

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

On 27 March 2018, the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory* (the Inquiry) released its Final Report. The Inquiry found that provided the recommendations in the report are adopted and implemented, the environmental, social, cultural and economic risks associated with hydraulic fracturing of shale reservoirs could be minimised to an acceptable level.

On the 17 April 2018, the Northern Territory Government accepted all the recommendations of the Inquiry and lifted the moratorium on unconventional gas in the Northern Territory. The Inquiry recommended a series of actions be completed before exploration approvals are issued, with the remainder implemented before any production begins. Responsibility for implementing the 135 recommendations spans a number of different departments. The Department of the Chief Minister has established an implementation team to coordinate the delivery of the recommendations.

Chapter 16 of the Final Report makes recommendations regarding coordinating implementation. Recommendations 16.2, 16.3 and 16.4 set out the need for an implementation framework, team and reference group respectively.

2. Purpose

The Onshore Shale Gas Community and Business Reference Group (**Reference Group**) provides a forum for Government to seek advice and share information on the development of the implementation plan to deliver on the 135 recommendations and their subsequent execution.

The purpose of the Reference Group is to provide:

- Advice to the Northern Territory Government on the implementation plan and its subsequent execution to ensure that the plan aligns with community and industry expectations;
- a forum to share information and provide opportunities for cooperation, and collaboration with key stakeholders and the community; and
- a medium through which key stakeholders can communicate their views about the implementation framework and its subsequent execution directly to the Government.

3. Composition of the Reference Group

The Chief Executive of the Department of the Chief Minister invited a Chairperson and members to be part of the Reference Group.

The members appointed bring a diversity of skills and stakeholder views from the community, environmental groups, local business, land councils, the gas industry, and local Government.

Non-government appointees are entitled to sitting fees for non-statutory bodies as defined by Class C2 sitting fees.

Members are entitled to be paid a travelling allowance for each overnight stay away from the member's usual place of residence, and reimbursement of reasonable expenses as approved by the Chairperson, upon production of receipts.

4. Code of Conduct

To maximise transparency and enhance value of the Reference Group, members may receive information deemed as confidential or sensitive. Members shall not distribute papers deemed confidential or disclose confidential information, and will be required to sign a disclosure of interests.

Members shall act ethically and be respectful of differing views within the Reference Group.

Members shall declare interests which may constitute a conflict, and not seek to obtain a benefit, pecuniary or otherwise, from the information received by being a member of the Reference Group.

5. Terms of Appointment

The Membership of the Reference Group will be for a one year term.

Members who do not attend two consecutive meetings may have their membership reviewed by the Chairperson.

6. Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson will be the only media spokesperson for the Reference Group.

The Chairperson will advise members of their roles and responsibilities as members of the Reference Group.

The Chairperson will conduct meetings to foster effective consideration of issues referred to or raised by the Reference Group.

The Chairperson will settle meeting dates and agendas for meetings.

The Chairperson may nominate an alternate Chair in the event they are not able to attend a meeting.

7. Operating arrangements

Four meetings will be held during the appointment period.

A quorum for a meeting of the Reference Group shall comprise half the membership.

Proxies are not permitted.

The Chairperson may invite a non-member to attend meetings.

8. Reporting arrangements

The Reference Group will develop a public communique in each meeting to be made available on the website within 7 days following the meeting. It is the intent that the Communique will be interpreted into Aboriginal languages, in accordance with availability and advice from the Aboriginal Interpreter Service.

The Reference Group will provide direct feedback and advice to the Hydraulic Fracturing Inquiry Implementation Taskforce in the Department of the Chief Minister.

9. Role of Government Agencies

The Hydraulic Fracturing Inquiry Implementation Taskforce in the Department of the Chief Minister will provide secretariat support to the Reference Group and will help the Chairperson organise meetings, prepare agendas and record of meetings.

Northern Territory Government staff from various agencies will provide relevant technical information to assist the Reference Group to develop its advice and recommendations.