



## GISERA | Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance

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### Minutes of the NT Research Advisory Committee Meeting No. 11 Held in Darwin and via video on Tuesday, 4 March 2025

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#### OPENING

The meeting of the CSIRO GISERA NT Research Advisory Committee (RAC) was called to order at 9.37 am (ACST) on Tuesday, 4 March 2025.

#### PRESENT

Damian Barrett:	GISERA Director (CSIRO)
Adam Thompson:	Manager – Resources & Energy Branch (Northern Land Council)
Julieann Stoll:	Independent Representative retired, formerly Central Land Council
Simone Cameron:	Northern Australia, Senior Policy Manager (Cotton Australia)
James Pratt:	Senior Executive Director- Energy Development (NT DME)
David Gornall:	Manager Environment (Santos)
Matt Kerneke:	Environment and Approvals Manager (Tamboran Resources)

#### Other participants:

Cameron Huddlestone-Holmes:	GISERA NT State Leader (CSIRO)
Jizelle Khoury:	GISERA Executive Officer (CSIRO)
Melina Gillespie:	GISERA Communication & Stakeholder Engagement Manager (CSIRO)

#### Apologies:

Eileen Breen:	Board Member (Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory)
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#### 1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The GISERA Director welcomed all members to the meeting including new member David Gornall. Apologies were received from Eileen Breen.

## **2. GISERA COMMUNICATIONS**

The GISERA Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Leader provided an update on the communication material currently being developed to supplement the research being undertaken in CSIRO.

- The RAC viewed a draft video produced during the August 2024 field trip for the Hot Springs Valley project. The video will include an acknowledgement of the Northern Land Council and Traditional Owners involvement.
- A near final 3D digital model of the Beetaloo Sub-basin was also viewed. Some feedback included:
  - Including a town(s) of significance, scale of depth, well locations for key activities (Tanumbirini/Santos, Shenandoah/Tamboran and Eastern extension/Empire's activities) as well as aquifers/aquifers may provide more perspective.
  - The Developing Northern Australia Conference in July 2025 might be a good opportunity to showcase some of GISERA's communication resources.
  - Consider incorporating a link to NT Government website for access to additional information.

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **3. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The NT RAC noted progress with action item (22-06-23 Item 5) remaining open.

### **4. PROJECT PROPOSAL**

#### **Groundwater connectivity between the CLA and the surface in the Eastern Beetaloo Sub-basin extension**

The GISERA Director provided a summary of the project proposal.

Key points raised:

- It will be important to look at the springs at a local scale initially and then consider the regional scale.
- From a regulatory perspective, it will be critical to understand the connectivity between the Anthony Lagoon and the Gum Ridge formations and determine the presence or absence of aquifers. Also, if aquifers are connected, what are the consequences of that connectivity. This needs to be a priority and made explicit in the proposal.
- Early engagement with Traditional Owners will be important to ensure access issues are resolved to carry out field campaign as per schedule.

- It would be useful to clarify in the proposal what this project will do and what is out of scope.

Outcome: The NT RAC approved this project, subject to the actions below being addressed to their satisfaction. The revisions made to the proposal will be forwarded to the NT RAC via email out of session.

Action: The research proponent to update the scope and deliverables to ensure research priorities are made explicit.

Action: The research proponent to clarify what is out of scope.

## 5. PROJECT PROPOSAL

### **Review of potential environmental impacts of shale gas related wastewater disposal options**

The GISERA Director provided a summary of the project proposal.

Key points raised:

- The proposal needs to clarify the purpose of the development of gasfield scenarios and acknowledge it will not be a detailed re-evaluation of all wastewater management options. There needs to be transparency in explaining why options and technologies are ruled out during scenario development (e.g. why they are impractical in the NT circumstances) and under what circumstances those options would be ruled back in.
- Scenarios will need to assess the risk at least at a broad level (project level risks cannot be assessed).
- An emphasis should be on understanding wastewater injection risks and specification of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory recommendation 7.9.
- Terms of Reference should be established as part of task 1 and the role and input required from the Technical Reference Group needs to be clarified in the proposal. TRG participants must include parts of NT Government responsible for the Water Act.
- The purpose of the workshop needs to be clearly defined in the proposal. Participants should include representatives with hydrogeologic training from Northern Land Council, NT Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (Water Resources Group), NT Department of Mines and Energy (Petroleum Operations) and the gas companies (Santos, Tamboran and Empire).
- Further discussions with key stakeholders are required to help refine proposal.

Outcome: The NT RAC requested that the proposal be revised taking to account all points raised and reconvene via video to consider revised proposal.

Action: The research proponent to consider the comments noted and refine proposal for reconsideration by the NT RAC.

## **6. PROJECT PROPOSAL**

### **Pathways for Indigenous socio-economic development in the Beetaloo Region of the Northern Territory**

The GISERA Director provided a summary of the project proposal.

Key points raised:

- The proposal should detail how outcomes from the project will benefit communities with clear examples.
- It was noted that communication will go beyond native title holders and include members of broader community.
- The Research Proponent should consider the 'Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy for the Beetaloo' work conducted by the Northern Institute, CDU and build on that work and avoid any repetition. This report along with other local studies should also be referenced in the proposal.
- It would be good to know what frameworks work (from an indigenous led space) and what models internationally have worked to mitigate the risk of outcomes from the project having very little benefits for communities. The desired outcome is that benefits are maximised among indigenous communities. There have been several economic studies that the Research Proponent may be able to draw upon. The proposal must focus more towards ensuring the models developed will do the job intended.
- There were over 58 submissions in Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory in 2019 – a great starting point would be to look at where we up to now and what are the clear gaps which can be tackled in this project.
- Agreements with companies will sit with Northern Land Council or representative body working with native title holders. They all include employment and training, and this project will not be interfacing with those because agreements are private agreements.
- While the intent of proposal is supported, what is not clear, is the relationships with existing initiatives and other activities that have happened and how this project will provide benefit. Also need to consider in the proposal current negotiations with companies, Native Title Agreements and other agreements represented through the Northern Land Council and the industry and how it aligns with this proposed project. Greater specifics about what this project will do and deliver are required.
- It was unclear where Industry Capability Network – Northern Territory (ICNNT), small businesses and the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network (NTIBN) fit in to the proposal.

- The research needs to be cognisant to address the risk/issue of the existing conversations and negotiations that are happening, and to ensure these negotiations do not get confused. There are on-country meetings scheduled, and it will be important not to disrupt the work the Northern Land Council are doing. The timing of fieldwork needs to be coordinated with the Northern Land Council to avoid clashes with other activities on country.
- The proposal needs to be clearer on who the Research Proponent will be talking to.
- One of the long-term outcomes in the Project Impact Pathway of the proposal lists 'Uptake of the research findings will improve Industry's knowledge and practices related to social, economic & environmental opportunities of developments including unconventional gas projects'. The Research Proponent should think about options for government policies and institutional frameworks that could increase the likelihood of opportunity development.

Outcome: The NT RAC requested that the proposal be revised taking to account all points raised and reconvene via video to consider revised proposal.

Action: The research proponent to meet with UQ researchers to consider the comments noted and existing work conducted in the region so that the scope of the project can be defined with greater detail. As part of this process, the research proponent and UQ should meet with the Northern Land Council to discuss current on-ground activities and their implications to the proposed research.

## **7. UPDATE ON EXISTING PROJECTS**

The GISERA Director provided a status summary of all existing projects.

### **ITEMS FOR NOTING OR DISCUSSION BY EXCEPTION**

## **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **8.1 Future investment for GISERA**

There was discussion amongst RAC members on whether there is an ongoing need for GISERA research in the Northern Territory and whether further funding should be provided.

Action: Industry partners to consider the value proposition and possibility of further funding to GISERA.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the NT Research Advisory Committee will be scheduled for April 2025, where revised proposals will be considered.

#### **MEETING CLOSE**

The meeting closed at 2.43 pm (ACST).

#### **SUMMARY OF ACTIONS FROM GISERA NT RAC MEETING #11 – 4 MARCH 2025**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
04-03-25 Item 4	The research proponent to update the scope and deliverables to ensure research priorities are made explicit.
04-03-25 Item 4	The research proponent to clarify what is out of scope.
04-03-25 Item 5	The research proponent to consider the comments noted and refine proposal for reconsideration by the NT RAC.
04-03-25 Item 6	The research proponent to meet with UQ researchers to consider the comments noted and existing work conducted in the region so that the scope of the project can be defined with greater detail. As part of this process, the research proponent and UQ should meet with the Northern Land Council to discuss current on-ground activities and their implications to the proposed research.
04-03-25 Item 8	Industry partners to consider the value proposition and possibility of further funding to GISERA.

#### **SUMMARY OF ACTIONS CARRIED OVER FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
22-06-23 Item 5	If feasible, the research proponent to include location maps of selected sites.