

The International Comparative Legal Guide to:
Gas Regulation 2008

A practical insight to cross-border Gas Regulation work



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1 Overview of Natural Gas Sector

1.1 A brief outline of New Zealand's natural gas sector, including a general description of: natural gas reserves; natural gas production including the extent to which production is associated or non-associated natural gas; importation and exportation of natural gas, including liquefied natural gas (LNG) liquefaction and export facilities, and/or receiving and re-gasification facilities ("LNG facilities"); natural gas pipeline transportation and distribution/transmission network; natural gas storage; and commodity sales and trading.

New Zealand's natural gas market is very small by international standards, with 163 PJ produced in 2006. Nevertheless, natural gas is an important source of primary energy, providing 20% of New Zealand's total primary energy supply. While direct consumption of natural gas is low, the industry plays an important role in the New Zealand economy, providing fuel for electricity generation and primary fuel for industry. In 2006, 56% of natural gas was used to generate electricity, 20% for industrial use, and 15% was used in the petrochemicals sector.

New Zealand's natural gas is entirely indigenous and is sourced from the Taranaki region, with the sector dominated by the large Maui field (57% of gas production in 2006) 35kms off the coast. However, with the recent fall in Maui's estimated reserves to 439 PJs focus has turned to the operational fields Pohokura (9% production in 2006; estimated 885 PJs remaining) and Kapuni (17% production in 2006; estimated 263 PJs remaining), as well as the Kupe field (opening mid-2009, with expected reserves of 254 PJs). Crown Minerals estimates that 1048 billion cubic feet (bcf) (1100 PJs) of reserves remain in producing fields and that 1144 bcf (1201 PJs) lie in currently non-producing fields.

Nationwide gas is transported through more than 3,400 km of high pressure pipes to feed in excess of 2,800 km of intermediate, medium, and low pressure distribution networks. The high pressure networks are owned by Maui Development Limited (being the owner of the Maui Pipeline) and Vector Gas Limited (being the owner of the Vector Pipeline). These pipelines connect the gas fields of Taranaki to the major load centres of the North Island.

1.2 To what extent are New Zealand's energy requirements met using natural gas (including LNG)?

Natural gas has traditionally played an important role in New Zealand's primary energy supply. The Ministry of Economic Development's Energy Data File 2007 breaks down production into seven categories:

- Oil: 275 PJ (37.1%).
- Gas: 152 PJ (20.6%).
- Coal: 92 PJ (12.5%).
- Geothermal: 89 PJ (12.0%).
- Hydro: 84 PJ (11.4%).
- Other renewables: 47 PJ (6.3%).
- Waste heat: 1 PJ (0.1%).

New Zealand does not currently import LNG. Nevertheless, the supply uncertainty created by the Maui field's decline has led to consideration of this option. Genesis Energy (a State Owned Enterprise) and Contact Energy are currently engaged in a joint venture known as Gasbridge, the object of which is to make preparations for an LNG import terminal at Port Taranaki that could be used in the future by both companies in the event of gas shortage.

The current government has expressed a preference for an indigenous solution, noting in its recently released Energy Strategy that electricity generation by way of imported LNG would link the New Zealand's electricity prices to international oil and gas prices for the first time. Further, the Government's Climate Change (Emissions Trading and Renewable Preference) Bill currently before Parliament would place a 10-year restriction on new fossil-fuelled electricity generation except to the extent required to ensure energy security.

1.3 To what extent are New Zealand's natural gas requirements met through domestic natural gas production?

Natural gas used in New Zealand is entirely indigenous.

1.4 To what extent is New Zealand's natural gas production exported (pipeline or LNG)?

New Zealand does not export natural gas.

2 Development of Natural Gas

2.1 Outline broadly the legal/statutory and organisational framework for the exploration and production ("development") of natural gas reserves including: principal legislation; in whom the State's mineral rights to natural gas are vested; Government authority or authorities responsible for the regulation of natural gas development; and current major initiatives or policies of the Government (if any) in relation to natural gas development.

The exploration and development of the New Zealand gas resource is

governed by the Petroleum Act 1937, the Crown Minerals Act 1991 and the Minerals Programme for Petroleum, issued under that Act. While those Acts state the law relating to the management of Crown owned minerals, the Minerals Programme for Petroleum is prepared by the Minister of Energy and contains the policies and procedures governing the development of all petroleum resources (including gas). Responsibility for giving effect to both instruments lies with Crown Minerals, an office of the Ministry of Economic Development.

The Minerals Programme for Petroleum 2005 includes a range of Government exploration incentives, based around royalty reduction and the funding of seismic acquisition. The Government has recently released \$21 million to fund seismic surveys of a number of new prospective hydrocarbon basins. The survey data generated by this process is intended to be provided free of charge to prospective permit holders. Tax disincentives have also been removed as they relate to drilling rigs and seismic ships.

In recognition of indigenous Maori rights the Minerals Programme for Petroleum 2005 excludes certain land in the Taranaki region from the permitting regime.

The Gas Act 1992 outlines the responsibilities of gas operators and owners of gas fittings, and provides for a model of co-regulation for the domestic gas sector. Under this system an 'industry body' may recommend regulations and rules to the Minister in the areas of wholesaling, processing, transmission and distribution of gas. The 2004 Government Policy Statement on Gas Governance (GPS) requested coherent leadership from the industry on regulatory matters: the response from the industry was the formation of the Gas Industry Company (GIC) which was duly approved as an industry body, under s43ZL of the Gas Act, in December 2004. The GIC is required to make recommendations to the Minister on a range of industry issues, including the wholesaling, transmission, distribution and retail of natural gas.

Despite promoting industry-led solutions and light-handed regulation, the Government has maintained oversight of the process and has reserved the right to regulate unilaterally where industry solutions are not considered appropriate. The Government has also indicated its intention to establish a regulatory authority of its own if the GIC does not deliver the required outcomes.

The Resource Management Act 1991 and the Maritime Transport Act 1994 also play important roles in any natural gas development. Due to the time-consuming nature of the resource consent process, the Minister for the Environment may use a 'call-in' process (on a case by case basis) to streamline the appeals process and decrease consent timeframes.

2.2 How are the State's mineral rights to develop natural gas reserves transferred to investors or companies ("participants") (e.g. license, concession, service contract, contractual rights under Production Sharing Agreement?) and what is the legal status of those rights or interests under domestic law?

All gas in its natural state is property of the Crown. Property in the gas will pass to a permit holder who has obtained the gas lawfully and in the course of activities authorised by a permit.

As described below, three types of permit are available under the Crown Minerals Act: prospecting; exploration; and mining permits. While prospecting rights are non-exclusive and do not imply subsequent rights, exploration and mining rights are exclusive. Further, an exploration permit generally gives a subsequent right to apply for a mining permit.

In addition, some licences continue to exist under the Petroleum Act 1937.

2.3 If different authorisations are issued in respect of different stages of development (e.g., exploration or production arrangements), please specify those authorisations and briefly summarise the most important (standard) terms (such as term/duration, scope of rights, expenditure obligations).

Three types of permits are granted by the Minister of Energy: prospecting; exploration; and mining.

Prospecting permits allow for reconnaissance of prospective gas fields, typically by the collection of geological and geophysical data. Such permits are allocated on a non-competitive basis, may be non-exclusive when granted, and are valid for up to one year.

Exploration permits allow for physical surveying, appraisal drilling, and testing of petroleum discoveries. Many exploration permits originate with the Minister of Energy issuing a Petroleum Exploration Permit Block Offer. The winning tenderer in the offer process is afforded exclusive exploration rights, as well as subsequent rights to apply for a mining permit. Exploration permits run for up to five years, a renewal for five years is available over no more than 50% of the area, and appraisal extensions may be granted for four years.

'Priority in time' applications are also used to obtain an exploration permit where explorers wish to start an immediate and extensive effort over a certain area without waiting for a Block Offer. Certain criteria must be fulfilled for a priority permit, including a commitment to a strict minimum work programme.

Mining permits are normally granted to exploration permit holders who have discovered a petroleum field in the area of their permit. In evaluating a mining permit application, the Minister must be convinced of the viability of the field and that the applicant's work programme complies with good mining and exploration practice. Mining permits allow for operations relevant to the extraction, separation, treatment and processing of petroleum. A mining permits' duration will depend on the size of the discovery and rate of production, and may be granted for up to 40 years.

2.4 To what extent, if any, does the State have an ownership interest, or seek to participate, in the development of natural gas reserves (whether as a matter of law or policy)?

The state does not currently seek to develop gas reserves itself. However, the State Owned Enterprise, Genesis Energy, (100% owned by the Crown) has significant equity interests in the natural gas sector. Genesis is a joint venture partner in the Kupe Gas Project (31%, via subsidiaries), holds a 40% equity in the Cardiff-2 gas prospect, and is an equal joint venture partner in the Gasbridge project (see question 1.2 above). Mighty River Power (also an SOE) also has natural gas interests, including a 54% interest in the Western Southland basin well.

2.5 How does the State derive value from natural gas development (e.g. royalty, share of production, taxes)?

A hybrid royalties regime applies to petroleum permits comprising an *ad valorem* royalty and an accounting profit royalty. For mining permits where the net sales revenue has not exceeded NZ\$1 million in one reporting period only the *ad valorem* royalty is payable. If the net sales revenue exceeds this amount the permit holder must calculate both the *ad valorem* and accounting profit royalties and pay whichever is the higher.

As part of the Government's current incentives package the *ad valorem* royalty has been reduced from 5% to 1% of all sales revenue for gas discoveries made during the period 30 June 2004 -

31 December 2009; similarly, the accounting profit royalty has been reduced from 20% to 15% for the first \$750 million gross offshore sales and the first \$250 million onshore sales.

2.6 Are there any restrictions on the export of production?

This issue has not yet arisen in the gas industry. Nevertheless, section 45(2) of the Crown Minerals Act 1991 provides that the Minister may direct, in certain circumstances, that petroleum be refined in New Zealand and not exported.

2.7 Are there any currency exchange restrictions, or restrictions on the transfer of funds derived from production out of the jurisdiction?

There are no such restrictions.

2.8 What restrictions (if any) apply to the transfer or disposal of natural gas development rights or interests?

Transferability of permits is limited; bids will not be accepted where the bidder's intention is to trade the permit. The Crown Minerals Act 1991 provides for the assignment of a permit interest to allow for risk sharing, and for the transfer of permits as part of commercial transactions. However, transactions are subject to the consent of the Minister of Energy (section 41 of the Crown Minerals Act and section 23 of the Petroleum Act 1937 if granted under that Act).

2.9 Are participants obliged to provide any security or guarantees in relation to natural gas development?

The only formal guarantees that participants must provide are those contained in the work programmes that must be furnished to the Minister. These programmes include commitments as to timeframe and content of programmes.

Under the Petroleum Act 1937 licence holders were required to lodge a deposit or bond, to be returned when the licence has expired or ceased.

2.10 Can rights to develop natural gas reserves granted to a participant be pledged for security, or booked for accounting purposes under domestic law?

A security interest may be granted over a permit granted under the Petroleum Act 1937 or the Crown Minerals Act 1991. However, the transfer restrictions in section 23 of the Petroleum Act and section 41 of the Crown Minerals Act apply to the exercise of any such security interest (as above, question 2.8).

2.11 In addition to those rights/authorisations required to explore for and produce natural gas, what other principal Government authorisations are required to develop natural gas reserves (e.g. environmental, occupational health and safety) and from whom are these authorisations to be obtained?

Development of the gas resource may require resource consents, building consents, permits and compliance plans under the following Acts respectively: the Resource Management Act 1991; the Building Act 2004; the Maritime Transport Act 1994, the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 2004, and the Overseas Investment Act 2005. Further, the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 (and relevant regulations) requires

compliance with certain workplace safety standards.

2.12 Is there any legislation or framework relating to the abandonment or decommissioning of physical structures used in natural gas development? If so, what are the principal features/requirements of the legislation?

Decommissioning and abandonment procedures typically constitute part of the work programme included as part of a permit granted under the Crown Minerals Act 1991. Further, the Resource Management Act 1991, the Maritime Transport Act 1994, and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 2004 will have to be observed.

3 Importation / Exportation

3.1 Outline any regulatory requirements, or specific terms, limitations or rules applying in respect of cross-border sales or deliveries of natural gas (including LNG).

Due to the entirely indigenous supply of natural gas in New Zealand, and the absence of exports, no specific regime exists. If New Zealand were to import LNG, for example, companies would need to comply with the environmental and safety provisions of Maritime Transport Act 1994 and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 2004.

4 Transportation

4.1 Outline broadly the ownership, organisational and regulatory framework in relation to transportation pipelines and associated infrastructure (such as natural gas processing and storage facilities).

New Zealand's high-pressure network is owned by two entities: Vector Gas Limited, running pipes from the gas fields of Taranaki to primary load centres, and Maui Development Limited (MDL), operating the Maui high-pressure pipeline. The Vector network is also a welded party to the Maui pipeline. The Maui Pipeline Operating Code (MPOC) provides the regime that governs parties' shipping gas through the Maui pipeline and the Vector Transmission Code provides for non-discriminatory access to the Vector network for users as well as minimum standards of conduct and disclosure on behalf of the pipeline owner.

4.2 What Governmental authorisations (including any applicable environmental authorisations) are required to construct and operate natural gas transportation pipelines and associated infrastructure?

Resource and building consents will be required under the Resource Management Act 1991 and Building Act 2004 respectively. Consent and approval may be required under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 2004 to transport a potentially dangerous substance such as natural gas.

4.3 In general, how does an entity obtain the necessary land (or other) rights to construct natural gas transportation pipelines or associated infrastructure? Do Government authorities have any powers of compulsory acquisition to facilitate land access?

There is no longer any presumption in favour of permit holders having access rights to land: companies must privately negotiate agreements

to either purchase land; lease land; or obtain a pipeline easement.

Under the Resource Management Act 1991 a network utility operator may apply to be deemed a “requiring authority.” If such application is granted, the operator may be able to designate land for laying pipeline, a status which suspends the normal provisions of the district plan over the designated route.

4.4 How is access to natural gas transportation pipelines and associated infrastructure organised?

Both Vector Gas Limited and Maui Development Limited operate under “open access” regimes as outlined in question 4.1 above. See further, below, question 4.6.

4.5 To what degree are natural gas transportation pipelines integrated or interconnected, and how is co-operation between different transportation systems established and regulated?

Injection points along the high-pressure network introduce gas from producers; delivery points distribute gas to local distribution networks. Access is governed by the Maui Pipeline Operating Code and the Vector Transmission Code. Aside from the open access agreements, co-operation is governed by private contracts.

Three major types of agreement operate: transmission services agreements between the pipeline owner and the shipper (retailer or direct purchaser of gas); interconnection agreements between the pipeline owner and welded parties (parties who have physical assets connected to the transmission pipelines); and gas supply agreements between the producer (seller of gas) and the shipper.

4.6 Outline any third-party access regime/rights in respect of natural gas transportation and associated infrastructure. For example, can the regulator or a new customer wishing to transport natural gas compel or require the operator/owner of a natural gas transportation pipeline or associated infrastructure to grant capacity or expand its facilities in order to accommodate the new customer? If so, how are the costs (including costs of interconnection, capacity reservation or facility expansions) allocated?

As noted above at question 4.1, two regimes govern third party access to the high-pressure transportation system in New Zealand: the Maui Pipeline Operating Code (MPOC), and the Vector Transmission Code (VTC).

The MPOC provides third parties with non-discriminatory, transparent access to the Maui pipeline. As part of this regime MDL publishes the MPOC on its website. Further, all Interconnection Agreements (ICAs) and Transmission Services Agreements (TSAs) that MDL enters into incorporate the MPOC into the agreement.

Similarly, the VTC is designed to ensure transparency and open access to the Vector pipeline. There is a movement toward all the shippers on Vector Gas’s network falling under Transmission Services Agreements that incorporate the VTC, however, it is unclear whether all of the relevant shippers have adopted these standard Transmission Services Agreements at this stage.

4.7 Are parties free to agree the terms upon which natural gas is to be transported or are the terms (including costs/tariffs which may be charged) regulated?

Generally parties are free to agree the price of transport of gas

within the confines of the MPOC and VTC. Also potentially relevant are the provisions of the Commerce Act (see, generally, section 8 below).

5 Transmission / Distribution

5.1 Outline broadly the ownership, organisational and regulatory framework in relation to the natural gas transmission/distribution network.

Gas supply agreements operate between the producer and retailer, and the retailer and end-user. Further, the retailer will contract with the distributor in the area under a distribution services agreement. The main distribution networks are operated by Vector and Powerco.

Despite being historically regarded as geographically distinct natural monopolies, distribution networks are subject to effective competition in certain areas: in Auckland; Wellington; and the Hawkes Bay, Nova Gas has launched networks by-passing the incumbent distributors, leading to price reductions in these areas.

5.2 What Governmental authorisations (including any applicable environmental authorisations) are required to operate a distribution network?

Distributors must comply with the requirement of being a ‘gas operator’ under the Gas Act 1992. Compliance by way of consents or permits may also be required under the Resource Management Act 1991, the Building Act 2004 and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 2004.

5.3 How is access to the natural gas distribution network organised?

The owner of the local distribution network will contract with the retailer by way of a distribution services agreement. Although there are significant emerging pockets of competition, many local distribution networks are discrete to each area and unchallenged in their location.

5.4 Can the regulator require a distributor to grant capacity or expand its system in order to accommodate new customers?

No.

5.5 What fees are charged for accessing the distribution network, and are these fees regulated?

Until recently, parties have been free to agree fees for accessing the distribution network, subject only to generic competition laws. However, in 2005 the Minister of Energy, on the advice of the Commerce Commission, imposed price control on the two main gas distributors, Vector and Powerco, reducing average prices by 9% for Powerco, and 9.5% for Vector (due to last until 2016). The Minister also signalled that other distribution businesses would become subject to a price path thresholds regime.

Government has recently announced planned changes to the Commerce Act price control regime. However, this is unlikely to fundamentally change the current regulation of gas distribution businesses.

5.6 Are there any restrictions or limitations in relation to acquiring an interest in a gas utility, or the transfer of assets forming part of the distribution network (whether directly or indirectly)?

Generally the Commerce Act 1986 prohibits agreements or business acquisitions that substantially lessen competition (see below, question 8.2). Aside from the Commerce Act, investors may be required to comply with the Overseas Investment Act 2005 if the subject-matter is deemed sensitive land or a significant business asset under that Act (see below, question 9.1).

6 Natural Gas Trading

6.1 Outline broadly the ownership, organisational and regulatory framework in relation to natural gas trading. Please include details of current major initiatives or policies of the Government or regulator (if any) relating to natural gas trading.

In the wholesale market, gas supply agreements are used to transfer gas from producers to wholesale market participants such as retailers, electricity generators and wholesale end-users. Transmission services agreements are also required with the pipeline owner for the purposes of delivery.

Retailers enter into distribution services agreements with local distribution network owners and supply gas to end-users of all types (industrial, commercial, and residential) under gas supply agreements. Five retailers supply to residential end-users, while seven supply to commercial and industrial customers.

6.2 What range of natural gas commodities can be traded? For example, can only "bundled" products (i.e., the natural gas commodity and the distribution thereof) be traded?

Although there is typically only one distributor in any given area (and therefore options are limited), and bundled products do exist, there are no requirements to purchase bundled products in New Zealand.

7 Liquefied Natural Gas

7.1 Outline broadly the ownership, organisational and regulatory framework in relation to LNG facilities.

No LNG facilities currently exist in New Zealand.

7.2 What Governmental authorisations are required to construct and operate LNG facilities?

Although no such facilities currently exist, development of LNG facilities would require resource consents, building consents, permits and compliance plans under the following Acts respectively: the Resource Management Act 1991; the Building Act 2004; the Maritime Transport Act 1994; and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 2004. Overseas Investment Act clearance may also be required (see, below, question 9.1).

7.3 Is there any regulation of the price or terms of service in the LNG sector?

No LNG facilities exist in New Zealand (see question 7.1, above). However, if LNG became a significant component of the New Zealand market, controls could be exercised under the Commerce Act 1986.

8 Competition

8.1 Which Governmental authority or authorities are responsible for the regulation of competition aspects, or anti-competitive practices, in the natural gas sector?

The Commerce Act 1986 prohibits anti-competitive practices and allows for goods and services to be subject to price control; the Commerce Commission is responsible for administering the Act.

8.2 To what criteria does the regulator have regard in determining whether conduct is anti-competitive?

Under the Commerce Act the following are prohibited:

Any agreement containing a provision that substantially lessens competition in a market (section 27); arrangements to exclude competitors (section 29); agreements to fix prices (section 30); taking advantage of substantial market power to prevent competition (section 36), and resale price maintenance (sections 37 and 38).

8.3 What power or authority does the regulator have to preclude or take action in relation to anti-competitive practices?

The Commerce Commission may:

- seek a Cease and Desist Order from a Cease and Desist Commissioner;
- seek an injunction from the High Court under section 81 of the Commerce Act; or
- take a private civil prosecution to seek a pecuniary penalty and damages for breach.

If the Court finds that a person has breached the Commerce Act, it may:

- impose pecuniary penalties on businesses that must not exceed the greater of:
 - \$10 million;
 - or either:
 - three times the value of any commercial gain or expected commercial gain resulting from the breach; or
 - if commercial gain is not known, 10% of the turnover of the business and all of its interconnected businesses (if any).

The Commerce Act also creates personal liability for anti-competitive conduct. While pecuniary penalties may not exceed \$500,000 for an individual, the Court may also order that the individual concerned be excluded from the management of a body corporate for up to five years. Moreover, companies may not indemnify individuals involved in price-fixing.

8.4 Does the regulator (or any other Government authority) have the power to approve/disapprove mergers or other changes in control over businesses in the natural gas sector, or proposed acquisitions of development assets, transportation or associated infrastructure or distribution assets? If so, what criteria and procedures are applied? How long does it typically take to obtain a decision approving or disapproving the transaction?

Under the Commerce Act prohibits mergers and acquisitions that have the effect or likely effect of substantially lessening competition in a market. The Act provides a voluntary pre-acquisition notification regime whereby companies may apply for

either clearance or authorisation of proposed mergers or acquisitions. The Commission must grant clearances where it is satisfied a transaction is unlikely to substantially lessen competition, and authorisations for transactions that, although lessening competition, would provide public benefits outweighing the detriment caused.

While the Commission might apply to a Cease and Desist Commissioner for an order to stop a transaction, ultimate authority lies with the courts and their jurisdiction to hear judicial review and appeals of Commission decisions as well as claims by third parties.

As noted at questions 5.6 and 9.1, Overseas Investment Office clearance may also be required and may take from two to four months to obtain. A similar timeframe can be expected for gaining approval for the transfer of permits under the Crown Minerals Act (as noted at question 2.8, above).

9 Foreign Investment and International Obligations

9.1 Are there any special requirements or limitations on acquisitions of interests in the natural gas sector (whether development, transportation or associated infrastructure, distribution or other) by foreign companies?

In broad terms potential overseas investors must obtain the consent of the Overseas Investment Office (OIO) in two situations: when making a significant investment in a New Zealand business or asset, and when purchasing “sensitive land”.

Consent of the OIO will be required when the overseas person wishes to invest more than NZ\$100 million in an asset or shares, take control of 25% or more of the shareholding of a New Zealand company, or expand on an existing share holding of 25% or more.

While investors may not purchase seabed, it is possible that an onshore area might, in certain cases, constitute sensitive land (by virtue of size and rural location, or proximity to features such as conservation areas, waterways or parks). Applications relating to land assets are assessed by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Land Information. In the case of sensitive land the potential investor must demonstrate business experience relevant to the investment, financial commitment to the investment, their good character, and a benefit to New Zealand (if the person does not intend to reside in New Zealand).

9.2 To what extent is regulatory policy in respect of the natural gas sector influenced or affected by international treaties or other multinational arrangements?

The current Government’s energy policy is influenced by the Kyoto Protocol. In this respect the gas industry may be affected by the Government’s Climate Change (Emissions Trading and Renewable Preference) Bill that, among other things, seeks a ten year moratorium on new thermal generation of electricity (see above, question 1.2).

New Zealand has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Although this treaty makes mention of the development of gas reserves, it does not directly affect regulatory policy in respect of natural gas.

10 Dispute Resolution

10.1 Provide a brief overview of compulsory dispute resolution procedures (statutory or otherwise) applying to the natural gas sector (if any), including procedures applying in the context of disputes between the applicable Government authority/regulator and: participants in relation to natural gas development; transportation pipeline and associated infrastructure owners or users in relation to the transportation, processing or storage of natural gas; and distribution network owners or users in relation to the distribution/transmission of natural gas.

No compulsory dispute resolution procedures are mandated between supply-side actors such as regulators, producers and retailers.

However, the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commission provides a binding disputes resolution service for consumers who have had disputes with their retail provider. Companies signed up to the Commission include Vector, Powerco, and Genesis Energy.

10.2 Is New Zealand a signatory to, and has it duly ratified into domestic legislation: the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards; and/or the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States (“ICSID”)?

The Arbitration Act 1996 ratifies the New York Convention in New Zealand; the Arbitration (International Investment Disputes) Act 1979 provides that articles 18, 20 to 24, and chapters II to VII of the ICSID have the force of law in New Zealand.

10.3 Is there any special difficulty (whether as a matter of law or practice) in litigating, or seeking to enforce judgments or awards, against Government authorities or State organs (including any immunity)?

No difficulty in taking legal action has been experienced.

10.4 Have there been instances in the natural gas sector when foreign corporations have successfully obtained judgments or awards against Government authorities or State organs pursuant to litigation before domestic courts?

Yes. Foreign corporations have used the normal litigation process to seek to enforce certain rights in relation to petroleum permits against the Crown.

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Andrew specialises in mergers and acquisitions and securities offerings.

His experience includes advising on international and domestic mergers and acquisitions, particularly cross-border transactions and a range of securities offerings.

Andrew has acted for both purchasers and sellers in acquisition and disposition transactions, including stock and asset sales recapitalisations, restructurings, joint ventures, partnerships, and other structured solutions.

Andrew has industry experience in oil & gas, electricity regulation and contracting, property fund work and is a key member of Bell Gully's Hotels, Tourism and Leisure practice.

Andrew was named as a leading mergers and acquisitions lawyer in Asialaw's 2007 guide to Asia's leading lawyers, citing market feedback that "Andrew brings a very strong commercial perspective to transactions and has a natural flair for negotiation strategy". In 2007, Australasian Legal Business identified Andrew as a leading New Zealand lawyer in the energy and resources sector with clients commending the "great expertise he brings to all tasks".

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