

Community Bulletin # 15

Hydraulic Fracturing Inquiry Implementation

Progress towards developing a highly-regulated onshore gas industry: Petroleum Act Amendment Bill 2018 passes and new CSIRO Methane Monitoring Report released

Significant progress implementing the recommendations from the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory* is continuing, with amendments to petroleum legislation passed in Parliament last week and the release of CSIRO's second interim methane monitoring report for the Beetaloo Sub-Basin.

Passing of the Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

The Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 addresses a number of key recommendations including:

- Creating provisions for judicial review, with any person now able to have proceedings heard in the Supreme Court to challenge the lawfulness of particular decisions or determinations under the *Petroleum Act 1984* and *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016* if they believe the legal process was not followed correctly.
- Ensuring gas companies applying for an exploration permit or production licences must be a "fit and proper person", with past history and performance taken into consideration.
- Enforcing adherence to mandatory Codes of Practice under the *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016*.

The mandatory Codes of Practice will be vital to the strong regulatory regime being implemented, addressing well integrity, well decommissioning and abandonment, methane monitoring, surface activities and wastewater management.

These amendments, along with the implementation of other recommendations summarised in table 16.1 of the Final Report of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing, will allow exploration to commence this year.

Release of CSIRO's Ground Survey Monitoring Baseline Emissions in the Beetaloo Sub-basin

CSIRO has published a second interim report following its second round of monitoring of baseline methane emissions in the Beetaloo Sub-basin.

The Inquiry recommended that baseline monitoring of methane be undertaken ahead of the granting of exploration approvals for unconventional gas under recommendation 9.3. The NT Government commissioned the CSIRO through the Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance (GISERA) to conduct baseline methane monitoring in the Beetaloo Sub-basin.

The CSIRO's second interim report presented data from surveys conducted over a nine day period during the fire season between 6 to 15 November 2018. The first published report presented data from surveys undertaken earlier in the 2018 dry season. Additional surveys were conducted during the wet season in early 2019, with findings to be presented in a third interim report in the coming months.

The surveys of atmospheric methane concentrations within the Beetaloo Sub-basin region were conducted using two gas analysers mounted in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Vehicle surveys covered approximately 5,300 km on trafficable roads and tracks during the nine day survey period.

Most of the survey areas include pastoral land, crown land and exploration leases. Where accessible, targeted surveys made during the first survey were repeated at 10 of the 11 plugged and abandoned or suspended petroleum wells, and 16 of the 21 water bores visited during the first survey, and three additional water bores.

The interim report found that overall the majority of methane concentrations recorded during the surveys were within the range of 1.77 to 1.85 parts per million (ppm) with a median value of 1.81 ppm, which is very close to normal background concentrations expected in rural or natural areas, of about 1.8 ppm. This was similar to the results from the first survey.

Isolated pockets of slightly elevated methane concentrations were observed in some areas; the sources of these were identified as grazing cattle, urban areas, pipeline infrastructure and local fires. The observations were expected given these activities are known to generate emissions and were within expected ranges, being very low above background levels.

To read CSIRO's latest Baseline Methane Monitoring Interim Report click [here](#).

To access detailed information about key legislative and administrative changes, and the implementation of each specific recommendation, visit www.hydraulicfracturing.nt.gov.au

You can download [Actions by Recommendation](#) for a full overview of the implementation process.

To read the latest from the NTG Newsroom, please visit [NTG Newsroom](#)

To read the Implementation Plan or access additional information, please visit hydraulicfracturing.nt.gov.au