



## REGIONAL INTERESTS DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

The *Regional Planning Interest Act 2014* has been approved by Parliament and is expected to become operational in the second half of 2014. The Act introduces a new Regional Interests Development Approval regime for resource projects.

Resources projects located in living, high quality agricultural and sensitive environmental areas, as defined by Regional Plans, created under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*, will now, with some exceptions, be required to make application for a Regional Interest Development Approval under the *Regional Planning Interest Act 2014*. The Act also establishes a process of assessing resource development in these areas.

The Government has stated the Act will level the playing field for landholders negotiating with the resources sector and provide the strongest incentive yet for resource companies to effectively negotiate with landholders. The framework provides that if agreement cannot be reached between a landholder and a resource company in identified high quality agricultural areas, the company must seek a Regional Interests Development Approval from Government. Applications must also be made for resource proposals in living and important environmental areas.

The approvals required under this Act are independent from and additional to the tenure and environmental authorities required to be obtained under resource legislation. The assessment process is more aligned to processes contained in the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* and like approvals under this Act will 'run with the land'. The new Regional Interests Development Approvals can reasonably be described as a 'crossover' between the resources and planning regulatory environments.

RLMS has extensive experience in dealing with legislative compliance for petroleum activities, including environmental requirements, and can assist in all phases of project development from exploration to development. RLMS also has extensive experience in developing appropriate regulatory approval strategies and plans for complex resource and non-resource projects and linear infrastructure.

RLMS is therefore well placed to assist resource companies with structuring projects to address the requirements of this Act and preparing Regional Interests Development Approval applications. Additionally, RLMS staff include a highly experienced town planner familiar with the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* and the process, procedures and principles likely to be applicable to application for a Regional Interests Development Approval.

This combination of resource and town planning knowledge and experience makes RLMS well placed to assist resource proponents' deal with the newly introduced Regional Interest Development Approval assessment and application regime.

If you would like further information or assistance please contact [Richard Wood](#), [Sue Slater](#) or [James Beckett](#) at RLMS on 3229 8472.

*RLMS covers the project spectrum from planning through to State and Federal government approvals, including land access, compensation, environmental impact statements and work schedules for clients ranging from entrepreneurs to major corporations, from start-ups to government agencies, and state significant projects such as Queensland's LNG giants.*