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Northern Territory moratorium lifted; jobs, investment and energy benefits to flow

The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association welcomed today's announcement by the Northern Territory Government that the near two-year moratorium that stalled onshore gas exploration and development would end, enabling the creation of thousands of jobs in the Territory, billions of dollars of government revenue and the delivery of much-needed energy supply for the NT and the nation.

The Government has accepted the key finding of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory that any risks associated with onshore gas development and hydraulic fracturing can be managed by effective regulation.

APPEA NT Director Matthew Doman welcomed the Government's decision to support development of the NT's abundant gas resources but warned the manner and timeframe in which it implemented the Inquiry's 135 recommendations would be critical in determining the commercial viability of the industry.

In particular, the Government has accepted that 30 of the recommendations must be brought into effect before exploration activity can resume.

"If they are to be implemented they must be addressed within the next six months to ensure the industry can be on the ground exploring in the 2019 dry season," Mr Doman said.

"Businesses, contractors and workers in the Territory are counting on the quick ramp up of the gas industry to get the Territory moving again. Explorers are ready to resume their activities as soon as the Government gives the green light.

"As soon we can get back to work, we will again employ local people, engage local companies and resume royalty payments to host Traditional Owners. Our exploration activity will build our knowledge of the gas resources, groundwater and the environment that contains them — and enable informed decisions about future development.

"APPEA's member companies stand ready to invest billions of dollars in new projects in the Territory. We are determined to do this in a safe and sustainable manner, and to generate real benefits for all Territorians."

APPEA Chief Executive Dr Malcolm Roberts said states opposed to onshore gas development should be reconsidering their positions.

"As we look to Friday's COAG Energy Council meeting, the Territory Government has sent an important message to other jurisdictions about the energy security, emissions reduction and economic benefits of natural gas. It is time for those other jurisdictions to hear that message," Dr Roberts said.

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