

# Northern Territory Gas Plan

## A pathway to 2030



# Introduction

The **Northern Territory Gas Plan – A pathway to 2030** is a roadmap that builds on previous strategies, while modernising and streamlining its future focus.

The Plan is of fundamental importance to the community and will ensure the Northern Territory capitalises on what is expected to be one of the most transformational, five-year periods in our history.

By focussing on Economic Growth, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability, the NT Government will forge a path toward a prosperous and sustainable future for the Territory, and contribute to Australia’s and the region’s sustainable economic growth and resilience.

## Economic Growth

- Increased Territory revenue
- Business growth
- Regional development

Implementing these initiatives will lead to positive outcomes such as: increased investment, job creation, improved infrastructure and a more independent and resilient economy across the Northern Territory.

## Energy Security

- Territory
- National
- Regional

Gas development from the Beetaloo Sub-basin will underpin energy security for the Northern Territory, Australia, and regional energy trading partners. This will be achieved by expanding domestic supply, reinforcing economic relations, meeting mutual energy security objectives and cementing our role as a reliable LNG supplier.

## Environmental Sustainability

- Reducing emissions through Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), including for regional trading partners
- Displacing coal nationally and regionally
- Using blue energy as a mechanism to build logistics and infrastructure requirements to support a green energy future

Spearheading the charge in emissions reduction with CCS, displacing coal nationally and regionally, and leveraging blue energy to build essential logistics and infrastructure, will lead to a sustainable green energy future.

## The Northern Territory and Natural Gas

The Territory's gas story began in the 1960s with the onshore Amadeus Basin west of Alice Springs. It has expanded to include world-class offshore projects like the INPEX and Santos LNG processing facilities in Darwin Harbour. Work on the Barossa Gas Project started recently, which will see resources piped from an offshore northern field to Darwin, for processing by 2025.

The implementation of recommendations from the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory has enabled the responsible development of the onshore Beetaloo Sub-basin, located south of Katherine. Successful development of the Beetaloo Sub-basin will usher in a new period of economic prosperity for the Northern Territory.

Our gas story is also bolstered by three complementary technologies and natural resources with significant potential: renewable energies, critical minerals, and carbon capture storage (CCS). As countries strive to meet renewable energy and net-zero emissions targets, cleaner natural gas from the Northern Territory will serve as a reliable, affordable, transitional source.

By 2030, the Northern Territory's world-class solar irradiance is expected to become a major energy source as technology and costs align.

The emergence of CCS opportunities in offshore geological formations near Darwin, including depleted gas fields, will be crucial for our economic and environmental future. The NT Government is committed to assessing the geological suitability for storing carbon and hydrogen, and developing specific legislation.

The integration of natural gas, solar and CCS will be vital in achieving domestic and regional emissions targets.

***“The (gas) Plan is of fundamental importance to the community and will ensure the Northern Territory capitalises on what is expected to be one of the most transformational, five-year periods in our history.”***

# An Evolving Gas Landscape – The Opportunities Ahead

Since 2018, there have been key strategic shifts that warrant the creation of a new, more contemporary gas plan designed to respond to the evolving environmental agenda.

**Northern Territory Gas Plan – A pathway to 2030** has a renewed focus on opportunities in a net zero carbon emissions future, which includes meeting the increasing local and international demand for clean, affordable transition fuel sources.

## Key strategic shifts include:

- **Global shift to decarbonisation and a targeted pathway to net zero emissions**

Achieving net zero emissions is a comprehensive, collaborative effort that requires government policies, technological advancements, corporate responsibility and individual actions. Achieving net zero is a crucial step in mitigating the impacts of climate change and creating a sustainable future.

To achieve the NT Government's policy of net zero emissions by 2050, new emissions must be minimised and remaining emissions must be compensated through improved technologies and strategies like CCS. Where emissions reductions cannot occur, investment in offset projects that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere will be required.

Natural gas is a cleaner energy source that produces half the carbon emissions of coal-fired power. Gas from the Beetaloo Sub-Basin has been found to contain low levels of Carbon Dioxide (Co2).

- **World-class Carbon Capture Storage (CCS) opportunities in offshore geological formations near Darwin**

There are emerging, global-scale opportunities for the Northern Territory to deliver emissions reduction via CCS capability and technology. CCS enables carbon emissions to be stored in existing depleted gas fields and other natural storage reservoirs.

These CCS opportunities close to the Northern Territory include the depleted Bayu–Undan gas reservoir in the Timor Sea and saline aquifers in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf. Both are of world-class significance.

Developing Northern Territory specific legislation for Carbon Capture and Storage will enable new industry development.

CCS will make a significant contribution towards the Northern Territory meeting its emissions targets. Importantly, CCS will make a significant contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions from our strategic trading partners who don't have sufficient carbon capture storage fields.

- **The change of status for key offshore and onshore gas projects from ‘proposed’ to ‘in development’**

### Offshore

In March 2021, Santos announced the final investment decision for the Barossa Gas Project located in Commonwealth waters, indicating that the resource would be transported to their existing Darwin LNG facility. Following the resolution of legal challenges in January 2024, work on the project commenced and the 2025 target date for delivery of first gas remains on schedule.

### Onshore

The release of the final implementation report, in response to the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory in 2023, marked a transition from system reform to ongoing regulation, monitoring and evaluation of the onshore industry.

In 2024, exploration results in the Beetaloo Sub-basin continue to improve, supported by the use of world class technology and knowledge from shale experts from the United States, who have invested heavily in the region.

With results eclipsing those from some of the best known gas fields in the world, the Northern Territory will provide substantial volumes of low carbon, natural gas to Australia and our region. On this basis, industry has moved to pilot program development in the Beetaloo Sub-basin, and planning for supporting infrastructure requirements.

These developments, will see first gas flowing from the Beetaloo Sub-basin in 2025/26, immediately supporting the gas energy security needs for the Northern Territory and its industries.

Importantly, onshore gas developments have a long lifespan of continued drilling ensuring the industry will create service and supply opportunities for the Northern Territory for decades to come.

***“With (Beetaloo Sub-basin) results eclipsing those from some of the best known gas fields in the world, the Northern Territory will provide substantial volumes of low carbon, natural gas to Australia and our region.”***

## A Plan for Action

The role of Government is described through 5 Enablers:

1. Partnerships - Forging the relationships required to streamline development
2. Local Workforce and Supply Chains – Building a workforce for the future
3. Planning and Infrastructure – coordinating and planning the delivery of hard and soft infrastructure required for significant industry development
4. Regulation – Maintaining a contemporary regulatory environment that balances effectiveness with efficiency
5. Investment – Facilitating public and private investment to build capacity and capability



***“Success will be determined by government and industry working in partnerships to achieve growth of a diverse industrial base that increases energy production and decreases emissions.”***

## 2024 - 2030

### Accountability measure:

Success will be measured by the growth of a diverse industrial base that increases energy production, decreases emissions and generates sustained local economic growth.

Enabler	Objective	Action
Partnerships	A secure and stable gas supply for the NT, Australia (east coast) and the region that is supported by an effective CCS industry.	1. Establish and uphold connections with stakeholders across industry, public and private sectors, community and representative Indigenous organisations at regional, national and local levels.

2. Create a world-class import and export facility at Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct by working with key stakeholders to deliver and manage whole of supply chain infrastructure and facilities.

3. Engage with key stakeholders, including the Australian Government, to maximise the contribution of NT gas to Australia's emissions reduction, energy security and economic growth.

Enabler	Objective	Action
Local Workforce and Supply Chains	A skilled, empowered workforce and a service and supply industry focused on the sustainable economic growth of the Territory.	1. Work with industry to plan for and secure future supply of appropriate workforce skills.

2. Ensure social infrastructure is in place and retain skilled and general industry workforce.

3. Implement targeted capacity-building, including collaboration with educational institutions and initiatives to support local service and supply businesses.

Enabler	Objective	Action
Planning and Infrastructure	Coordinated planning and delivery of supporting infrastructure.	1. Plan for regional infrastructure and social services to support the growth of the gas industry, in the context of broader regional development considerations of other industries and our communities.

2. Plan for gas production and associated infrastructure that supports NT's transition to a manufacturing and energy export economy.

3. Plan for governance and strategic land allocation to support gas industry development.

Enabler	Objective	Action
Regulation	An effective regulatory framework in accordance with government policy and community expectations.	1. Ensure principles of best practice regulation (proportionality, accountability, consistency, transparency and targeted) are implemented across the regulatory spectrum, including from assessment of application through to monitoring, compliance and enforcement.

2. Develop carbon capture storage legislation for the Northern Territory.

Enabler	Objective	Action
Investment	Investment in capacity and capability to enable sustained industrial growth.	1. Partner with public and private investors to fund investments in infrastructure to support the development of the NT gas, gas related and CCS industries.

2. Invest in education, training and workforce development programs to ensure a skilled labour force capable of meeting industry demands.

3. Strengthen local business capability and capacity to support industry's service and supply requirements.



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