

# CLAIM VS FACT

A petition from Lock the Gate to its subscribers makes several inaccurate and misleading claims about the development of the onshore oil and gas industry in the Northern Territory's Beetaloo Basin – especially in relation to the use and protection of water sources in the region.

We've responded to some of the most misleading claims below with fact-based sources.

## The Claims

- ✘ 'They're also hiding water monitoring data from fracking wells'
- 'Continuous monitoring data be made available to the public as soon as possible.'
- 'Data from all the bores in the Beetaloo released for public scrutiny.'

## The Facts

All water monitoring data is currently made publicly available. ✓

It is available on the government website POINT and within the Environmental Performance reports submitted by Operators on the DEPWS website.

- ✘ 'We're also calling for you to urgently fix the broken water monitoring system, by implementing Fracking Inquiry recommendation 7.11 to require:
  - A minimum of 3 sensors in each of the monitoring bores at every fracking well pad.'

This recommendation has been adopted and already actioned. ✓

The Northern Territory Government worked with independent scientific experts to develop a Code of Practice relative to the Inquiry's recommendation. The Code is legally enforceable through the Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016. The finalised Code was published on 12 June 2019.

The Code requires proponents to comply with the Preliminary Guideline for Groundwater monitoring bores for Exploration Petroleum Wells in the Beetaloo Sub-Basin which was finalised and distributed on 29 November 2018.



ENERGY INFORMATION  
AUSTRALIA

Energy Information Australia is an initiative funded by the Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA). Authorised by S Browne, Melbourne.

# CLAIM VS FACT

## The Claims

**✘** 'There must be no Water Allocation Plans approved until the Strategic Regional and Environmental Baseline Assessment (SREBA) is completed and until there is a comprehensive groundwater model for the Beetaloo Basin.'

**✘** 'The NT Government must commit to proper, sustainable management of water resources - the fracking industry must not be allowed to drain water faster than it replenishes.'

## The Facts

**✔** SREBA is a set of research studies to understand the current situation of the local people in the region along with plants, animals, water, and air quality, so that any changes over time can be measured through ongoing monitoring programs.

This will give the Northern Territory Government (NT Government) up to date and accurate information to make decisions about the development of the onshore gas industry in the Beetaloo region.

This work is 75% complete.

Existing knowledge of the groundwater models in the NT, including studies conducted during The Pepper Inquiry, Chapter 7 only further strengthen industry and government's understanding of water structures and resources.

There are at least 15 historical studies used to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of groundwater in the region.

This includes a recent independent scientific program jointly assessed by The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, the Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO, and Geoscience Australia that found prospective gas development in the Beetaloo Basin – including unconventional sources such as shale and tight gas – has "low to very low" chance of impacts on surface water, groundwater. It also stated that potential impacts from other pathways "can be mitigated through ongoing compliance with existing regulatory and management controls."

**✔** Industry recognises the importance of water as a resource used during operational activity and adheres to strict environmental standards and regulations in order to protect and preserve water sources including adhering to limitations on extraction.

Current industry take from the Gum Ridge Formation is ~1.2 GL per annum and represents <0.0001% per annum of the sustainable yield.

The estimated sustainable yield of the Gum Ridge Formation is 1,412,800 GL.

To put this into perspective, stock use is currently ~13 GL per annum or 0.0009% of sustainable yield; and a local sandalwood operation accounts for ~6 GL per annum or 0.0004% of sustainable yield.



ENERGY INFORMATION  
AUSTRALIA

Energy Information Australia is an initiative funded by the Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA). Authorised by S Browne, Melbourne.

# CLAIM VS FACT

## The Claims

**X** **'Local communities must not be excluded from the process - properly constituted water advisory committees must be in place before any further consideration of this issue, and the cultural knowledge of Traditional Owners must be respected.'**

## The Facts

**Consultation on water allocations occur through the development of Water Allocation Plans which are advised by water advisory committees. Committee members represent a range of water users and uses in a planned area including industry, drinking water supply, environment and cultural uses.** ✓

**Committee minutes are public and draft plans are subject to a period of public consultation prior to a final declaration decision by the Minister.**

**Water Allocation Plans guide decisions on licence applications by setting the estimated sustainable yield (ESY) and through allocations from the ESY to different beneficial uses as defined in the Act.**

**These beneficial uses will include allocations to the:**

- environment,
- public water supply
- rural stock and domestic
- domestic Aboriginal economic development,
- then a range of development uses.

**These elements are prioritised in the order outlined above and tailored to the plan area. Local protections, the strategic Aboriginal Water Reserve and rules about matters like trade are also outlined in plans.**

**Plans are not determinative, and each licence application is individually considered, and public views are invited for each application.**

**All accepted licence applications are published in a local paper inviting public comment for a 30-day period.**

**Neighbouring landowners and managers are also directly written to notifying them of the application and invite specific comments and views. This includes seeking the comments of Native Title holders via Land Councils.**

**Any comments received are considered as part of the licence decision. How comments have been considered and accommodated will be outlined in the published Statement of Decision, and in individual responses back to commenters.**

**Where there is no Water Allocation Plan yet declared, the volume of water that can be allocated under a licence is limited to what would be available to that land area using the 80/20 rule, a mechanism that protects water availability for all land owners and for the Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserve.**



**ENERGY INFORMATION  
AUSTRALIA**

Energy Information Australia is an initiative funded by the Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA). Authorised by S Browne, Melbourne.