

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

COMMUNIQUE - Meeting Three, Tuesday 12 March 2019, Darwin, Northern Territory

Purpose of the meeting

- The purpose of the meeting was to provide the members an update on progress of implementing the recommendations from the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory*, community and engagement activities and presentations on industry development.

Third meeting of the Community and Business Reference Group

- The Community and Business Reference Group (Reference Group) held its third meeting on 12 March 2019 in Darwin.
- Members of the Reference Group present at the meeting were: Mr Denys Stedman, Mr Jimmy Cocking, Ms Julie-Ann Stoll, Mr Greg Bicknell, Mr Michael Bridge, Mr David Ciaravolo, Mr Damian Hale, Prof Alan Cass, Mr Tom Stockwell, Mr Geoff Crowhurst, Mr Matt Doman (by teleconference) and Mr Greg McDonald (representing the Northern Land Council).

Industry Development

- A presentation was provided to the Reference Group by Mr Thomas Murphy from the Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research in Pennsylvania (via Video conference), providing insights into lessons learned from shale gas industry development in the U.S.A.
- The Reference Group noted:
 - the importance of being ready for potential opportunities (including jobs and manufacturing) and impacts of industry growth and that now is the best time for careful, considered planning.
 - well integrity issues have declined with improved regulation and technologies.
 - clear communication about risks was critically important to maintain community support and ensure considered decision making.

Mr Murphy provided members with the opportunity to ask questions

No Go Zones

- The Department of Primary Industries and Resources provided an update on declared reserved blocks under Section 9 of the Petroleum Act 1984 (Recommendation 14.4).
- Proposed timeframes for No Go Zones consultation was provided, with a period of public consultation to occur in conjunction with CBRG targeted stakeholder consultation.
- The Reference Group feedback highlighted significant community interest in the development of No Go Zones and the importance of there being opportunities for key stakeholders, as well as the general public to be effectively engaged in consultation.

Industry Presentations

- Origin Energy and Santos Ltd. provided presentations on their Northern Territory operations and exploration activities.
- The Reference Group noted:
 - both companies are intending to resume exploration activities in 2019 when regulatory approval is obtained.
 - there is much confusion around the terminology and practices surrounding gas exploration and production. Further understanding is required throughout the community.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions.

Progress Update and Reporting

- The current status of progress of the recommendations from the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing Implementation Plan was presented and discussed.

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- The Reference Group provided the following feedback:
 - Significant progress has been achieved in implementing the recommendations noting some key reforms were taking longer than initially envisaged.
 - Further publicity is required to increase subscriptions to the community bulletins and web traffic and ensure feedback and input is being received from the community and tools such as social media could be used.
 - Consideration should be given as to the length of time proposed reforms are provided for public comment.
- The Reference Group noted the December 2018 Quarterly Update on Hydraulic Fracturing Implementation was recently finalised after being circulated Out of Session to the Group, with members providing comments on the report prior to its public release.
- The Reference Group endorsed a new approach to communicating their activities to Aboriginal stakeholders.
- The reference group noted that government priorities for 2019 include:
 - Complete the pre-exploration recommendations outlined in table 16.1 of the final report
 - Embedding the new EMP arrangements with reference to new Codes of Practice
 - New monitoring and compliance strategy adopted and fully operational
 - SREBA Framework finalised and Beetaloo scope agreed
 - First 'No Go' zones declared Reserved Blocks
 - Commence work on Statutory Land Access agreements
 - Environmental Offsets Policy developed
 - Development of an implementation plan focused on stage three of the plan

Regulatory Changes

- A presentation on the current status of regulatory changes, including amendments to the *Water Act 1992*, the *Northern Territory Environment Protection Act 2012* and the *Administrative Arrangements Order* transferring responsibility for the *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2012* to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources was provided by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
- It was noted that the reforms are complex and when considered in isolation do not appear complete, so therefore specific changes need to be considered with regard to the broader reforms being undertaken.
- The Reference Group noted that better communication materials regarding reforms to environmental management of the onshore petroleum industry will assist in explaining the changes.

Next Meeting

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



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Denys Stedman
Chair

19 March 2019