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Media Release

NT decision to allow onshore gas exploration to restart in 2019

Santos welcomes the Northern Territory Government’s decision to implement the prerequisite conditions for recommencement of onshore gas exploration by the end of 2018.

The independent Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing has concluded the challenges and risks associated with any onshore shale gas industry in the NT can be appropriately managed.

Santos thanks all those from NT businesses and local communities, including Indigenous leaders, who have supported a process to enable a safe and sustainable onshore gas industry to proceed.

Santos CEO and Managing Director Kevin Gallagher said “This is a great outcome for Territory communities because it will reinvigorate the economy there, generating jobs, local business opportunities and the social investments that gas companies make to help build a better future for the communities in which we operate.”

“Territory businesses, contractors and workers are counting on the quick ramp up of the onshore gas industry to get the Territory moving again,” Mr Gallagher said.

“As soon as we can get back to work, we will employ local people, engage local companies and resume royalty payments to host Traditional Owners.

“Santos does not want to let them down and we will be ready to go in the 2019 dry season.”

Mr Gallagher said “With exploration and appraisal success, the NT’s McArthur Basin has the potential to do for the NT and Australia what the shale gas revolution has done for America, providing the competitive advantage to breathe life back into energy-intensive industries and generate wealth for the nation.”

“Opening up access to this clean energy resource in the Territory is a great outcome for national energy security, potentially attracting new energy-intensive industries to Darwin and supporting new and expanded pipelines connecting to the east coast domestic gas market,” Mr Gallagher said.

“There is a window of opportunity to also grow LNG exports as global supply gaps open up in the early to mid-2020s.

“Implementing the conditions for onshore gas exploration by the end of 2018 and getting the regulatory framework in place to allow onshore gas development by 2021 is vitally important to deliver a viable onshore gas industry as well as the desperately-needed economic and social benefits Territorians are counting on.

“Santos is committed to robust, effective and efficient regulation and we also recognise the need to bring the community with us.

“Our exploration activity will build our knowledge of the gas resource, groundwater, the environment and the needs of other land users — and enable informed decisions to ensure safe and sustainable development.”