

CSG centre set to raise questions

A new centre of excellence for research and education on coal seam gas at the University of Queensland will start critical study into CSG projects throughout Queensland, including the Western Downs.

The Centre for Coal Seam Gas, which is part of UQ's Sustainable Minerals Institute, aims to be the pre-eminent global authority on vital issues relating to CSG.

SMI director Professor Chris Moran said CSG companies Origin, Santos, QGC and Arrow as well as the state and federal governments had been working closely with UQ during the centre's planning phases.

"Since the institute's inception in 2001, we have worked closely with industry and we envisage their strong involvement in the new centre," Professor Moran said.

Far from being entirely focused

on laboratory experiments at the university's St Lucia campus, much of the centre's work is planned to be conducted on-site.

"The centre won't be a distant ivory tower," Prof Moran said.

"Students and projects will be on the ground."

However, landholder representative group Basin Sustainability Alliance has raised questions regarding the transparency of the centre's research given how closely it has been working with CSG companies.

"This research will be partly funded by industry and government, so we sincerely hope the research is transparent given the specialist centre will be funded by those who stand the most to gain from the industry going ahead," BSA chair Ian Hayllor said.

The centre is likely to be launched before the end of the year.