

Approved response to Action Items from NGP CCC #5

1. The CCC members would like to be notified of any 'stop the clock' issues for the REF assessment.

A letter was issued to Santos from DRE on 12 May 2015 requesting additional information. The additional information has been requested by 5 June 2015. DRE have temporarily suspended the assessment process (or 'stopped the clock') until the additional information is received.

2. How are other departments submissions on the REF made available?

The policy as determined by the Director ESU is for submissions from NSW government agencies and organisations are to be uploaded to the web and made publically available. Submission from community members are not to be uploaded due to privacy and confidentiality issues. Accordingly, submissions that comply with this policy have been uploaded to the web (via the departments DIGs site) on Wednesday 13 May.

3. How can below ground impacts be quantified in a security assessment? Is this covered in the Aquifer Interference Policy - what is the make good policy?

Rehabilitation cost estimates are provided for the decommissioning (plugged and abandonment) and rehabilitation of each well. These requirements are outlined in the Well Integrity Code of Practice 2012 and Schedule of Onshore Petroleum Exploration and Production Safety Requirements 1992, and include filling the well (or core hole) with cement grout.

If necessary, the Department can pursue enforcement action under the Petroleum Onshore Act 1991 (POA) for rehabilitation for both current and expired titles, pursuant to Section 77. Section 78 and 79 of the POA allows the department to recover costs and expenses if the Department then undertakes the rehabilitation work. This could cover 'below ground impacts'.

I am not aware of the 'make good policy' in the AIP, NSW Office of Water would be best placed to answer this query. I believe this may be a reference to Queensland regulation.

4. What criteria are used to determine what recommendations are made by other agencies are accepted in the REF process? CCC members would like more clarity on the process.

A memorandum of understanding exists between DRE, DPE, NOW and EPA. Although no formal criteria is provided in this document, it does emphasis the need for these agencies to have a collaborative and consultative approach. This approach is adopted by DRE and the submissions received are taken into account, but the determination is the responsibility of the Department when discharging its duties under Section 111 of the EP&A Act. The assessment ultimately relies on the professional opinion and experience of the assessment officer (or assessment team) and the decision is made by the authorised delegate of the Minister.