

Public interest prompts extension of NT fracking inquiry

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PHOTO: [Concerns about the use of fracking in the Northern Territory have been growing.](#)

MAP: [Alice Springs 0870](#)

The deadline for submissions in an inquiry into the use of hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking', in the Northern Territory has been extended due to significant public interest.

Fracking involves pumping water, sand and chemicals at high pressure to fracture rock layers deep within the earth to extract natural gas.

There is growing concern about the technique, used in the oil and gas industry, from both environmental and pastoral interests.

The inquiry has already received more than 130 submissions.

Commissioner Dr Allan Hawke was appointed by Chief Minister Adam Giles to undertake the inquiry in March.

The ABC understands Dr Hawke decided to extend the deadline after receiving requests from stakeholders wanting more time to prepare their submissions.

The inquiry [will now close on June 30.](#)

Yesterday, the Northern Territory Environment Minister Peter Chandler told Budget Estimates the inquiry was putting the onshore gas industry at risk.

"We don't know the recommendations that will be from that inquiry and we'll be damned as a government not to follow those recommendations," he said.

"I put it to you that it is a double-edged sword, but if we are going to support fracking, we need to have the best recommendations around that."

A final report is expected to be tabled in parliament by the end of the year.

http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-04-11/fracking-inquiry-extended-northern-territory/5521272?WT.mc_id=newsmail