



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 253

WRITTEN QUESTION

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

LNG Facility Monitoring and Compliance

These questions concern the regulation of the two LNG facilities at Bladin Point under Environment Protection Licences EPL217 and EPL228, and the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority's review of the environment protection licences for those facilities.

1. The Darwin Airshed LNG Licence Review records that additional continuous monitoring of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes by INPEX commenced in July 2025 at three Northern Territory Government air quality monitoring stations and has recently been extended to three more locations in 2026.
 - a. Is the data collected publicly available and, if not, why not?
 - b. Has the Authority recommended that the data be published? If so, in which document and on what date?
 - c. Will the data be published and, if so, on what date, and will publication include all data collected since July 2025?
2. Is ambient monitoring of pollution impacts from each of the two Darwin airshed LNG facilities a mandatory condition of its environment protection licence, or conducted on a voluntary basis?
 - a. Where monitoring is provided by the licensee, is it independently verified and, if so, by whom and how often?
 - b. Has the Authority ever required additional monitoring because of concerns about the adequacy of licensee-supplied data? If so, on what dates and in respect of which facility?
 - c. Has the Authority advised the Minister on whether monitoring around LNG facilities should be made mandatory and independent? If so, on what date, and can that advice be provided?

- d. At which locations is that monitoring conducted, including whether it is conducted at the facility site boundary and at Frances Bay?
3. For what period following commissioning of each of the two Darwin airshed LNG facilities was air toxics monitoring conducted, and on what date did it cease?
 - a. On what basis was the period of monitoring determined to be sufficient, and in which document is that basis recorded?
 - b. Has restarting air toxics monitoring been considered in light of proposed industrial expansion at Middle Arm and, if so, on what date and with what outcome?
 - c. Which air toxics are not routinely monitored in the Darwin region?
 - d.
4. Where air quality modelling is provided by a licence applicant rather than commissioned independently, how many major proposals have undergone independent review of that modelling in the five financial years to 2025–26?
 - a. Please list each, with the reviewer and the date.
 - b. Has independent review ever identified material flaws in an applicant's assumptions or modelling? If so, in respect of which proposal and with what consequence?
 - c. Does the Authority have sufficient in-house expertise to critically assess complex atmospheric modelling?
 - d. What was the Authority's expenditure on external air quality modelling advice in each of the five financial years to 2025–26?
 - e. Has the Authority advised the Minister of any limitation in its capacity to assess atmospheric dispersion modelling supplied by an applicant? If so, on what date, and can that advice be provided?
5. The ground level measurement obligation in Environment Protection Licence EPL228 was reduced across two amendments. In versions 01 and 02 it was condition 57, requiring that “The licensee must verify by ground level measurements, during the first 24 months of commencement of operations, when both LNG trains and the CCPP are operating at steady state, that the licensed activity does not cause ground level concentrations of contaminants to contribute to more than 27% of the standards for pollutants specified in National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure” and the investigation levels in the Air Toxics Measure. Version 03 carried it in the same terms as condition 55. In version 04 condition 55 required only that the licensee

“undertake ground level measurements” for the same pollutants over the same period, the verification against 27 per cent having been removed. Version 05 contains no such condition. The Darwin Airshed LNG Licence Review records at section 5.3.1.6 that a requirement for licensees to demonstrate what percentage of the airshed capacity their emissions constitute “should be reintroduced”.

- a. Was the verification against the 27 per cent figure carried out while the condition was in force? On what dates, and what percentage of each relevant standard was measured?
 - b. In which document is the result of any ground level measurement taken under condition 57 or condition 55 reported, and is it published?
 - c. The licence revision history records the version 04 amendment as requiring the licensee to “undertake ground level measurements ... during the first 24 months of commencement of operations when both LNG trains and the combine cycle power plant are operating at steady state (future modelling of emissions should not exceed 27% of ambient standards)”. Does the 27 per cent figure now apply to modelling rather than to measurement, and in which condition of the current licence does it appear?
 - d. The revision history records the version 05 change as “Renewal of licence”. Was the removal of the ground level measurement condition considered as part of that renewal, and in which document is that consideration recorded?
 - e. Given the licensee’s upward revision of its emissions estimates in October 2025, does any verification carried out under those conditions remain valid?
 - f. Has the Authority accepted the finding at section 5.3.1.6, and by what date will the requirement be reintroduced?
6. Is hot venting used to release emissions at height at either Darwin airshed LNG facility when acid gas incinerators are unavailable?
 - a. How frequently has hot venting occurred at each facility in each of the five financial years to 2025–26?
 - b. What pollutants are released during hot venting events, and in what quantities compared with normal operations?
 - c. Has any restriction or limit on hot venting been considered and, if so, on what date and with what outcome?
7. By letter of 5 June 2026 the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority recorded that, following a request of 4 March 2026, a delegate

authorised three additional hot venting days on 27 May 2026 under condition 43 of EPL217-07, and the Authority authorised a further 23 days on 4 June 2026, bringing the total to 26 additional days in the 2026 calendar year. The letter records that the licence permits 36 days of hot venting, intended to apply to steady-state operations, and authorises the additional days for commissioning, process upsets, and repairs and maintenance.

- a. How many hot venting days were actually used at that facility in the 2026 calendar year to date, and how many under each of commissioning, process upsets, and repairs and maintenance?
 - b. What quantity of each pollutant of concern was emitted during those additional 26 days, and how was it estimated?
 - c. On what basis was the 36-day limit set, and has the Authority assessed whether a limit framed for steady-state operations remains appropriate for a facility that has sought authorisation to exceed it?
 - d. In each of 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025, how many additional hot venting days were requested and how many authorised, at each Darwin airshed LNG facility?
 - e. The letter of 5 June 2026 records that a copy of it will be published on the Authority's website. Are all authorisations permitting exceedance of a licence limit published, and where?
 - f. Recommendation 2 of the Darwin Airshed LNG Licence Review is to include clearer hot venting duration limits in EPL228 and specify expected incineration equipment availability in both licences with a view to reaching 99 per cent. Has it been accepted, and by what date will the licences be amended?
 - g. Recommendation 3 is to include provisions in both licences to avoid cumulative impacts from concurrent hot venting at both facilities. Has any assessment been made of concurrent hot venting to date?
8. How many breaches of Environment Protection Licences have been identified at the two Darwin airshed LNG facilities in the five financial years to 2025–26?
 - a. How many resulted in enforcement action, and of what kind?
 - b. How many resulted in a financial penalty, and what was the total value?
 - c. How many related to air emissions exceeding licence limits?

9. Are hydrocarbon processing facilities identified as a priority compliance area in the Authority's compliance planning?
 - a. If so, in which compliance plan or published document, and what compliance concerns led to that designation?
 - b. How many inspections were conducted at each of the two Darwin airshed LNG facilities in each of the five financial years to 2025–26? Please provide as a table by facility and year.
 - c. How many non-compliances were identified, and how many inspections were unannounced?
10. How many complaints relating to LNG operations, industrial emissions or air quality were received through the Pollution Hotline in the five financial years to 2025–26?
 - a. What were the most common issues raised?
 - b. How many complaints resulted in an investigation, and how many were substantiated?
 - c. If complaints are not categorised by subject in that form, in which system are they recorded and in what format?
11. The Darwin Airshed LNG Licence Review (NT EPA, version 1.0, approved 14 July 2026) records at section 7.3 that the recent under-reporting of emissions by INPEX highlighted that quality assurance and quality control of emissions calculation and estimation methodology was insufficient to detect the errors that occurred over several years of reporting, and that the licences do not require licensees to maintain documentation of emission calculation methodology.
 - a. Section 7.3 concludes that “Existing conditions are considered sufficient, as they allow the NT EPA to request any document relevant to the licence. No changes are recommended.” On what basis were existing conditions considered sufficient, given the same section records that quality assurance and quality control were insufficient to detect errors occurring over several years of reporting?
 - b. Over how many years of reporting did those errors occur, and what was the difference between the reported and revised figures for each year?
 - c. The Review records at section 7.3.1.2 that licence audits have been completed as required, but that the under-reporting indicates the audits were not undertaken to the level of depth necessary to verify the quantities of pollutant emissions reported.

- d. Has Recommendation 20 — aligning audit requirements and strengthening the Authority's ability to define audit scope — been accepted and implemented?
 - e. For each audit conducted under either licence since 1 January 2022, who approved the scope, and did the Authority add any scope item?
- 12. Environment Protection Licence EPL217-07, held by Santos NA Darwin Pipeline Pty Ltd and commencing 19 September 2025, requires the licensee to establish a Community Consultative Committee. EPL228 contains no equivalent condition. Recommendation 14 of the Darwin Airshed LNG Licence Review is to align the licence conditions so that both licensees convene community consultative committees, and to review their performance and efficacy every two years.
 - a. Has Recommendation 14 been accepted? If so, by what date will EPL228 be amended; if not, what reason was recorded?
 - b. EPL228-05 expires on 12 December 2027. Will the amendment be made before that date, or at renewal?
 - c. How many times has the committee convened under EPL217 since the condition was inserted, and are its minutes published?
- 13. The Darwin Airshed LNG Licence Review, approved 14 July 2026, records that “The versions of the licences current during this review were EPL228-05 (Ichthys LNG) and EPL217-05”, and that “EPL217-05 was a renewal issued on 19 September 2025 for a period of 5 years”. The licence now in force is EPL217-07, on the same licence period.
 - a. On what dates were EPL217-06 and EPL217-07 issued, and what did each change?
 - b. EPL217-07 is dated 3 June 2026, before the Review was approved on 14 July 2026. Were the Review’s findings and recommendations assessed against the licence as then amended, and in which document is that assessment recorded?
 - c. Did either amendment address any matter later the subject of a recommendation in the Review?
- 14. The Darwin Airshed LNG Licence Review makes 23 recommendations. Please provide, in table form, for each of the 23: whether it is accepted, accepted in principle, not accepted or under consideration; the date of that decision; its implementation status; and, where not yet implemented, the expected date.
 - a. Which recommendations require amendment of an Environment Protection Licence, and for each, has the amendment process

under section 38 of the Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998 been commenced?

- b. Which recommendations have been assessed as requiring additional funding, and what amount has been allocated to each?
- c. Recommendation 11 is to “Require licensees to provide continuous ambient air quality monitoring data required under the licence to the public in real time, unless provided through other legislative mechanisms.” Has it been accepted; which other legislative mechanisms does the Authority consider apply; and from what date will the data be publicly available?