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Minister for the Environment and Energy

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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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BIOREGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF ISA BASIN

The Isa Superbasin in Queensland is to be assessed as a potential area for the safe extraction of gas as the Turnbull Government seeks to ensure that Australia can access our plentiful resources in a responsible way.

Extending approximately 56,000 square kilometres along the northern part of the Queensland-Northern Territory border, the Isa Superbasin was selected for its world class petroleum source rocks, demonstrated shale gas flows and its proximity to pipeline infrastructure – all of which make it an excellent candidate to deliver new gas supplies to the East Coast Gas Market in the next five to 10 years.

“As we work with states, territories and industry to get more gas to market, this initiative aims to not only boost supply to the eastern states, but also support strong regulation of unconventional gas projects,” Minister Frydenberg said.

“It is yet another step the Turnbull Government is taking to deliver affordable and reliable energy for Australian households and businesses as we transition to a lower emissions future.”

The independent scientific studies will assess the geology, water quantity and quality of surface and groundwater as well as protected environmental assets to determine the potential impacts and environmental safety of shale and tight gas developments.

“Governments, industry and local communities must all be assured that our decisions about resources are based on a sound scientific understanding of the region’s geology and environmental values,” Minister Frydenberg said.

Minister Canavan said increasing our access to gas supplies will help create Australian jobs and support investment in regional Australia.

“It is vital that we unlock our gas resources and bring more gas to market. By taking steps to unlock our gas reserves, we will help put downward pressure on gas prices,” Minister Canavan said.

“This investment will make use of the best science to map and access our gas supplies to keep Australian industry running.”

The \$30.4 million Geological and Bioregional Assessments Program was announced in Budget 2017-18. The studies will be conducted by Geoscience Australia and the CSIRO, supported by the Bureau of Meteorology and managed by the Department of the Environment and Energy.

Work on the Isa Superbasin assessment will begin in early 2018. It is the second region to be assessed as a potential source of gas by the Turnbull Government – the Cooper Basin in Queensland and South Australia having already been selected. The third and final region will be announced in coming months.

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