

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE**  
**Question Taken on Notice**

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**From:** Mr Steve Edgington

**To:** Hon Nicole Manison

**Portfolio:** Mining & Industry

**Agency:** Industry, Tourism & Trade

**Subject:** Gas exploration permit approval times

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**QUESTION**

What is the average processing time for the approval of a gas exploration permit?

**ANSWER**

The average time to grant a petroleum exploration permit is 3 years and 8 months. Within this duration, an average of 2 years and 6 months of this time is absorbed by regulatory process legislated under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* and *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*.

For applications over native title land, the right to negotiate (RTN) procedure under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* applies to all petroleum exploration permit applications.

The RTN procedure involves petroleum companies negotiating with registered native title parties to reach an agreement to conduct future petroleum activities. The expedited procedure, for RTN, only applies to mineral exploration licence applications.

The consent to negotiate (CTN) procedure under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*, applies to all exploration applications on Aboriginal freehold land. The CTN procedure involves petroleum companies, through a prescribed body corporate (Aboriginal Land Council), obtaining Traditional Owner consent to grant a permit and conduct future petroleum activities.