

The Geological and Bioregional Assessment Program held its first User Panel meeting for the Cooper Basin in Quilpie, on 21 March 2018.

The User Panel consists of representatives from a number of stakeholders including landholders, local indigenous people, local and state governments, industry, community and environmental groups.

This communique outlines the key topics discussed by the User Panel.

- The Cooper Basin environment is a unique environment that requires careful management to ensure environmental and cultural values are protected, in particular this relates to the importance of:
 - Floodplains
 - Great Artesian Basin.
- The existing petroleum and gas industry is currently seen to make a positive economic and social contribution to the region and local communities.
- If the industry is to continue to develop there is a need to determine what success might look like, for industry, governments and communities.
- There is a need for improved communication of industry operations and management practices to support local community information needs.
- Consistent and coordinated legislative frameworks across the basin would enable consistent management practices that reduce regulatory burden and deliver good environmental outcomes.
- There was broad agreement from User Panel members represented at the meeting to contribute data to the program as required. The Program will make targeted approaches for data once specific needs are identified.
- As part of regular and ongoing consultation to ensure user needs are considered, there was a general agreement to incorporate a field trip for the User Panel in the Cooper Basin in early Spring, with the aim of increasing the Program and User Panel members' understanding of the region's values and industry operations.