



GOVERNMENT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## Frequently Asked Questions

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Implementation of the Government's response to the Independent Scientific Panel Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation in Western Australia – July 2019

### **What is the purpose of the Implementation Plan?**

The Implementation Plan details how and when the Government will action its policy decisions and the recommendations of the Inquiry.

### **Will the State Government consult in relation to the Implementation Plan?**

No consultation has been carried out on the development of the Implementation Plan itself – as this is the Government's response to the Inquiry Report – which considered extensive stakeholder feedback. However, stakeholders will be consulted as we work to implement various actions from the Implementation Plan.

### **What will the consultation process involve?**

A range of consultation methods are anticipated to be used throughout the stakeholder consultation process where required, including:

- conducting workshops and briefings with impacted stakeholders;
- releasing draft proposals for public comment and feedback;
- publishing responses to feedback on the website; and
- informing stakeholders through the website once actions have been completed.

### **Will the State Government implement all of the Inquiry's recommendations?**

The Government has accepted in-principle all of the Inquiry's 44 recommendations. The Implementation Plan outlines the Government actions to implement all of the recommendations.

## **When will the Government implement all of the actions?**

The Government aims to implement the Inquiry's recommendations through the Implementation Plan by the end of 2020. However, implementation of some actions will require complex and lengthy reforms across a number of agencies, involving further policy development, and changes to legislation and processes, which may take a number of years to fully implement.

## **Who is responsible for implementing the Inquiry's recommendations?**

Overall responsibility belongs to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum and the Minister for Environment. A Senior Officials Steering Group (SOSG) has been formed to oversee the delivery of the Implementation Plan actions. The SOSG is co-chaired by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS). DWER and DMIRS will lead the implementation project, under the direction of the SOSG.

## **Who are the members of the SOSG?**

The SOSG membership consists of officials from the Departments of the Premier and Cabinet; Water and Environmental Regulation; Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety; Health; Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions; Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation; Planning, Lands and Heritage; and Treasury.

## **Has the moratorium on hydraulic fracturing been lifted across Western Australia?**

No. The moratorium remains in place and hydraulic fracturing is banned in Perth, Peel and the South-West regions, national parks, the Kimberley's Dampier Peninsula, iconic natural heritage areas (to be defined and delineated on maps), and within 2,000 metres of gazetted Public Drinking Water Source Areas.

## **Will the moratorium on hydraulic fracturing be lifted?**

The moratorium will only be lifted on land covered by onshore petroleum titles (exploration permits, retention licences and production licences) existing as of 26 November 2018.

## **What work is needed to enact State Government's policy on hydraulic fracturing?**

Amendments to the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources (Hydraulic Fracturing) Regulations 2017 are currently being drafted to enact the Government's policy – a process that should be completed by mid-2019.

## **When will companies be able to submit proposals for hydraulic fracturing?**

Companies can submit hydraulic fracturing proposals to DMIRS and refer them to the EPA at any time. Proposals received by DMIRS will be referred to the EPA for assessment.

## **How will onshore hydraulic fracturing proposals be referred to the EPA?**

While the administrative framework is being implemented, existing title holders are expected to self-refer proposals for hydraulic fracturing projects to the EPA for assessment. If a proposal has not been referred, DMIRS will refer the proposal to the EPA.

### **What protection from hydraulic fracturing will be provided for our water sources?**

The Government's policy decision to prohibit hydraulic fracture stimulation within 2,000 metres of gazetted Public Drinking Water Source Areas sends a strong message to industry on the importance of safeguarding our water supplies. This will be reinforced by the implementation of the Inquiry's recommendations requiring baseline and routine monitoring of groundwater, strengthening of regulations governing the use and assessment of chemicals associated with hydraulic fracture stimulation, comprehensive geomechanical risk analysis, and site water audits.

### **What protection from hydraulic fracturing will be provided for water sources not gazetted as Public Drinking Water Source Areas?**

In addition to the 2,000 metre exclusion zones around gazetted Public Drinking Water Source Areas, in the absence of a local health risk assessment indicating otherwise, a 2,000 metre buffer zone will apply around residences and settlements, which includes bores, rainwater tanks, dams and tributaries. There will also be strong protection of water sources with referrals of all onshore hydraulic fracture proposals to the EPA for assessment under the EP Act.

### **What protection from hydraulic fracturing will be provided for our environment?**

The State Government's policy decision to ban hydraulic fracturing in national parks, the Dampier Peninsula and other iconic natural heritage areas (to be defined and delineated on maps), demonstrates the Government's commitment to safeguard our environment. Environmental protection will be strengthened further with the new requirement for all applications for onshore hydraulic fracture stimulation exploration and production proposals to be referred to the EPA for assessment under the EP Act.

### **What protection from hydraulic fracturing will be provided for conservation areas not deemed a National Park?**

Hydraulic fracturing is not permitted in national parks, the Dampier Peninsula and iconic natural heritage areas (to be defined and delineated on maps). Additionally, any applications for exploration and production hydraulic fracturing in the titles that existed at the time of the State Government's policy decision on 26 November 2018 will be referred to the EPA for assessment, which will allow for consideration of options to protect other areas with important conservation values.