



2 February 2018

The Hon. Justice Pepper  
Hydraulic Fracturing Taskforce  
GPO Box 4396  
Darwin, NT 0801, Australia

Dear Justice Pepper,

**RE: Response to Social Impact reports released 19 January 2018**

Attached is Origin's response to the findings published in the Social Impact reports released 19 January 2018.

Origin welcomes the wide-ranging consideration of social and socioeconomic matters presented in the Social Impact Assessment and 'Social License to Operate' studies. Consistent with our 19 January response to the Inquiry's Draft Final Report, many of the recommendations in the Social Reports align with Origin's strong support of, and commitment to sustainable communities.

We have focussed our response on the recommendations made in the SIA Framework report (and reiterated on pages 4 and 5 of the summary report), which are shaped by best practice SIA theory as well as the findings from the other two Beetaloo-specific studies.

Origin looks forward to contributing positively to a robust collaborative process for developing detailed terms of reference for a pilot, socially-inclusive, strategic regional assessment centred on the Beetaloo Basin.

If you require any further information, please contact myself.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Close".

David Close  
Unconventional Exploration Manager, Origin  
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## APPENDIX ONE - Response to Social Impact Reports released 19 January 2018

### Social impact regulatory mechanisms

Origin agrees with the 'strategic regional assessment approach' to shale gas development in the NT; with the social landscape given focal importance in its own right, rather than subsidiary recognition as part of the environmental landscape.

Origin believes a socially-inclusive SREBA-like approach could be iteratively piloted and refined in the Beetaloo Basin in conjunction with resumed exploration and appraisal activities if the current moratorium were to be lifted. The outcome of such a pilot, and refined knowledge base would then support a carefully considered expansion of the regulatory regime.

Origin agrees with the principle of aligning Territory and Commonwealth involvement in projects of national significance, such as the envisaged Beetaloo development (Coffey, pages 5 and 6, recommendations 1 and 3). However, we question whether invoking the 'water trigger' under the EPBC Act is the optimal mechanism at this stage. Other options at this early stage might include amending NT regulations to provide for regional assessments (as noted in Coffey recommendation 1 and recommended in the 2015 Hawke Report), allowing time for deeply-considered legal and regulatory review of longer-term options to achieve NT and Commonwealth alignment.

### Social baseline assessment and ongoing governance

Origin agrees with the concept of an independently-led social baseline assessment coordinated across multiple projects that could ultimately lead to some form of independent monitoring authority (Coffey, page 6).

Origin strongly believes the establishment of governance arrangements that includes the dedicated independent authority (to oversee strategic assessment, baseline studies and ongoing monitoring and reporting), but that also involves project proponents, will be fundamental to success.

Origin agrees that cost recovery for both the baseline assessment and independent body can be suitably pro-rated across project proponents (Coffey, page 6, recommendation 7), however Origin also suggests the NT and Commonwealth governments should underwrite this work in order to a) kick start it; b) to motivate NT and Commonwealth regulatory alignment, c) incentivise proponents to "sign up" to the single baseline/monitoring approach; d) enable recovery of costs from late entrants; and, e) demonstrate the commitment of the NT and the Commonwealth to NT-based development that contributes to Australia's overall energy security.

### Community engagement & negotiation

Origin believes the onus of engagement with directly affected and proximal community groups on matters of mutual interest must lie with project proponents; not only through an "independently led community engagement" program implied in the Coffey Report (Coffey, page 5, recommendation 7).

In addition, it is paramount that project proponents retain the ability to directly engage with directly affected Aboriginal groups and their representatives, and separately with specifically relevant pastoral landholders, under common law principles of engagement and negotiated settlement, with the government(s) having an important role in oversight and ensuring procedural equity and outcomes in these agreements. Based on proper ethnographic and historical identification, Origin believes agreements reached in this way can be consistent with agreements reached on land rights and native title lands in the NT. Under this approach the specific placement of wellheads and associated infrastructure to avoid culturally sensitive sites (Coffey, page 6, recommendation 10) would specifically



be adhered to by direct engagement with ethnographically identified cultural informants and the AAPA register.

Origin believes the principle of 'centrality' of directly affected community groups must be preserved at all cost, and notes with concern the inference that 'third parties' should be able to trigger grievance mechanisms on matters deemed beyond project scale (Coffey, page 6, recommendation 6). The threshold test for any such lodgements would need to be tightly defined and upheld.

