



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 312

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, Hon Joshua Burgoyne MLA:

Beetaloo Appraisal Well Approvals

1. The Department's published register of environment management plan decisions records that EMP STO8-2, the EP161 Beetaloo Basin Appraisal Pilot Environment Management Plan, held by Santos QNT Pty Ltd and Tamboran Resources Ltd, was approved on 12 May 2026 under the Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016.
 - a. How many petroleum wells does that approved plan permit, at how many well pads, and over what period?
 - b. What conditions were imposed on the approval, and which of them require monitoring or public reporting?
 - c. In the Approved Environment Management Plans section of the register, an NT Environment Protection Authority (NTEPA) advice document is published against each of the 22 plans approved between 6 June 2019 and 26 November 2024, and against none of the six approved since. In the approval notice and statement of reasons for STO8-2, the entry for the dates the NTEPA was requested to, and provided, advice under section 29B of the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act 2012 is recorded as "N/A". Was the NTEPA's advice sought on STO8-2 and, if not, why not?
 - d. On what date, and by what decision, did the practice of publishing the NTEPA's advice on the register cease, and for which approvals since 26 November 2024 was the NTEPA's advice sought?
 - e. Has any modification notice under regulation 22 or 23 been given in respect of STO8-2 since 12 May 2026?

2. What approvals for appraisal drilling in the Beetaloo Sub-basin have been granted since 1 July 2025?
 - a. For each, please state the proponent, the number of wells approved, the date of approval, and the instrument or regulation under which it was granted.
 - b. If no such approval has been granted, please state so.
 - c. Which approvals for appraisal drilling in the Beetaloo Sub-basin are currently under assessment, and for how many wells?
3. For each approval identified in question 1, what environmental, water and greenhouse gas impact assessments informed the decision?
 - a. What conditions were imposed to monitor, mitigate and publicly report those impacts?
 - b. Were the cumulative impacts of the wells assessed as part of broader Beetaloo Sub-basin development, rather than the proposal being assessed in isolation? If so, in which document is that cumulative assessment recorded?
 - c. What modelling was undertaken of potential impacts on groundwater resources and on nearby environmentally significant areas, and can it be tabled?
 - d. What emissions estimates were considered, including both direct project emissions and downstream emissions from the gas produced?
 - e. Were any independent scientific reviews commissioned or relied upon, and can they be tabled?
4. For each approval identified in question 1, what conditions would trigger the suspension, amendment or revocation of the approval if environmental impacts exceed those assessed?
 - a. Has any such condition been triggered to date?
5. For each approval identified in question 1, did the Government consider whether the project should be referred for assessment under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999?
 - a. If a referral was made, what is its number and current status?
 - b. If no referral was made, what is the basis for the view that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance, and in which document is that view recorded?

- c. Has the Government sought or received advice on the question of referral? If so, on what date and can it be tabled?
- d. The statement of reasons for STO8-2 records that “The EMP was not referred under the Environment Protection Act 2019, as the reg 9(3) regulated activity does not have the potential to cause a significant impact on the environment”. It records no corresponding reason in relation to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. On what basis was the regulated activity not referred under that Act, and in which document is that basis recorded?
- e. The statement of reasons for STO8-2 records that a 1999 record of Carpentarian Grasswren in the Atlas of Living Australia within approximately 30km of the project area “has been excluded from the NT Fauna Atlas following a screening process”. On what date was it excluded, and by whom?