

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

COMMUNIQUE

1. Purpose of the meeting

- The purpose of the meeting was to confirm the establishment of the Onshore Shale Gas Community and Business Reference Group and to provide feedback on the Northern Territory Government on the Draft Implementation Plan for the recommendations from the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory.

2. Establishment of the Community and Business Reference Group

- The Reference Group were appointed in June 2018 as per recommendation 16.4 of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory.
- The Community and Business Reference Group (Reference Group) met on 3 July 2018 in Darwin for the first time.
- The Chair, Mr Denys Stedman welcomed the Reference Group to the inaugural meeting and outlined the role of the group and the contribution and expectations that will be required of each member of the group.
- Mr Stedman confirmed that it is the intention that the reference group will be required for a period of 12 months to undertake its role, and during that time it is anticipated that it will be required to meet 4 times in total.

3. Address from Dr Ritchie

- Dr David Ritchie, the Independent Officer, Implementation Oversight provided a verbal address to the Reference Group outlining his role in the implementation process and how he will interact with NT Government agencies and the reference group during the course of his work.

4. Governance

- The Reference Group considered the Terms of Reference, and operating arrangements for the group. The Reference Group noted that while members have been invited to participate in the group as a representative of their stakeholder group, that there may be instances where they can also provide feedback from the community or other stakeholders not represented in the reference group. The Reference Group endorsed the Terms of Reference and Operating Protocols for the group. The Reference Group's Terms of Reference and membership can be found at <https://hydraulicfracturing.nt.gov.au/reference-group>.

5. Draft Implementation Plan

- An overview of the Draft Implementation Plan for implementing the recommendations of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory, and the proposed mechanics of its operations, was provided by the Hydraulic Fracturing Inquiry Implementation Taskforce from the Department of the Chief Minister. Senior Government Officers of the key Government departments with responsibility for implementing the recommendations were in attendance and were introduced to the Reference Group.
- The Reference Group reviewed the Draft Implementation Plan and provided the following feedback for inclusion in the final plan, to the Hydraulic Fracturing Implementation Taskforce:
 - It is important that the Plan makes a distinction between this inquiry and previous reports and reviews. The Inquiry recommendations are transformative, wide ranging and complex. The effort required to implement these reforms is a significant task involving a considerable amount of co-ordination of government and other agencies – government must ensure adequate funding, resourcing and support is provided, both now and into the future to ensure the effective implementation of all recommendations.
 - The group considered that the role of Traditional Owners in the successful implementation of the recommendations needed to be more clearly expressed in the opening introduction to the Plan.
 - The Plan must better reflect Climate change considerations and the recommendations of the final report insofar as they relate to Climate Change issues.
 - Health data and impact analysis should feature throughout the Plan including in the SREBA table.
 - The Plan should recognise that there are a number of recommendations have the potential to be in conflict with the rights of Traditional Owners established under ALRA and the NTA and that these recommendations must be progressed in close consultation with Traditional Owners and Land Councils.

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- The Plan should acknowledge that there are a number of recommendations that will intersect with other Acts/Legislation and these must be carefully considered to ensure that all consequential changes are adequately implemented.
- The Plan should acknowledge that recommendation 14.34 is critical to building trust in the community and that this is a transformative recommendation which is going to be a challenge to implement in the time frame. The regulatory model developed must be clear and provide certainty for all stakeholders.
- The Plan should acknowledge that political support at federal, territory and local government levels will be vital to ensure the full scope of the Inquiry recommendations are delivered and that risks are minimised and opportunities realised.
- The baseline development and continuous monitoring of environmental, social, cultural and health values and impacts is important, and this should be stressed in the Plan.
- Appropriate engagement with communities is vital to the successful implementation of the Plan, and as such should be acknowledged in the Plan.

The reference group also provided the following feedback to the Taskforce generally:

- The reference group discussed No Go zones in detail and noted that there was concern about the accuracy of some of the information that had already been released publicly, and acknowledged that in accordance with agency advice given to the group that further clarity will be provided in approximately 8 weeks. The group noted the intent to develop objective criteria in accordance with recommendation 14.4 and a structured process to determine zones. The group highlighted that the current map needs work including that it needs to recognise the rights of Traditional Owners.
- Effective engagement with Land Councils and Traditional owners is critical to support the successful execution of the Plan.
- The commitment to high quality and balanced engagement throughout the inquiry was recognised and the Implementation Taskforce should continue to openly engage with all stakeholders.
- The reference group recommended that the Aboriginal Interpreter Service is utilised to ensure that the work of the group is able to be shared appropriately with all Territorians, and that channels to distribute information should include radio.

The CLC highlighted the need to recognise their strong role in site protection. The Reference Group noted the feedback provided will inform the final Implementation Plan scheduled for release 17 July 2018.

6. Next Meeting

- The Chair advised he is looking forward to working with the Reference Group over the year and agreed the next meeting to be scheduled for 23 October 2018.



Denys Stedman

Chair

July 2018

Attendees present

- Mr Denys Stedman (Chair) – Buy Local Advocate
- Mr Jimmy Cocking – Director, Arid Lands Environment Centre
- Ms Julie-Ann Stoll – Manager – Mining, Central Land Council
- Mr Greg Bicknell – Chief Executive Officer, Chamber of Commerce
- Ms Gillian Duggin – Principal Lawyer and Executive Officer, Environmental Defenders Office
- Mr Geoff Crowhurst – Chair, Katherine Mining Services Association
- Mayor Fay Miller – Mayor, Katherine Town Council

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- Prof Alan Cass – Director, Menzies School of Health Research (via telephone)
- Mr Michael Bridge – Chairman, Tourism NT
- Mr Joe Morrison – Chief Executive Officer, Northern Land Council (via telephone)
- Mr David Ciaravolo – Executive Officer, Amateur Fisherman’s Association of the NT
- Mr Damian Hale – Organiser, Australian Workers Union

Apologies were received from:

- Mr Matt Doman – Director, SA and NT, Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association
- Mr Greg Owens – Chief Executive Officer, NT Farmers Association
- Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association