

**HYDRAULIC FRACTURING INQUIRY IMPLEMENTATION
ONSHORE SHALE GAS COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS REFERENCE GROUP**

COMMUNIQUE

Meeting Two, Tuesday 23 October 2018, Darwin, Northern Territory

Purpose of the meeting

- The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on progress of implementing the recommendations from the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory* and provide input into the approach to delivering the framework for the Strategic Regional Environmental Baseline Assessments (SREBAs).

Second meeting of the Community and Business Reference Group

- The Community and Business Reference Group (Reference Group) held its second meeting on 23 October 2018 in Darwin.
- Three new members, Ms Katherine Warby, Mr Tom Stockwell and Mr Bobby Nuggumajbarr attended the meeting to complement the Reference Group appointed in June 2018 as per recommendation 16.3 of the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory*.

Progress Report

- A presentation was provided to the Reference Group by the Hydraulic Fracturing Inquiry Implementation Taskforce on the current implementation status of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing Implementation Plan.
- Dr David Ritchie, the Independent Officer overseeing implementation of the recommendations from the *Scientific Inquiry in Hydraulic Fracturing*, provided advice on the progress on Stage 2 of the Implementation process, due to be completed by the end of the year, to allow exploration approvals to begin assessment in early in 2019. Dr Ritchie discussed the need for systems change and behavioral changes in the government, industry and the community to fully implement the inquiry recommendations.
- The Reference Group noted the progress summary and the tracking status which will be uploaded to the website. The group provided feedback about the communication approach and recommended that in addition to an update on progress over the last quarter, some discussion on the reforms on the immediate horizon also be included.
- The Reference Group stressed the need to increase communications to the community and in particular increase information for remote communities. The group requested clarification on communications including communicating CBRG discussion and outcomes with emphasis on communicating with Aboriginal stakeholders.
- The Reference group were advised that the No Go Zones policy is close to being released for consultation. The Reference group will be directly consulted on the policy prior to its release. The importance of defining strategic infrastructure (one of the criteria under recommendation 14.4) was discussed along with the need to engage with Land Councils.
- The group noted other progress and asked for further detail on the water advisory committee plans for the Roper-Daly-Beetaloo WCD. They noted the correspondence from the CE Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Strategic Regional Environmental Baseline Assessment

- NT Government and CSIRO representatives provided a presentation on the approach to defining the framework for the SREBAs, the SREBA for the Beetaloo Sub-basin and the contributions by CSIRO and the Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance (GISERA).
- An overview was provided on the Commonwealth Government's Geological and Bioregional Assessment (GBA) Program which includes the Beetaloo Sub-basin.
- The Reference Group discussed the approach to defining the framework for the SREBAs and provided the following feedback:

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- Care needs to be taken to avoid duplication of effort and research;
 - The technical baselines need to be clear about how they capture and monitor risks to the community;
 - It is important that the SREBA framework is flexible to accommodate different baseline disciplines, issues and regional variations;
 - Setting geographical boundaries for the SREBA will be difficult and requires careful consideration; and
 - The health baseline is appropriate to be separate to the socio-cultural-economic baseline.
- The Reference group noted Tom Stockwell is the CBRG member on the SREBA Project Advisory Committee and that questions and feedback could be channelled through Tom or the Taskforce.
 - The Reference group agreed to provide further feedback on how best to consult with the broader community on the framework and whether any key baselines are missing, noting the Inquiry provided a roadmap.

Environmental Regulatory Arrangements

- A presentation on the current status of the environmental regulatory arrangements was provide by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The Reference Group noted:
 - The transfer of the powers to approve activities relating to oil and gas under environmental management plans will be transferred from the Minister for PIR to the Minister for Environment;
 - The EPA will have additional members and broader scope to facilitate advice on EMPs being provided to the Minister; and
 - There were amendments to the Water Act introduced in August and further amendments planned for November to ensure that Onshore gas industry activities relating to water are regulated under the Water Act appropriately with stringent controls in place.
- The reference group recommended that government put out further communications on how the various amendments enable the new regulatory model will be enacted and work in practice.

1. Next Meeting

- The Reference Group agreed the next meeting to be scheduled for 26 February 2019.



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Denys Stedman
Chair

30 October 2018