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Shale gas moratorium a risk to NT jobs, development

Calls for a moratorium on shale gas exploration and hydraulic fracturing in the Northern Territory have no basis in science and ignore the industry's strong safety record, Australia's peak oil and gas body has warned.

The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association said decades of practical experience and numerous inquiries in Australia and overseas showed fracking, the process used to extract shale gas, posed minimal environmental risk.

APPEA NT Director Steven Gerhardy said a moratorium would prevent the exploration activity needed to develop a successful shale gas industry that had the potential to deliver up to 6300 new jobs and boost government revenues by up to \$460 million a year by 2040, according to a new study by Deloitte Access Economics

"The independent inquiry into hydraulic fracturing by Allan Hawke concluded there was no need for a moratorium because there was clear evidence the industry could be developed safely with proper regulation," Mr Gerhardy said.

"Industry is supporting government moves to strengthen the NT's regulatory framework and is committed to safe and sustainable operations.

"The reality is hydraulic fracturing is a well understood technology that has been used in Australia for decades."

Mr Gerhardy said the Hawke Inquiry report and the DAE economic study presented a strong case for developing shale gas.

"Shale gas has the potential to become an important new industry for the Territory, delivering jobs, economic growth and much-needed government revenues to fund new and improved infrastructure and services for the community," Mr Gerhardy said.

"The Deloitte study found that shale gas has the potential to be the second or third largest private sector employer in the NT creating long-term, high-paying jobs well into the future.

"Increasing onshore gas production would also generate increased royalties and business opportunities for indigenous communities."

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