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## **Association secures fundamental legal rights for farmers**

Farmers in NSW have had their fundamental legal rights secured in relation to access agreements with mining companies, according to the NSW Farmers' Association.

NSW Farmers' Association President Charles Armstrong says the Association has strongly defended the property rights of farmers since the Mining and Petroleum Amendment Bill was introduced into parliament four weeks ago.

"The Association has worked hard with all sides of parliament to defend the rights of farmers to ensure mining company respect the rights of farmers to carry on their business on their properties," Mr Armstrong said.

"Farmers can now be certain that current access agreements with mining companies are secure and any uncertainty surrounding this issue has been removed.

"The Association has ensured that exploration licence conditions relating to access on farms can still be included in an access agreement between the farmers and a mining company. This right would have otherwise been removed, but for the Association's intervention.

Exploration licences detail the conditions the government places on a mining company relating to access agreements and enables farmers to deny access when these conditions are breached.

"Contrary to the assertion of the Greens, the amendments strengthen the rights of farmers when there is an issue with an access agreement," Mr Armstrong said.

"Industry and Investment NSW are now required by law to act within 48 hours of a request by a landholder where there is an issue with access agreements.

"This right to deny access remains until any such dispute over access has been determined by an arbitrator appointed by Industry and Investment NSW.

"These rights for farmers were going to be removed by the Amendment Bill had the NSW Farmers' Association not acted in the interest of farmers' property rights," Mr Armstrong said.

"For anyone, including the Greens, to suggest that the Association has acted against the interests of farmers is totally wrong," Mr Armstrong concluded.

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