

SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY INTO
HYDRAULIC FRACTURING
IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



DRAFT FINAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2017



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This is the *draft Final Report of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory* draft. There is also a Summary of the draft Final Report and a set of appendices. Each document has been published separately, but together they form the totality of the draft Final Report.

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The Hon Michael Gunner MLA
Chief Minister
Parliament House
Darwin, NT 0801

Dear Chief Minister

RE: RELEASE OF THE INQUIRY'S DRAFT FINAL REPORT

On 3 December 2016 your Government announced the final Terms of Reference for the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing of Onshore Unconventional Reservoirs and Associated Activities in the Northern Territory (**the Inquiry**). Under the *Inquiries Act 1945* (NT) I was appointed Chair of the Inquiry along with a panel of scientists for the Inquiry panel.

I am pleased to present you with the draft Final Report for the Inquiry. This report sets out work of the Inquiry to date and presents its current assessment of the impacts and risks of hydraulic fracturing of onshore shale gas reservoirs and associated activities in the Northern Territory.

The Inquiry will be consulting with the community on this draft Final Report before completing a Final Report for your Government in 2018.

In presenting this draft Final Report I wish to acknowledge the assistance of many people that have contributed to the Inquiry's efforts, including those members of the community who took the time to join conversations, present information and make written submissions to the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Pepper'.

THE HON JUSTICE RACHEL PEPPER

Chair

12 December 2017

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Draft Final Report foreword

This draft Final Report is part of a suite of documents published to date by the Inquiry, which include the *Background and Issues Paper* and the *Interim Report*. The draft Final Report is accompanied by an Executive Summary, which summarises the principal findings and risk assessments contained in each Chapter and sets out all the draft recommendations made by the Panel in the Report. There is also a set of appendices. Each document has, for the sake of convenience and due to the length of the draft Final Report, been published separately, but together they form the totality of the draft Final Report.

The draft Final Report represents the work of the Panel over the past 12 months. As its title indicates, it is amenable to change once the final round of consultations have concluded and the Inquiry has received comment on the content of the Report from various stakeholders, community groups, and individual members of the public. That amendment should occur upon receipt of further submissions is appropriate given its draft status. With each round of consultations, the Panel has received additional information that has been invaluable to its deliberations and analyses and instrumental in the formulation of its recommendations. Further material and new perspectives are integral to the final round of consultations and it can reasonably be expected that the draft Final Report will be altered to reflect any new and relevant evidence and perspectives.

In addition to the Panel members who have undertaken the research, deliberation and writing of this Report, and the Taskforce, without whom the operation of this Inquiry would not be possible, the Inquiry would like to acknowledge the assistance of Prof Sandra Kentish (who assisted with the research for Chapter 9), and Ms Nicole Heesh and Mr Angus Veitch (who assisted with the literature review for Chapter 12).

THE HON JUSTICE RACHEL PEPPER
Chair

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