

# Community Bulletin # 8

## Hydraulic Fracturing Inquiry Implementation

### A strengthened regulatory regime for the onshore gas industry

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The Northern Territory Government is committed to developing a transparent, accountable onshore gas industry that will create jobs for Territorians while protecting our environment.

With indications that the shale gas reservoirs in the Beetaloo Sub-basin are of global significance, it is important that we enable this substantial industry to expand in a well-regulated and planned manner from the outset. Two legislative amendment bills were passed in Parliament last week. This is in response to government's commitment to implement all of the recommendations outlined in the Final Report from the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory*.

Legislative amendments to date include;

- *Water Legislation Amendment Bill* passed through Parliament that will ensure that the requirement for water licensing and permits to access water resources will apply to mining and petroleum activities; along with updating offences and penalties (Recommendation 7.1);
- Passing of the *Environment Protection Authority Amendment Bill*, providing the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NTEPA) additional members with specialist skills and experience in the assessment and management of the environmental impacts of onshore gas development, positioned to deliver independent expert advice to the Minister for Environment to inform decision making (Recommendation 14.34).
- Introduced the *Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill* with amendments to ensure petroleum companies, as applicants, are 'fit and proper' to hold exploration permits or production licences (Recommendation 14.12); providing provisions for open standing for judicial review for decisions made under the *Petroleum Act* and *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations* (Recommendation 14.23); and ability to ensure codes of practice that are established are enforceable by law and companies can be penalised if they do not abide by them.

A strengthened regulatory regime will ensure robust decision making by the government and provides Industry with certainty about their proposed work plans. Further regulatory changes are progressing and will be introduced to parliament for consideration in the coming months.

In addition to the legislative changes above, two Industry proponents have had Environment Management Plans approved by the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources to install groundwater monitoring bores in the Beetaloo Sub-basin. Origin and Santos plan to install monitoring bores in close proximity to proposed exploration sites to enable collection of baseline groundwater data, as required under recommendation 7.11 of the Final Report. Six months of groundwater data is a prerequisite for future activities at these sites. You can view the environment management plans [here](#)

Recommendation 14.27 of the Final Report outlines the need to establish a hotline to report any potential onshore gas industry non-compliance. The Onshore Gas Non-Compliance Hotline supports paragraphs two and three of Recommendation 14.27 which reads as follows:

*That prior to any further exploration approval being granted, a hotline be established permitting anonymous reporting about any onshore shale gas industry non-compliance.*

*That all such reports be immediately investigated.*

The Non-Compliance Hotline is now operational. Callers to the hotline will be asked to provide a detailed report outline the specifics of their issue.

To report any potential non-compliance by the onshore gas industry, please call 1800 413 889.

For more information about implementation progress, or to read the quarterly update progress report, please click [here](#)

To view the comments from the Independent Officer, Dr David Ritchie on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations from the Final Report, click [here](#)

To read the Implementation Plan or access additional information, please visit [hydraulicfracturing.nt.gov.au](http://hydraulicfracturing.nt.gov.au)

To read the Inquiry report and recommendations, please visit [frackinginquiry.nt.gov.au](http://frackinginquiry.nt.gov.au)

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