

Onshore gas in the Northern Territory

Water

This fact sheet supports the recommendations of the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory*.

Safeguarding water and the environment

The government is implementing all recommendations of the Inquiry, many of which will safeguard water and other environmental values through strengthening regulation and ensuring accountable industry practice.

Chapter 7 of the Final Report focuses on the protection of water resources in terms of water quality, water quantity and aquatic ecosystems and in the context of the Beetaloo Sub-basin, which is the most prospective region for shale gas production in the Northern Territory.

The Water Act 1992 has been amended to require mining and petroleum activities, including onshore shale gas, to comply with water licensing and permits obligations to access water resources. Additionally the Water Act 1992 prohibits the use of surface waters for hydraulic fracturing activities and makes the disposal of hydraulic fracturing wastewater to surface water and aquifers illegal.

Government has ensured that practices that pose an unacceptable risk to water resources, such as the use of surface water by the gas industry or the reinjection of wastewater have been prohibited.

Government acknowledges the importance of adequately assessing the state of water resources before any gas production. This assessment will be undertaken in a strategic regional environmental and baseline assessment, or SREBA, commencing with the Beetaloo Sub-basin.

The Report notes that it is also important that any water extracted from aquifers is accounted for. The Government supports the recommendation for water allocation plans to be created for the southern and northern regions of the Beetaloo Sub-basin and has extended the Daly Roper Water Control District to include the Sub-basin. Water allocation planning will identify the estimated sustainable yield of groundwater resources in regions subject to development, and ensure appropriate allocation of water to all users, including the environment and cultural uses.

What will implementation look like?

Actions to mitigate the risks to the Northern Territory's water will be implemented in the timeframes recommended in the Report, noting that these timeframes are expressed relative to exploration and production approvals, rather than explicit time periods.

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Further Information

Where can I get more information?

More information about water management can be found at: <https://nt.gov.au/environment/water>

More information including implementation detail for each of the recommendations, is available at www.hydraulicfracturing.nt.gov.au.

To read the Inquiry report and recommendations, visit frackinginquiry.nt.gov.au.