

## Approval notice and statement of reasons

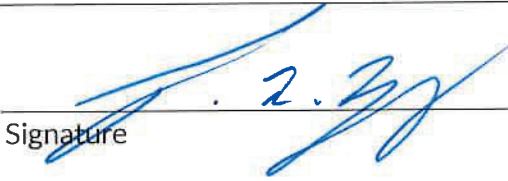
*Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016 (NT) (Regulations)*

Interest holder	Imperial Oil and Gas Pty Ltd ABN 92 002 699 578
Petroleum interest(s)	Exploration Permit 187 (EP187)
Environment management plan (EMP) title	Carpentaria Pilot Project
EMP document reference	IMP5-3 Prepared by inGauge Energy Australia 17 September 2024
Regulated activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>land clearing and earthworks up to 226 ha;</li> <li>nine gravel pits (plus the use, and potential expansion of three existing gravel pits) to extract 100,000 m<sup>3</sup> of gravel;</li> <li>drilling, completion, testing, maintenance, suspension, and abandonment of 12 wells;</li> <li>hydraulic fracturing of 9 wells;</li> <li>construction, operation, modification of facilities, and gas and wastewater flowlines (60 km of flowlines);</li> <li>appraisal gas facility (subject to approval under the <i>Petroleum Act 1984</i>)</li> <li>a wastewater handling station with up to 110 ML in capacity; and</li> <li>decommissioning and rehabilitation.</li> </ul>
Is the EMP a new plan submitted under reg 6 or a revision of a current plan submitted in accordance with reg 18, or regs 15 and 17?	This is a new plan submitted under regulation 6
Was the regulated activity referred <sup>1</sup> for consideration whether environmental impact assessment was required?	Yes. NT EPA reference EP2024/033
Was environmental impact assessment <sup>2</sup> required?	No See NT EPA reference EP2024/033
Has an environmental approval <sup>3</sup> been issued for the regulated activity?	N/A
Has an Authority Certificate under the <i>Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989</i> been issued for the regulated activity?	Yes C2024/062
Date an EMP compliant with reg 8 was first submitted under reg 6	18 March 2024
Date within which the EMP was published for comment under reg 8A, if applicable	22 March 2024 to 19 April 2024
Date further information was required and submitted under reg 10, if applicable	N/A
Date of resubmission notice under reg 11(2)(b), if applicable	27 June 2024 (requested) 26 July 2024 (received)

<sup>1</sup> This means a referral under the *Environment Protection Act 2019* (NT) (EP Act) and/or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act).

<sup>2</sup> This means a requirement for an environmental impact assessment to be conducted under the EP Act and/or the EPBC Act.

<sup>3</sup> This means an approval granted under the EP Act and/or the EPBC Act.

Date EMP was resubmitted under reg 11(3), if applicable	26 August 2024 (requested) 18 September 2024 (received)
Date a notice setting out a proposed timetable for consideration of the EMP was issued under reg 11(2A)	13 June 2024
Proposed timetable given in notice under reg 11(2A)	27 June 2024
Where provided under s29B of the <i>Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act 2012</i> (NT) (NT EPA Act), the dates the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) was requested to, and provided, advice on EMP	Date of Minister's request for advice: 25 February 2019 Date of NT EPA Advice: 1 November 2024
Date of decision	<b>12</b> November 2024
Decision maker	
	 Signature Hon Joshua Burgoyne MLA, Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment

## 1 Approval notice

1. I approve the EMP under reg 11(3)(a)(i).
2. The approval is subject to the following conditions:

**Condition 1:** Within 90 days of the anniversary of the approval date of the EMP (IMP5-3), the interest holder must submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) a completed Annual Environmental Performance Report (AEPR) for the preceding 12 month period of 1 July to 30 June using the AEPR template. The AEPR template must be completed in accordance with the Onshore Petroleum Annual Environmental Performance Reporting Guideline as updated from time to time.

**Condition 2:** When regulated activities occur during the Wet Season (as defined in the Code of Practice: Onshore Petroleum Activities in the Northern Territory (Code)), the interest holder must submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) weekly reports with the following information:

- i. daily inspection for secondary containment in use, and where relevant, the type and date of corrective actions taken, or date proposed to be taken in response to issues identified in the daily inspection reports; and
- ii. all dates the regulated activity was stopped due to Wet Season events and the date and time that the regulated activity recommenced or is proposed to recommence.

**Condition 3:** During drilling activities or hydraulic fracturing activities, the interest holder must submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) a weekly report with the following information:

- i. the daily freeboard available in any drill cutting pits and any wastewater tanks (in cm) and the date of measurement; and
- ii. whether any non-compliances with the EMP were identified in the daily inspections and, if relevant, corrective actions taken, or proposed to be taken, and the

timeframe for implementation of corrective actions, in response to the non-compliances.

**Condition 4:** Within 30 days of completing any new land clearing or other ground disturbing activities (being all ground disturbing activities, including earth moving, land clearing, installation of gravel pits, establishment of well pads, and establishment of access tracks), the interest holder must submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) geospatial files (as shapefiles and inclusive of metadata).

**Condition 5:** By 31 October of each year, the interest holder must submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) the emissions report required by clause D.6.2 of the Code, which must:

- i. calculate emissions in accordance with the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (Measurement) Determination 2008;
- ii. document actual annual greenhouse gas emissions from conduct of the regulated activity estimated and reported under the *Commonwealth National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (NGER Act)* versus predicted emissions in the EMP (IMP5-3);
- iii. demonstrate the actual emissions have been verified by an auditor registered under the Register of Greenhouse and Energy Auditors established under section 75A of the NGER Act;
- iv. include a summary of all regulated activities conducted which have contributed to greenhouse gas emissions during the reporting period; and
- v. account for differences between actual and predicted emissions with reference to all parts of the regulated activity with potential to create greenhouse gas emissions.

**Condition 6:** If the interest holder's emissions report, documents that actual annual greenhouse gas emissions exceeded 100,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e for the financial year of the report, within 30 days of the emissions report being submitted under condition 5, the interest holder submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) a Greenhouse Gas Abatement Plan (GGAP), which:

- a) meets the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Plan content requirements specified in the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Management for New and Expanding Large Emitters Policy, version 1.1 dated 1 September 2021; and
- b) includes any emissions resulting from venting activities.

**Condition 7:** If the interest holder is required by condition 6 to prepare a GGAP, the interest holder must comply with the GGAP.

**Condition 8:** If the interest holder is required by condition 6 to prepare a GGAP, by 31 October in each subsequent year, the interest holder must submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) an updated GGAP that demonstrates:

- a) the actual scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions produced, compared to the predicted scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions in the EMP (unique EMP reference code);
- b) the proposed method/s of offsetting residual cumulative scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions across all active EMPs for the preceding financial year;
- c) any changes to predicted future cumulative scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions across all active EMPs; and
- d) annual progress towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

**Condition 9:** If the interest holder is required by condition 6 to prepare a GGAP, by 30 November in each subsequent year, the interest holder must submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) evidence of offsets obtained during the previous financial year

**Condition 10:** The interest holder must record all accidental releases of liquid contaminant or hazardous chemicals in a site spill register, which records:

- i. the liquid contaminant or hazardous chemical spilled or leaked;
- ii. the GPS co-ordinates of the location of the spill or leak;
- iii. the source and volume of the spill or leak;
- iv. the volume of impacted soil removed for disposal and the depth of any associated excavation; and
- v. the corrective actions taken or proposed to be taken to prevent recurrence of an incident of a similar nature.

**Condition 11:** The interest holder must undertake quarterly groundwater monitoring at each control and impact monitoring bore for a minimum of three years after establishment, unless otherwise advised by the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE).

**Condition 12:** The interest holder must undertake groundwater level/pressure monitoring at each impact monitoring bore established, using a logger to record water level at a minimum of every 4 minutes for the duration of the recording period, for 14 days prior to, during, and 28 days after completion of hydraulic fracturing operations at each well pad.

**Condition 13:** Within 60 days of each groundwater monitoring event, the interest holder must submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) the results of groundwater monitoring in the following formats:

- i. Excel data file in the Aquarius template provided by DLPE; and
- ii. Pdf from the analysing laboratory.

**Condition 14:** Within 90 days of the anniversary of the approval date of the EMP (IMP5- 3), and each subsequent year, the interest holder must submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) an interpretative report of groundwater quality which includes:

- i. identification of any change to groundwater quality or level attributable to conduct of the regulated activity at the well site(s) and discussion of the significance and cause of any such observed change;
- ii. interpretation of any statistical outliers observed from baseline measured values for each of the analytes listed in Table 6 of the Code;
- iii. a summary of the results including descriptive statistics;
- iv. discussion of any trends observed;
- v. description of the layout of the groundwater monitoring bores and wells, indicative groundwater flow directions and levels in accordance with the Preliminary Guideline Groundwater Monitoring Bores for Exploration Petroleum Wells in the Beetaloo Sub-basin; and
- vi. in the third annual report, site-specific trigger values for groundwater quality and interquartile ranges for analytes at each of the impact monitoring bores established based on the first three years of groundwater monitoring.

**Condition 15:** Within 14 days of completion of groundwater level/pressure monitoring in each impact monitoring bore as required by condition 12, the interest holder must submit to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) the logger data in Excel format.

**Condition 16:** Within 60 days of completion of well flowback operations for the first well where flowback fluid has been reused, the interest holder must provide to [Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au](mailto:Onshoregas.DLPE@nt.gov.au) a risk assessment of the returned flowback fluid following the reuse, which must be:

- i. prepared by a suitably qualified person; and
- ii. prepared in accordance with the monitoring wastewater analytes specified in section C.8 of the Code.

**Condition 17:** Prior to commencement of regulated activities, the interest holder must provide DLPE with a rehabilitation plan which has been developed or reviewed by a suitably qualified person.

## 2 Material considered

1. The following material has been taken into account in making this decision:
  - a. Carpentaria Pilot Project EMP (IMP5-3), 17 September 2024
  - b. The principles of ecologically sustainable development referenced in reg 5A and the approval criteria set out in reg 9(1)
  - c. The NT EPA advice provided under s29B of the NT EPA Act
  - d. The Authority Certificate issued under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989*
  - e. The Code of Practice: Onshore Petroleum Activities in the Northern Territory (Code) as set out in reg 4A
  - f. The Department of Mining and Energy advice that the Well Operations Management Plan approved for the regulated activity meets the requirements of the Code.
  - g. Correspondence between Northern Land Council, the interest holder, and the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment in relation to stakeholder engagement.
  - h. All public comments submitted under reg 8B.

## 3 Statement of reasons

1. The EMP meets the approval criterion in reg 9(1)(a), because it contains all the information required by Schedule 1 of the Regulations. reg 9(1)(a)
2. I have considered the approval criterion in reg 9(1)(b) by noting the nature and scale of the regulated activity and bearing it in mind during my consideration of the impacts and risks. In particular, I note that: reg 9(1)(b)
  - a) The nature of the regulated activity is as follows:
    - i. land clearing;
    - ii. earthworks;
    - iii. establishment of dill pads and drilling;
    - iv. hydraulic fracturing;
    - v. storage and transportation of petroleum and hazardous substances;
    - vi. wastewater storage and handling;

- vii. appraisal testing of wells; and
- viii. the construction, operation, modification of well, pipelines and other facilities.

b) The scale of the regulated activity is as follows:

- i. total area of surface disturbance - 226 ha;
- ii. total area of access tracks - 24.2 ha;
- iii. number of exploration wells - 12 including up to 9 new wells;
- iv. groundwater usage – between 1 and 414 ML per year, 950 ML total over the 5 year project (groundwater extraction licence GRF10316);
- v. up to 8 control and 8 impact monitoring bores;
- vi. up to 9 gravel pits (plus use, and potential expansion, of three existing gravel pits) to extract 100,000 m<sup>3</sup> of gravel covering a total of 57.6 ha;
- vii. extended production testing - Up to 25 months for all wells;
- viii. one camp covering 1.2 ha and housing up to 247 people;
- ix. peak traffic movements - ~240 light vehicles per week and ~74 heavy vehicles per week;
- x. average traffic movements (first 3 months) - ~186 light vehicles per week and ~39 heavy vehicles per week;
- xi. average traffic movements (for the balance) - ~65 light vehicles per week and ~29 heavy vehicles per week;
- xii. volume of drilling mud and cuttings generated - ~1,500 m<sup>3</sup> (per well);
- xiii. flowback volume generated - 35 ML (per well);
- xiv. flowback/wastewater volume predicted for treatment and offsite disposal - 5% per well;
- xv. wastewater storage- Wastewater Handling Station: Main configuration up to 110 ML in capacity; and
- xvi. Gas recovery of ~25 TJ/day is expected during the appraisal phase. Flaring of ~25 TJ/day during the appraisal phase would result in ~475,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e per year. Exporting this gas to the McArthur River Gas Pipeline (MRGP) significantly reduces Scope 1 GHG emissions from the Carpentaria Pilot Project (CPP) Area. The total greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) forecasted from the regulated activities over the life of this EMP are approximately 180,381 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e, subject to appraisal gas approval under Section 57AAA of the *Petroleum Act 1984* and exporting to MRGP.

3. The approval criteria in reg 9(1)(c) requires that I be satisfied that the environmental impacts and environmental risks of the activity will be reduced to a level that is both: (i) as low as reasonably practicable; and (ii) acceptable. In assessing whether the EMP meets the approval criteria, I note that my decision is a prescribed decision (under reg 5A) for s 6A of the Act, and as such requires me to consider and apply the principles of ecologically sustainable development. In accordance with reg 12(3), I provide the following information about how the EMP meets the approval criteria, and the manner in which I have taken into account the principles of ecologically sustainable development when considering whether or not the plan meets the approval criteria.

reg  
9(1)(c)

4. The principles of ecologically sustainable development are defined at section 18-24 of the *Environment Protection Act 2019*, and I address each in turn:

- a) The **decision-making principle** (s 18 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires effective integration of long-term and short-term environmental and equitable considerations, and for processes to provide for community involvement in relation to decisions and actions that affect the community. Related to this, I note the following:

- i. The regulated activity is part of the appraisal phase of an onshore petroleum project with discrete activities staged over 5 years. The regulated activity will inform decision-making about longer-term petroleum activities for the project.
- ii. Public consultation on the EMP was required under the Regulations, as the EMP proposes drilling and hydraulic fracturing activities. The EMP was made available for public comment for 28 days from 22 March 2024 to 19 April 2024.
- iii. DLPE received 50 public submissions on the EMP. I note the issues raised in public submissions across the following broad themes:

Theme	Issues raised
Chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of chemicals on human health and environment.</li> </ul>
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on climate change.</li> <li>• Greenhouse gas emissions incomplete as it did not consider downstream emissions.</li> </ul>
Flora and fauna (environment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequacy of baseline assessment.</li> <li>• Threat to listed species.</li> <li>• Impacts to important habitat not adequately addressed.</li> <li>• Wastewater storage in open ponds – fauna access.</li> </ul>
Regulation and compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2019 (NT) (EP Act)</i> and the <i>Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)</i>.</li> <li>• Request for a full EIS</li> </ul>
Spills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centralised wastewater storage increases the risk of leakage with flowline infrastructure to take wastewater back to the central location.</li> <li>• Wet season transport and storage risks</li> <li>• Trucking of large quantities (90 ML) of wastewater</li> <li>• Lack of acknowledgement of change in risk profile resulting from multiple wastewater movements</li> <li>• No consideration of the impact of the changing climate (extreme weather events).</li> </ul>
Social and cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts to cultural heritage</li> <li>• Inadequate/lack of consultation with TOs</li> <li>• Informed consent</li> <li>• Economic benefit</li> </ul>
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on water availability</li> <li>• Contamination of aquifers (through drilling fluid losses)</li> </ul>
Well integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well integrity threatens aquifers</li> </ul>

- iv. I have taken into account the public submissions in making my decision and am satisfied the EMP appropriately identifies the risk and potential impacts from the regulated activity and commits to mitigation, management and monitoring measures to address these risks and potential impacts.
- v. The information before me suggests short-term and long-term environmental impacts are managed appropriately with the proposed mitigation measures and conditions of approval in place.

- vi. Taking an integrated view of long-term and short-term environmental and equitable considerations, I am satisfied that the considerations on balance and taken together support approval of the EMP.
- b) The **precautionary principle** (s 19 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) applies when there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage and requires that lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. I am satisfied that the regulated activity and the measures identified by the interest holder are effective to prevent a threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage.
- c) The **principle of evidence-based decision-making** (s 20 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires decisions to be made on the best available evidence in the circumstances that is relevant and reliable. I am of the view that the evidence before me satisfies this requirement for the following reasons:
  - i. The EMP was developed by persons who have professional qualifications, training, skills and experience on the subject matter of environment, safety, risk management, and petroleum development and operations, as well as consultants with experience working in the Beetaloo Sub-basin.
  - ii. The interest holder employed a process to obtain relevant information including baseline assessments, archaeological assessments, stakeholder engagement and consultation with relevant NT government agencies.
  - iii. The EMP has undergone review and assessment by a multi-disciplinary team in DLPE and experts across the NT Government. Consideration has also been given to the findings in the Strategic Regional Environmental and Baseline Assessment (SREBA), which has informed my decision on the EMP.
  - iv. The interest holder provided further information to address these concerns and modified the EMP to ensure it meets the requirements of the Regulations and the Code.
- d) The **principle of intergenerational and intra-generational equity** (s 21 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of present and future generations. I have given consideration to the impact on present and future generations as follows:
  - i. This criterion requires me to turn my mind to whether the benefits of the proposal disproportionately burden present or future generations, or particular groups or communities of present or future generations.
  - ii. I have considered whether the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of each of these relevant groups.
  - iii. The environmental burdens of the regulated activity will not disproportionately affect particular stakeholders.
  - iv. Provided that greenhouse gas measures detailed in the EMP are implemented fully, I consider that cumulative emissions are not significant when considered in context of 2022 NT and Australian emissions, which were approximately 16.73 million tonnes and 432.62 million tonnes respectively. I note that the Australian Government's Safeguard Mechanism may apply to projects in the Northern Territory.
  - v. Cultural values relating to sacred sites will be protected through the application of Authority Certificates issued to the interest holder under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act (NT) 1989*.
  - vi. Cultural heritage will be protected by ensuring compliance with the *Heritage Act (NT) 2011*, which I am also responsible for. That Act operates to protect the Territory's cultural and natural heritage. The interest holder is aware of its obligations under that



Act and the Cultural Heritage team in DLPE to monitor the interest holder's compliance with that legislation.

- vii. The Controller of Water Resources must issue a groundwater extraction licence under the *Water Act (NT) 1992* in relation to the extraction of any groundwater. The Water Act provides for the investigation, allocation, use, control, protection management and administration of the Territory's water resources. The Controller and the Water Resources Division in DLPE will ensure compliance with the Water Act and any groundwater extraction licences issued. Accordingly, I do not believe that the carrying out of the regulated activity in accordance with the EMP would have an effect contrary to the principle of inter or intra-generational equity.
- e) The **principle of sustainable use** (s 22 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires that natural resources should be used in a manner that is sustainable, prudent, rational, wise and appropriate. In applying this principle, I have considered the following:
  - i. I note the findings of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing (HFI) in the NT that states: "... in the short to medium term, the Australian National Energy Market is likely to require higher levels of flexible, gas-fired generation, which can provide a reliable, low emissions substitute for ageing coal-fired generation, and essential security services to complement variable renewable electricity generation."<sup>4</sup>
  - ii. I am satisfied that the concept of sustainable use of natural resources has been taken into account.
- f) The **principle of biological diversity and ecological integrity** (s 23 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires that biological diversity and ecological integrity should be conserved and maintained. I have applied this principle as follows:
  - i. I believe the information I have regarding the existing biodiversity and ecosystems that are to be affected by the regulated activity, the effects that are likely, and the mitigation measures reasonably available, are sufficient.
  - ii. The regulated activity does not pose a significant risk to any regional populations of threatened species. No core habitat for threatened fauna was identified in the project area, but 16 threatened species potentially occur in the wider landscape.
  - iii. The measures to conserve and maintain biological diversity and ecological integrity in the EMP are appropriate, given the nature and scale of the regulated activity.
  - iv. If carried out in accordance with the EMP, the risks of the regulated activity to the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity are considered to be mitigated to an acceptable level.
- g) The **principle of improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms** (s 24 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services, through application of the 'polluter pays' principles, consideration of full life cycle costs of providing goods and services and pursuing environmental goals in the most cost-effective way. I have applied the principle as follows:
  - i. The pollution and waste that will be generated by the regulated activity includes domestic waste, drilling waste, and waste from hydraulic fracturing and emissions.
  - ii. I am satisfied that both hazardous and non-hazardous waste will be disposed of in accordance with the requirements of the Code by the interest holder at its own cost, as outlined in the relevant sections of the EMP.

- iii. In relation to the risks of a pollution event that may occur unintentionally during the operations of the regulated activity, I consider that the following measures are in place to ensure the interest holder bears the costs of containment, avoidance, and abatement:
- (1) impacts and risks associated with contamination of soil, surface water and groundwater, which are managed through meeting mandated Code requirements, including in relation to well integrity (which is overseen by the Department of Mining and Energy) and clean-up of spills and leaks and remediation of impacted soil; and
  - (2) impacts and risks associated with loss of containment of wastewater, which are managed through containment measures.
- iv. In relation to full life cycle costs, it is expected that the regulated activity will have a life cycle of five years, and at the end of this cycle the interest holder will take action to remove any residual pollution and waste as detailed by the EMP.
- v. All interest holders are required to provide an environmental security related to the activities in an EMP, as per the onshore petroleum environmental security calculation guideline<sup>5</sup> and prior to commencement of the activities.
- vi. The Spill Management Plan includes commitments to immediately remediate spills and leaks, to reduce the risk of long-term contamination of the environment and avoid environmental impact legacies.
- vii. Measures are in place to conduct continuous waste management and remediation. Wastewater will be evaporated on-site, with the brine disposed of at a licensed facility.
- viii. I believe approval of the EMP with the conditions I have imposed is consistent with the principle of improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms.
- h) On 19 February 2024, the interest holder referred the EMP to the NT EPA under the *Environment Protection Act 2019*. The NT EPA accepted the referral of a proposed action for standard assessment on 14 March 2024. On 14 May 2024, the NT EPA determined that the Carpentaria Pilot Project proposed by the interest holder in its EMP (IMP5-1) does not have the potential for a significant impact on the environment and that an environmental impact assessment of the proposed action is not required. reg  
9(3)
- i) The NT EPA has also reviewed the EMP for the regulated activity following a request under s29B of the NT EPA Act to provide advice on EMPs. I have considered the NT EPA's advice in making my decision.
- j) The existing environment along with its particular values and sensitivities is appropriately identified in the EMP. reg  
9(1)(c)
- k) I agree with the risk assessment set out in the EMP.
- l) The interest holder's risk assessment is applicable to activities in all seasons and the outcomes are reflected in the EMP under the management plans. This is consistent with the requirements of the Code that allows for the regulated activity to occur in the wet season months when contingency planning is provided and minimum freeboard in wastewater infrastructure is maintained.
- m) The anticipated environmental impacts are appropriately identified in table 6.2-3 of the EMP. The regulated activity are a continuation of current activities and cumulative effects have been identified and assessed. In EMPs for subsequent stages (if they proceed) the interest holder will need to continue to address cumulative effects.

<sup>5</sup> [https://depws.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/1252879/onshore-petroleum-environmental-security-calculation-guideline.pdf](https://depws.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1252879/onshore-petroleum-environmental-security-calculation-guideline.pdf)

- n) The EMP demonstrates how the interest holder will comply with relevant requirements of the Code in undertaking these regulated activities. The EMP cross references relevant sections of the Code that apply to the mitigation and management measures to enable the reviewer to identify and confirm that the proposed activities comply with the Code, as applicable.
- o) Public submissions expressed concerns over stakeholder engagement. The interest holder has participated in 15 stakeholder engagement meetings since the public submissions were received by DLPE, including informal meetings with Traditional Owners and formal meetings with the Northern Land Council in June and August 2024. Further meetings and letters between stakeholders were held after the EMP was lodged in February 2024 and the interest holder has provided details of this engagement. The EMP provides details of stakeholder engagement that meets Regulation 7 and Schedule 1, Clause 9 of the Regulations (EMP Appendix 10). I am satisfied on the basis of material before me, including the EMP, that the interest holder has conducted stakeholder engagement and will continue to engage with stakeholders in relation to the activities.
- p) There are no environmental impacts or environmental risks relating to the proposed regulated activity that I consider to be unacceptable.
- q) Overall, having regard to the above, I am satisfied that the EMP is appropriate for the nature and scale of the activity, and demonstrates that the regulated activity is to be carried out in a manner by which the environmental impacts and environmental risks are reduced to a level that is:
  - i. as low as reasonably practicable; and
  - ii. acceptable.