Where oil and gas activities can occur

What is the current situation?

To date, exploration permits have been granted over defined areas in the Northern Territory as shown on the attached map. These permits cover areas where exploration activity can occur. All activities ranging from seismic activity to actual drilling within these permit areas must also be assessed and approved by government prior to the commencement of any activity.

The Northern Territory Government has recently revised the method by which land for oil and gas is released. This will provide greater certainty to Territorians that developments will not occur where the activity is incompatible with existing land use.

Prior to 2014, companies could apply for exploration permits across the Northern Territory. In 2014, a new acreage release process was introduced whereby industry can only apply for land for oil and gas development that the Northern Territory Government has assessed as suitable.

Future land release

Future land release for oil and gas activities will not be approved in residential areas, rural residential areas or areas of other land use or classification where oil and gas developments are not compatible.

The Northern Territory Government will not grant acreage release and exploration permits where there is a land use conflict, based on the following criteria:

- **Urban living areas including rural residential areas**
  - i.e. land zoned as residential and land zoned as rural residential.

  Where land is not zoned, but the land use is consistent with these purposes, oil and gas activities will not be permitted. Should the rural residential Landowners seek co-existence, they will have the ability to negotiate on a case by case basis through land access agreements.

Further information please visit www.onshoregas.nt.gov.au
Fact Sheet

• **Areas of intensive agriculture** – the Department of Mines and Energy will assess the compatibility of land use; however, intensive agriculture will exclude some operations including melon farms, mango orchards and aquaculture operations. Should the landholders agree to exploration on their land, they will have the ability to negotiate on a case by case basis through agreed land access agreements.

• **Areas of high ecological value** - as determined through the Northern Territory’s robust environmental assessment process following implementation of the Hawke review into the Northern Territory’s environmental assessment and approvals processes.

• **Areas of cultural significance as advised by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority**

• **Areas that include assets of strategic importance to nearby residential areas** – e.g. areas with high potential for other uses – tourism related development such as Bitter Springs at Mataranka.

In addition, the Northern Territory Government will retain the right to impose specific requirements on any development application. The underlying principle being that government reserves the right under the grant of a permit to allow development to occur in one area but not another.

Existing applications will be assessed against the criteria above. Where an area is assessed as having a land use conflict it may be refused. This approach is not inconsistent with the existing legislative mechanisms.

There is no change for Aboriginal land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* or the *Native Title Act*.

Onshore oil and gas has been part of life in the Northern Territory for decades. During this time, there have been no developments on residential or rural residential land. To date, no exploration permits have been incompatible with other uses. The assessment of future land release for oil and gas activities against the criteria above will ensure this continues to be the case.

For more information visit www.onshoregas.nt.gov.au
Granted petroleum permits

LEGEND
- Main town
- Aboriginal community and outstation
- Main road
- Gas pipeline
- Petroleum permit granted
- Reserve block (where no activity can occur)
- EP Exploration permit
- OL Production lease
- RL Retention lease
- L Production licence

As at November 2015