

Palaszczuk, Turnbull row: Gas pipeline nod fuels bitter war of words



Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, pictured in Townsville, has PM trouble in the pipeline. Picture: Wesley Monts

SARAH ELKS THE AUSTRALIAN 12:00AM May 1, 2017

The Queensland government has approved a licence for a critical pipeline linking the resource-rich Bowen Basin and the east-coast gas market, as a bitter stoush broke out between Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and Malcolm Turnbull over gas policy.

The Australian can reveal Arrow Energy will finally receive a petroleum pipeline licence for its planned Bowen pipeline, which — if built — will deliver coal-seam gas from Arrow’s Bowen Basin fields to Gladstone, increasing supply for the hungry domestic market.

Natural Resources Minister Anthony Lynham confirmed the state government had approved Arrow’s pipeline, which he said was a crucial “missing link” in the gas supply network, and encouraged the company to press ahead with the project.

“We are encouraging that pipeline, we want that pipeline to be hooked up because it’s an important piece of infrastructure that’s been missing,” Dr Lynham said.

An Arrow spokeswoman said it had production “challenges” in the Bowen Basin last year, which delayed its proposed gas expansion project and pipeline.

Separately, Arrow — a joint venture of Shell and PetroChina — announced in January 2015 that it would not go ahead with its own liquefied natural gas plant on Gladstone’s Curtis Island.

Ms Palaszczuk yesterday ramped up her campaign for federal funding for another gas pipeline for the Galilee Basin, and attacked the Prime Minister for failing to contact her before he announced in Brisbane last week a plan to restrict gas exports if there was a domestic shortage.

A furious Ms Palaszczuk said the policy would snatch royalties from Queensland and was the “last straw” in an escalation of tensions with Mr Turnbull, which began during last month’s Cyclone Debbie.

“All we’ve seen lately is a fly-in, fly-out Prime Minister who is espousing thought bubbles without any deep policy conversation,” Ms Palaszczuk said.

However, a spokesman for Mr Turnbull said federal Resources Minister Matt Canavan had given notice to his state counterpart, Dr Lynham, the night before Mr Turnbull’s announcement.

Mr Turnbull took to Facebook to rebuke Ms Palaszczuk, who he will join at a memorial in Townsville today for the Battle of the Coral Sea, [describing her barrage as “bitter, personal and wildly inaccurate”](#).

Mr Turnbull said the Premier had praised the “unprecedented” level of federal-state co-operation during the natural disaster, as he insisted his gas reforms would help thousands of Queenslanders keep jobs.

“The Premier’s remarks can’t conceal the reality that the Queensland Labor government is the biggest brake on state development,” Mr Turnbull said.

“Queenslanders don’t want their politicians hurling abuse; they want them to deliver.”

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