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# **Ministerial Council on Energy**

## **Statement on National Gas Emergency Response Protocol December 2004**

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The Ministerial Council on Energy (MCE) has signed, as an initial step, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the use of emergency powers for natural gas supply shortages as part of the development of a National Gas Emergency Response Protocol.

The MoU establishes the inter-governmental framework for the Protocol.

The MoU provides for MCE Ministers and relevant jurisdictional officers to use all reasonable endeavours to consult before invoking State emergency powers in the event of a natural gas supply shortage affecting more than one Jurisdiction.

The MoU will promote coordinated responses to emergencies caused by major natural gas supply shortages.

The MCE has agreed that government will work cooperatively with industry to develop a detailed communication and emergency response strategy for MCE consideration in March 2005. This joint effort will be directed at defining the roles and responsibilities of governments, market participants and customers for inclusion in the Gas Emergency Response Protocol. Representatives of all sectors of the gas industry and gas customers will be invited to participate in this work.

An Options Paper will be released for public consultation early in 2005 on the final arrangements for the national gas emergency response protocol.

The MCE will consider the arrangements for the Protocol in March 2005.

The MCE has agreed that the major deliverables for the National Gas Emergency Response Protocol will include:

- Emergency response coordination (within and external to the energy sector);
- The extent to which market based mechanisms should continue before intervention is required;
- Information provision requirements;
- Roles and responsibilities of Governments;
- Roles and responsibilities of market participants and end-users;
- Gas sharing arrangements; and
- Communication protocols.