

Western Australian fracking inquiry calls for submissions

24 November 2017

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Western Australia's scientific inquiry into hydraulic fracturing is underway. The scientific panel recently published a [Background and Issues Paper](#) to inform the development of submissions to the inquiry.

Established under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (WA), the inquiry will consider the potential impacts of fracking on the environment, including heritage, human health and safety. For a brief summary of the Western Australian (**WA**) ban and moratorium on fracking pending the outcome of the scientific enquiry, see our [previous article here](#).

The panel is inviting submissions on the potential environmental impacts, regulation and management of hydraulic fracturing from 27 November 2017 to 19 March 2018. All submissions will be publicly available on the inquiry website which you can [access here](#).

The panel is calling for stakeholders to provide submissions and evidence to obtain:

- a full and appropriate understanding of the environmental values potentially at risk from unconventional oil and gas development involving fracking;
- any data or other evidence that might inform a scientific risk analysis of those impacts, with an emphasis on local geographies and geologies, and local evidence from WA; and
- any reflections or experience on what a regulatory framework should ideally look like if the Government lifts its current moratorium.

The inquiry does not extend to the future of the oil and gas industry in WA, nor the social or economic benefits of fracking that do not arise directly or indirectly from degradation, pollution or loss of physical or biological values.

The panel has indicated that it will draw on the wealth of information from previous inquiries into fracking, in particular, the 2015 [WA Legislative Council Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs Report 2015](#). However, ultimately the panel is tasked to deliver independent findings and advice.

The panel will be holding public meetings in Perth, the Mid West and the Kimberley in February 2018, with the final report set to be released in August 2018.

We believe that it is important for the industry to have an active voice and participate in the inquiry to safeguard the future of oil and gas development in the State.

It is also vitally important that the panel stick to the published timeframes in order to bring certainty to an industry currently in a state of regulatory flux. In this regard, we are disappointed to hear that the Northern Territory has recently delayed its inquiry into fracking by three months to March 2018.

For further information or discussion regarding the inquiry or for assistance with your submission, please contact HopgoodGanim Lawyers' [Resources and Energy](#) team.

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