutually beneficial land access arrangements between landholders and gas companies across the Surat Basin.

All resource companies undertaking exploration and development activities must comply with conditions set out in the Land Access Code or face the full force and effect of the law.

Gas companies fund the legal representation of landholders.

Quite rightly, just who landholders approach for legal advice is a matter for them.

**Rick Wilkinson,**  
Chief operating officer,  
Eastern region,  
APPEA

### Poor form

THE Basin Sustainability Alliance is offended by Rick Wilkinson's attack on Shine Lawyers' free information sessions (Herald, May 5).

BSA would like to thank Shine Lawyers for providing balanced information to landholders.

Peter Shannon has volunteered personal time and countless hours advising on the potential issues that may arise when signing conduct and compensation agreements (CCA) and explaining the implications of legislation.

BSA agrees with comments made by Mr Shannon that landholder rights have been eroded.

Until landholders have a right to say no to CSG development on their land, the power balance is skewed.

We are curious about Mr Wilkinson's claim of a "large number of mutually beneficial land access arrangements".

A signed agreement is often only half the story – we know of landholders who have signed agreements and are now suffering regret at their decision to sign.

To say that CSG companies foot the legal bill is not entirely true.

We know specifically of cases where landholders are faced with having to pay their own legal fees or rack up unpaid bills at their solicitor, because the CSG company is telling them that they aren't prepared to pay until a CCA is signed.

Instead of criticising others, Mr Wilkinson should ensure that the CSG companies that are members of APPEA do the right thing.

The CSG companies should offer to pay landholders' legal costs up front.

We also question the appropriateness of a Gasfields Commissioner making such statements.

Mr Wilkinson should be welcoming the efforts of private companies who are taking it upon themselves to share vital information about access processes and landholder rights.

Unless he's afraid of landholders becoming too empowered?

**David Hamilton,**  
Chairman, Basin  
Sustainability  
Alliance