



8th August 2017

Hydraulic Fracturing Taskforce
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Attention: Hon. Justice Rachel Pepper and Panel

Dear Chairperson and Panel Members,

Re: Submission in response to the Northern Territory Government's 2017 Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing, Interim Report

Vista Gold Australia Pty Ltd (Vista) is pleased to provide a submission in response to the Northern Territory Government's 2017 Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing.

Vista is a mining company developing a large open cut mine, Mt Todd, ~50km north of Katherine.

It is not our intention to express an opinion on the merits (or otherwise) of hydraulic fracturing. However, Vista is concerned that the inquiry's Terms of Reference do not consider the impact of its recommendations on non-associated industries, like metalliferous mining.

As stated in the Inquiry's Interim Report one of the purposes of the inquiry is to "assess and determine... whether the existing regulatory framework is sufficient to implement these methodologies, and if not, **what changes need to be made...**".

In 2016 changes were made to legislation requiring gas exploration companies to have formal access agreements with other land tenure holders. This was done with consultation with government, gas exploration companies and landholders. At the last minute, this requirement was extended to mining companies, with zero consultation with the mining sector.

In each of the areas already identified by the inquiry there is obvious overlapping of issues;

- Water
- Land access
- Air emissions
- Public health
- Aboriginal people and their culture
- Social impacts
- Economic impacts
- Regulatory reform

Recommendation #1 No changes to regulations be extended to cover “other” non-fracking related activities without due process, specifically consultation with the affected stakeholders.

There is a lot of confusion in both the community and with our senior government officials around what industry undertakes hydraulic fracturing. The oil & gas industry, not the mining industry, carries out these activities. As recently as last Sunday Federal Minister Nigel Scullion stated that the “...mining industry still had some work to do before hydraulic fracturing was accepted by the community...”.

Recommendation #2 Care should be taken to ensure that the Oil & Gas industry remains differentiated from “other” industries, like metalliferous mining.

We thank you for the opportunity to raise these issues and look forward to the positive impact that the inquiry’s recommendation will have for all the stakeholders.

Should you require additional information or clarification on any points contained, please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED] [u](#).

Yours sincerely



Brent Murdoch

Director/General Manager