

**From:** Alison Orme <alison@originalpower.org.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 27 May 2022 12:29 PM  
**To:** Alison Orme  
**Subject:** Media Statement: Beetaloo Basin TOs: NT govt approves new Origin wells, Tamboran forces access onto Rallen cattle station

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## MEDIA STATEMENT - 27 May 2022

### **Beetaloo Basin TOs: NT govt approves new Origin wells Tamboran forces access on Rallen cattle station**

*NurrDALINJI Aboriginal Corporation vows to consider legal and other options  
New photos available of Tamboran forcing access onto Tanumbirini cattle station*

**WHAT:** On the same day Reconciliation Week begins, the new NT Fyles government has [approved four new Origin fracking wells](#) in the Beetaloo Basin. Meanwhile, Tamboran Resources has commenced bringing heavy work equipment to cut fences onto Tanumbirini cattle station, clearing land to build a road and new well dangerously close to Newcastle Creek which is protected by sacred sites legislation.

Tamboran has today forced access to Tanumbirini station, cutting fences and moving heavy equipment onto Rallen Australia's cattle station. Rallen has given no consent and the gas company is proposing construction of a new access track

**High quality stills:** Heavy equipment at Tanumbirini; NurrDALINJI Traditional Owners standing at access gate to Tanumbirini with cattle hands on horses behind them; TOs standing near Origin flaring fracking well on Wednesday [here](#).

**Media contact** Alison Orme 0432 332 104. NurrDALINJI website [here](#).

**Statement from GudANJI-Wambaya man Johnny Wilson, Chair of NurrDALINJI Native Title Aboriginal Corporation:**

"We are heartbroken that the Northern Territory Government is letting Origin do more fracking, on the

same day that Tamboran Resources is cutting gates and bringing heavy machinery onto our country on Tanumbirini Station without our consent.

“This is our country, our family and our future. Everything that is important to us is in grave danger. We will use all means and measures to stop this.

“We are working with our lawyers and Rallen Australia to consider all options, including immediate legal interventions.

“As Reconciliation Week starts it’s insulting that fracking plans which are actively opposed by Traditional Owners are being announced.

“Today we have suffered two new blows. We have repeatedly said we do not want this fracking, but the government and gas companies are ignoring us and putting money before our right to preserve country, sacred sites and water.

“Our people have deep connections across the region. We don’t want to see this one-by-one consideration of new wells, new fracking. Our clans and families talk to one another and are becoming more and more worried that this fracking is occurring right across the area.

“If the water is impacted in one part of our country it ultimately impacts on the story and song further away.”

## **Background**

### **About NurrDALINJI**

The NurrDALINJI Native Title Aboriginal Corporation includes native title holders from the Amungee Mungee, Beetaloo, Hayfield, Kalala, Newcastle Waters - MurrANJI, Nutwood Downs, Shenandoah, Tandyidgee, Tanumbirini, Daly Waters Township, Ucharonidge native title determinations.

The Beetaloo sub-basin is located around 500 kilometres south-east of Darwin. It embraces Aboriginal land, pastoral leases (which co-exist with Native Title rights and interests), horticultural enterprises, cattle stations and remote Aboriginal communities. A number of companies are currently undertaking fracked gas drilling in the region, with most of the NT covered by exploration permits.

### **Tanumbirini**

[Tanumbirini](#) is a 5,000 square km cattle station located near Daly Waters, 600km southeast of Darwin. Tanumbirini’s owners Rallen Australia are one of Australia’s largest landowners. They are in a legal dispute with Sweetpea Petroleum, a subsidiary of Tamboran Resources. Tamboran has an exploration permit (EP 136) for exploratory fracking that covers parts of Tanumbirini and the neighbouring Beetaloo Station.

### **NurrDALINJI**

The Tanumbirini owners and local Traditional Owners, supported by [NurrDALINJI Native Title Aboriginal Corporation](#), are united over concerns about fracking risks to land, water and sacred sites. NurrDALINJI has

been working closely with Rallen in a bid to protect their country for future generations. Both are vocal about a consistent failure by fracking companies to properly consult about their plans.

NurrDALINJI's Board has spoken out in public hearings and made submissions to government inquiries and in response to fracking companies' plans, including submitting comments on Sweetpea's draft Environmental Management Plan for EP 136. NurrDALINJI has [expressed concerns](#) about the potential of Tamboran to damage sacred sites and destroy country, water and culture on Tanumbirini. Tamboran's Sweetpea has failed to conduct stakeholder engagement with NurrDALINJI on any of its EMPs.

## Access

Following a failure to reach agreement about land access to Tanumbirini, the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) determined an access agreement for Tamboran and neighbouring Beetaloo Station on 4 May 2022. Tanumbirini and neighbouring Beetaloo Station are appealing, with a hearing scheduled for the NT Supreme Court on 20 June 2022.

This access agreement allows Tamboran to begin exploration works, and the company has given notice it intends to access Tanumbirini from Wednesday 25 May - the first company to do so since the commencement in January 2021 of new NT Petroleum Regulations which are designed to provide minimum protections to landowners, including pastoralists, in negotiating land access and compensation arrangements with petroleum companies. In this case, existing access may prove difficult, with the exploration area landlocked and access requiring Rallen's consent and there being no consent to clear a new road.

Rallen has given no consent to Tamboran travelling through no go zones near its water infrastructure, and the gas company is now proposing construction of a new access track on Tanumbirini which Rallen has seen no approval for from the Minister for Environment.


## Tamboran mired in controversy

Tamboran [faces financial challenges](#). Its 100% owned subsidiary, Sweetpea Petroleum, was purchased by Tamboran Resources, but Sweetpea's US investors maintain a 30% ownership of Tamboran through a shell company, [Longview Petroleum LLC](#), which is [registered in Delaware in the US, a known tax haven](#), via the notorious Corporation Trust Centre home to a reported 300,000 companies. Sweetpea was controversially granted [\\$7.5 million in public money for exploration by the Morrison government in March 2022](#). Tamboran is under threat of being referred for [contempt of the Federal Senate](#) for refusing to appear before an Inquiry into Fracking in the Beetaloo Basin, with its [critics pointing to its failure to be publicly accountable for this grant](#).

Tamboran's Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for EP 136 for drilling and fracking has not yet been approved. It was [withdrawn by the company](#) in March 2022, following complaints about Tamboran's failure to properly consult with impacted parties. A [revised EMP](#) is now open for public consultation until June 20.

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**MEDIA ALERT**  
**20 June 2022**

### **Big NT cattle pastoralists appeal Tamboran fracking access in NT Supreme Court**

**WHAT:** Media conference at NT Supreme Court with one of Australia's biggest landowners, Rallen Australia, which owns Tanumbirini Station and five other NT cattle stations, as Rallen appeals a decision granting gas company Sweetpea Petroleum Pty Ltd an access agreement for Tanumbirini station.

**WHEN:** 9.00AM SHARP, Monday 20 June 2022.  
Appeal runs from 10am Mon 20 - Tues 21 June. Appeal by Tanumbirini's neighbour, Beetaloo Station begins 22 June.

**WHO:** Tanumbirini station owner, Rallen Australia Director Pierre Langenhoven and lawyer Kathy Merrick, Partner, Gagens.

**WHERE:** Outside NT Supreme Court, State Square, Darwin

Full background below.

**Available for comment:** Gudanji-Wambaya man [Johnny Wilson, Chair of Nurrdalini Aboriginal Corporation](#), representing Traditional Owners from across the Beetaloo Basin who have been standing with Rallen to protect water and sacred sites.

**PHOTOS:** [Here](#). Footage of Tamboran's work on Tanumbirini [here](#). Media conference photos will be uploaded on the day.

**Rallen Australia Director, Luciana Ravazzotti said,** *"We are looking to the legal system to secure fair treatment because the government has given Tamboran the upper hand in negotiations and allowed the fracking industry to ride roughshod over our rights."*

*"The cattle industry in the Northern Territory is facing an unprecedented challenge from the fracking industry which risks contaminating precious water sources and damaging the country all Territorians value."*

*"We've had three years of Santos, Origin and Tamboran on our station and we're seeing that if the full development occurs into production that fracking and cattle don't mix. The government is doing nothing to ensure companies comply with regulation."*

**Rallen Australia Director, Pierre Langenhoven said,** *"In backing this controversial industry, the government risks wrecking the NT's water and the cattle industry, which has long been the economic backbone of the NT."*

*"Tamboran's subsidiary, Sweetpea Petroleum, has been flagrantly disrespectful of us, Traditional Owners and the cattle station itself. Its operations are already causing havoc. They have cut our fences, bulldozed access routes and flaunted their own plans for protecting our stock and managing weeds."*

**Contact** Alison Orme 0432 332 104

## **Background**

### **Why is the case important?**

[Sweetpea is the first company](#) to force access without the consent of pastoralists since the commencement in January 2021 of new NT Petroleum Regulations, designed to provide minimum protections to landowners in negotiating land access and compensation arrangements with petroleum companies.

In January 2022 Rallen won a [NT Supreme Court battle](#) against Santos for its failure to inform Rallen of plans to drill additional wells on its property.

### **About the Supreme Court Appeal**

Following a failure to reach agreement over Sweetpea's bid to access neighbouring cattle stations - Tanumbrini and Beetaloo Station - the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) determined an "access agreement" for Tanumbrini on 4 May 2022. There is no set decision date.

Rallen Australia has eight grounds of appeal. Key grounds include that the access agreement as determined by the NTCAT imposes lesser standards on Sweetpea than the standard minimum protections required under NT law, and fails to balance the interests of the parties by allowing an open scope of activities for an indefinite period of time.

Another ground of appeal is the NTCAT's failure to recognise and provide sufficient protections for the water infrastructure network established on the property. Water infrastructure is essential to the pastoral operations on the land and damage to that infrastructure can put stock at risk.

Rallen also challenges the NTCAT's interpretation of the condition imposed on the exploration permit granted to Sweetpea that it conduct its activities so as not to interfere with the rights and activities of any other person. The NTCAT read this condition down to allow the interference of Sweetpea's activities on Rallen's operations, on the assumption that exploration activities will necessarily interfere and must be permitted. In so doing the NTCAT gave priority to the explorer's interests over the pre-existing interests and

obligations of the pastoralist, rather than seeking to find a balance that might enable co-existence so far as that is possible.

Rallen filed expert evidence demonstrating that the economic loss for the pastoral business from Sweetpea's interference based on the activities it proposes will be at least \$1m/year and ongoing for the seismic activities alone, and if the 7 well program goes ahead, \$3.5m over 5 years, assuming that Sweetpea will rehabilitate in the 5 years, which Rallen doubts is possible.

Rallen states these losses make Rallen's current pastoral business model unsustainable.

The NTCAT found there would be no decrease in market value to the property as a result of Sweetpea's activities. Rallen is challenging that aspect of the decision. The determination was contradicted by the evidence that had been filed, was made on assumptions that were incorrect, and extended to activities that are as yet unknown, under an access agreement with unlimited scope and an indeterminate term.

### **About Rallen Australia/Tanumbirini cattle station**

Rallen Australia is in legal dispute with three gas companies which have exploration rights over its Tanumbirini station - Tamboran, Origin and Santos. It owns 1.1 million hectares of land, has six cattle stations in the NT (Tanumbirini, Kalala, Big River, Larizone, Mt McMinn and Forrest Hill) and runs over 70,000 head of cattle.

Rallen estimates it has spent \$200 million in the NT since 2019 and employs many Territorians in establishing a renowned Brahman cattle business.

Tanumbirini is a 5,000 square km cattle station located near Daly Waters, 600km southeast of Darwin. Tamboran has an exploration permit (EP 136) for exploratory fracking that covers parts of Tanumbirini and the neighbouring Beetaloo Station. Tamboran Resources is also in a joint venture with Santos, which has already drilled two wells on the Tanumbirini station.

### **Tamboran creates headache for Tanumbirini after starting work in May 2022**

Tamboran Resources' subsidiary, Sweetpea Petroleum, began cutting fences and clearing land on Tanumbirini on 27 May 2022, constructing a new access track and fracking well dangerously close to a restricted work area that is designed to protect sacred sites on the station.

Even in the short time since work commenced, Tanumbirini owners have witnessed conduct raising significant concerns about Tamboran's operations. For example, Tamboran has failed to install a stock-proof gate and a cattle grid to stop cattle wandering onto the Carpentaria roadway and not complied with its own weed management plan.

### **Tamboran mired in controversy**

Tamboran [faces financial challenges](#). Its 100% owned subsidiary, Sweetpea, was purchased by Tamboran Resources, but Sweetpea's US investors maintain a 30% ownership of Tamboran through a shell company, [Longview Petroleum LLC](#), which is [registered in Delaware in the US, a known tax haven](#), via the notorious Corporation Trust Centre home to a reported 300,000 companies. Sweetpea was controversially granted [\\$7.5 million in public money for exploration by the Morrison government in March 2022](#). Tamboran is under threat of being referred for [contempt of the Federal Senate](#) for refusing to appear before an Inquiry into Fracking in the Beetaloo Basin, with [critics pointing to its failure to be publicly accountable for this grant](#).

### **Partnership with local Traditional Owners**

Rallen and local Traditional Owners, supported by [Nurrdalinji Native Title Aboriginal Corporation](#), are united over concerns about fracking risks to land, water and sacred sites. Nurrdalinji has been working with Rallen in a bid to protect their country for future generations. Both are vocal about a consistent failure by fracking companies to properly consult about their plans.

### **About the Beetaloo Basin**

The Beetaloo sub-basin is located around 500 kilometres south-east of Darwin. It embraces Aboriginal land, pastoral leases (which co-exist with Native Title rights and interests), horticultural enterprises, cattle stations and remote Aboriginal communities. A number of companies are currently undertaking fracked gas drilling in the region, with most of the NT covered by exploration permits. The Morrison government allocated millions in public subsidies to fracking companies in the Beetaloo as part of its so called 'gas-fired recovery'.

## **Other related issues**

### **Environmental management**

Tamboran's Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for EP 136 for drilling and fracking has not yet been approved. It was [withdrawn by the company](#) in March 2022, following complaints about Tamboran's failure to properly consult with impacted parties. A [revised EMP](#), which Rallen has established contains significant flaws, is now open for public consultation until 20 June 2022.

### **Water security**

Tamboran is seeking to extract vast amounts of water for exploration, resulting in an untenable drawdown of existing groundwater, putting vegetation and interconnected surface water at risk. Rallen is concerned that the impacts to water security from Tamboran's proposed exploration and production activities is not adequately understood by the company, scientists or the government.



**From:** Rallen Australia <contact=nurrdalinji.org.au@cmail19.com> on behalf of Rallen Australia s 11C  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 June 2022 6:30 AM  
**To:** Nicholas Hynes  
**Subject:** MEDIA CONF 9AM DARWIN: Big NT pastoralists appeal Tamboran fracking access

No images? [Click here](#)



## **MEDIA ALERT**

### **Big NT cattle pastoralists appeal Tamboran fracking access in NT Supreme Court**

A court hearing begins today for one of Australia's biggest landowners, Rallen Australia, which owns six NT cattle stations and is appealing a decision to grant fracking company Sweetpea Petroleum an access agreement to start work on its Tanumbirini station on grounds that include a failure to protect water infrastructure on the property. A similar appeal by neighbouring pastoralists, Beetaloo Station, begins Wednesday.

**WHAT:** Media conference outside NT Supreme Court, State Square, Darwin.

**WHEN:** 9.00AM SHARP, Monday 20 June 2022.

Appeal runs from 10am Mon 20 - Tues 21 June. Appeal by Tanumbirini's neighbour, Beetaloo Station, against Tamboran, begins 22 June.

**WHO:** Tanumbirini station owner and Rallen Australia Director Pierre Langenhoven and lawyer Kathy Merrick, Partner, Gadens.

Sweetpea Petroleum is a subsidiary of Tamboran Resources. **Full background below.**

**Available for comment:** Gudanji-Wambaya man [Johnny Wilson, Chair of Nurrdalinji Aboriginal Corporation](#), representing Traditional Owners from across the Beetaloo Basin who have been standing with Rallen to protect water and sacred sites.

**PHOTOS:** [Here](#). Footage of Tamboran's fracking exploration works on Tanumbirini which commenced on 26 May [here](#).

**Rallen Australia Director, Luciana Ravazzotti said,** "We are looking to the legal system to secure fair treatment because the government has given Tamboran the upper hand in negotiations and allowed the fracking industry to ride roughshod over our rights."

*“The cattle industry in the Northern Territory is facing an unprecedented challenge from fracking which risks contaminating and depleting precious water sources and damaging the country all Territorians value.*

*“We’ve had three years of Santos, Origin and Tamboran on our station and we’re seeing that if the full development occurs into production that fracking and cattle don’t mix. The government is doing nothing to ensure companies comply with regulation.*

**Rallen Australia Director, Pierre Langenhoven said,** *“In backing this controversial industry, the government risks wrecking the NT’s water and the cattle industry, which has long been the economic backbone of the NT.*

*“Tamboran’s subsidiary, Sweetpea Petroleum, has been flagrantly disrespectful of us, Traditional Owners and the cattle station itself. Its operations are already causing havoc. They have cut our fences, bulldozed access routes and flaunted their own plans for protecting our stock and managing weeds.”*

**Contact** Alison Orme 0432 332 104

### **Why is the case important?**

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Rallen Australia is in legal dispute with three gas companies which have exploration rights over its Tanumbirini station - Tamboran, Origin and Santos. In January 2022 Rallen won a [NT Supreme Court battle](#) against Santos for its failure to inform Rallen of plans to drill additional wells on its Tanumbirini property.

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## Partnership with local Traditional Owners

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## About the Beetaloo Basin

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## Other related issues

### *Environmental management*

Tamboran's draft Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for EP 136 for drilling and fracking has not yet been approved. It was [withdrawn by the company](#) in March 2022, following complaints about Tamboran's failure to properly consult with impacted parties. A [revised draft EMP](#), which Rallen has established contains significant flaws, is now open for public consultation until 20 June 2022.

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**From:** Lauren Crawley <Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 17 May 2023 3:27 PM  
**To:** Peter McCutcheon  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,

Sorry for the delay. These PINS will be reported in the DEPWS Annual Report.

Cheers,

**Lauren Crawley** / Media Manager

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government

Level 4, Goyder Building, 25 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston  
PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

s 11C /s 11C

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**From:** Peter McCutcheon <McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 17 May 2023 10:10 AM  
**To:** Lauren Crawley <Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Lauren –

One more question – were these PINS made public? Was there any listing on a website or public announcement? I can't find anything online – but I may be looking in the wrong place.

Peter

---

**From:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 15, 2023 4:47 PM  
**To:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,

Sorry for the delay.

Two PINS were issued on 16 January 2023 for a breach of regulation 31(1) of the Petroleum (Environment) Regulations. The PINS relate to:

1. The application of approximately 314,000L of drilling sump wastewater onto land across the Maverick 1 well pad in October 2022 for dust suppression. This was raised by the ABC in their email but they referred to the wrong date.
2. The transfer and storage of approximately 31,460 L of drilling sump wastewater into an unlined earthen sump (turkey's nest) in October 2022 (issued 16 January 2023).

The PINs have been paid in full. An amount of \$3280 was paid for each PIN.

Sampling was done for both incidents and no harm was detected.

##

Kind regards,

**Lauren Crawley** / Media Manager

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government

Level 4, Goyder Building, 25 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston  
PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

s 11C /s 11C

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**From:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Monday, 15 May 2023 1:52 PM  
**To:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Lauren –

Any update on this request for more details about the penalty infringement notices?

Regards,

Peter

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**From:** Peter McCutcheon  
**Sent:** Friday, May 12, 2023 12:06 PM  
**To:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hello again Lauren –

Yes I do have one question. Can you please provide me with any more details of the penalty infringement notices (when they were issued, details of the breach, and fine etc)?

Regards,

Peter

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**From:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 12, 2023 11:46 AM  
**To:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,

Sorry for the delay. Please see information to be attributed to a spokesperson for the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security

- The incidents were reported to the regulator as per regulatory requirements.
- In relation to the October 2022 incident, the regulator has issued two penalty infringement notices.
- The November 2022 and March 2023 incidents are under investigation and no further comment is made at this time.
- The regulator undertakes all compliance and enforcement activities in accordance with its [Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#), [Enforcement Guideline](#) and prioritises the activities set out in its annual [Compliance Plan](#).

The Minister's office will be responding separately. Let me know if you need anything else.

Kind regards,

**Lauren Crawley** / Media Manager

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government

Level 4, Goyder Building, 25 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston  
PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

§ 11C / § 11C

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**From:** Lauren Crawley  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 10 May 2023 11:31 AM  
**To:** 'Peter McCutcheon' <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,

We're onto it.

Cheers,

**Lauren Crawley** / Media Manager

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government

Level 4, Goyder Building, 25 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston  
PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

§ 11C / § 11C



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**From:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 10 May 2023 10:15 AM  
**To:** Anne Lobo <[Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au)>; Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

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Sorry – one more thing. I see there was third alleged incident – Nov 27/28 2022 at the same place – stormwater and sediment from a retaining pond escaped after a heavy downpour. Again – was any investigation launched/action taken? How seriously does the department view this alleged breach?

Peter

---

**From:** Peter McCutcheon  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 10, 2023 10:37 AM  
**To:** [anne.lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:anne.lobo@nt.gov.au); [media.depws@nt.gov.au](mailto:media.depws@nt.gov.au)  
**Subject:** 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Dear Anne and the departmental media team,

ABC TV's 730 program is preparing a report on gas developments in the Beetaloo Basin, the economic opportunities and the environmental challenges ahead.

As Justice Pepper's 2018 report found, the shale gas industry has transformed energy markets around the world, but in some cases these changes came with costs in the form of poor environmental outcomes. So the successful management of these environmental risks is critical to the success of the development of the Beetaloo Basin.

With this in mind, we're requesting an interview with the minister. I'm Brisbane based, but we can do the interview via FaceTime with a Darwin crew later this week or early next week if the minister is available.

Also – I have some specific questions about a couple of recent incidents – which is way I've cc'd in the departmental media as well.

According to an incident report (October 1, 2020) – Tamboran Resources (Sweetpea Petroleum) accidentally used a mixture of contaminated water and bore water for dust suppression at the Maverick 1 well pad. What action, if any, did the department take after this was reported? How seriously does the department view this alleged breach?

Also – the Petroleum Operation Unit has been investigating another alleged action causing environmental harm by Sweetpea Petroleum at the Maverick 1 well pad around March 7, 2023, which allegedly resulted in contaminated water being pumped into an open paddock. I understand investigators attended the site on May 3. Has this investigation being completed? What were the findings/outcomes?

Please call me anytime on s 22 [REDACTED] if you have any further questions,

Regards,

---

**From:** Anne Lobo <Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 May 2023 9:18 AM  
**To:** Peter McCutcheon  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter – sorry about the delay and thanks for letting me know the air date – these are operational questions so the Department is going to come back to you today on this – should have something to you shortly.

Cheers  
Anne

---

**From:** Peter McCutcheon <McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 17 May 2023 3:12 PM  
**To:** Anne Lobo <Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

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Hi Anne –

Just confirming, our plan is to go to air with our report on Monday night.

Noting that the minister is not available for an interview, I have a couple of additional questions I'd like to put to her.

- Why weren't the PINs issued against Sweetpea (Tamboran Resources) on Jan 16 made public and the owner of the cattle lease notified?
- We've spoken to water ecologist Ass Prof Ian Wright from the University of Western Sydney who took some samples from the Maverick well site (which the Petroleum Operations Unit has). He says notifying the cattle lease owner and monitoring the site would have been best practice, and this wasn't done. What's your response to that?
- Dr Wright makes the general comment that the lack of transparency around the Jan 16 PINs, and the department's lack of monitoring around the site, and its initial rejection of the March 14 complaint about water being pumped into a paddock is a sign of poor environmental regulation in the early stages of the shale gas industry. What's the minister's response to that?

Our deadline for response is 1200 on Friday.

Thanks,

Peter

---

**From:** Peter McCutcheon  
**Sent:** Friday, May 12, 2023 3:17 PM  
**To:** Anne Lobo <[Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Thanks Anne

---

**From:** Anne Lobo <[Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 12, 2023 2:20 PM  
**To:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter, thanks for that. If you wanted to speak to a scientist from DEPWS Lauren Crawley their media manager may be able to assist – those guys did the SREBA for the Beetaloo Sub-basin – see presser here for more details <https://createsend.com/t/t-C49B99462C88AC402540EF23F30FEDED>

Unfortunately Minister Moss is not available for an interview however I have a statement for you – see below.

**To attribute to NT Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water Security Lauren Moss:**

In 2018 the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing, chaired by Justice Rachel Pepper, independently concluded in its final report that industry risks could be managed if all of the Inquiry's 135 recommendations were implemented.

Over the past four years the Territory Government has been working to implement those recommendations by undertaking comprehensive baseline studies and developing strong regulations and monitoring of an onshore gas industry in the NT.

In April 2023 the [Strategic Regional Environmental and Baseline Assessment](#) (SREBA) for the Beetaloo Sub-basin was released, accounting for 35 of the Inquiry's recommendations. The SREBA provided the information necessary to make appropriate decisions about the development of an onshore shale gas industry in the Beetaloo region, including assessment of water and biodiversity resources to inform land-use planning and the collection of baseline data to enable ongoing monitoring.

In May 2023 the Territory Government released the [Final Implementation Report into the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing](#) with a \$2 million annual investment to rigorously assess Environmental Management Plans, deliver a strong compliance program and provide education and guidance to industry.

The Territory Government is moving to carefully manage the onshore gas industry through our strong regulatory framework, ensuring an onshore industry will be operating to world's best practice with new measures to create a sustainable environment. The Northern Territory Budget outlined an investment of \$3.9 million towards ongoing funding to bolster the capacity of the Petroleum Operations unit and the Environment Assessment Unit.

Ends

Kind regards,  
Anne

**Anne Lobo**  
**Press Secretary to the Hon Lauren Moss MLA**  
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water Security  
Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention  
Minister for Equality and Inclusion  
Minister for Youth  
Minister for Seniors

Northern Territory Government  
Parliament House, Darwin  
GPO Box 3146, Darwin NT 0801

t. (+61)§ 11C | § 11C  
e. [anne.lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:anne.lobo@nt.gov.au)

---

**From:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 10 May 2023 4:32 PM  
**To:** Anne Lobo <[Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

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Thanks Anne -

Still working out details - but I will be approaching APPEA, and gas opponents Rallen. Also chasing a water scientist.

Peter

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**From:** Anne Lobo <[Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 10, 2023 4:58:32 PM  
**To:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,  
Thanks for reaching out, I will come back to you on Minister's availability as soon as I can.

Can you advise aside who else you are interviewing for this report?

Regards,  
Anne

**Anne Lobo**  
**Press Secretary to the Hon Lauren Moss MLA**  
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water Security  
Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention  
Minister for Equality and Inclusion  
Minister for Youth  
Minister for Seniors

Northern Territory Government  
Parliament House, Darwin  
GPO Box 3146, Darwin NT 0801  
t. (+61)§ 11C | § 11C  
e. [anne.lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:anne.lobo@nt.gov.au)

---

**From:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 10 May 2023 10:07 AM  
**To:** Anne Lobo <[Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au)>; Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

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Dear Anne and the departmental media team,

ABC TV's 730 program is preparing a report on gas developments in the Beetaloo Basin, the economic opportunities and the environmental challenges ahead.

As Justice Pepper's 2018 report found, the shale gas industry has transformed energy markets around the world, but in some cases these changes came with costs in the form of poor environmental outcomes. So the successful management of these environmental risks is critical to the success of the development of the Beetaloo Basin.

With this in mind, we're requesting an interview with the minister. I'm Brisbane based, but we can do the interview via FaceTime with a Darwin crew later this week or early next week if the minister is available.

Also – I have some specific questions about a couple of recent incidents – which is way I've cc'd in the departmental media as well.

According to an incident report (October 1, 2020) – Tamboran Resources (Sweetpea Petroleum) accidentally used a mixture of contaminated water and bore water for dust suppression at the Maverick 1 well pad. What action, if any, did the department take after this was reported? How seriously does the department view this alleged breach?

Also – the Petroleum Operation Unit has been investigating another alleged action causing environmental harm by Sweetpea Petroleum at the Maverick 1 well pad around March 7, 2023, which allegedly resulted in contaminated water being pumped into an open paddock. I understand investigators attended the site on May 3. Has this investigation being completed? What were the findings/outcomes?

Please call me anytime on § 22 if you have any further questions,

Regards,

Peter



Peter McCutcheon  
Journalist  
7.30, Brisbane bureau

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T +61 § 22 @P\_McCutch  
W news.abc.net.au



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**From:** Lauren Crawley <Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 May 2023 12:17 PM  
**To:** Peter McCutcheon  
**Cc:** Edwin Edlund; Media DEPWS  
**Subject:** FW: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,

I'm back on deck today and have seen your follow up email. Did you have questions further to the info below?

Regards,

**Lauren Crawley** / Media Manager

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government

Level 4, Goyder Building, 25 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston  
PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

s 11C /s 11C

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**From:** Edwin Edlund  
**Sent:** Friday, 19 May 2023 11:38 AM  
**To:** 'Peter McCutcheon' <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>; Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,

Lauren is off today.

In regards to your follow up questions below –

- Why weren't the PINs issued against Sweetpea (Tamboran Resources) on Jan 16 made public and the owner of the cattle lease notified?
- We've spoken to water ecologist Ass Prof Ian Wright from the University of Western Sydney who took some samples from the Maverick well site (which the Petroleum Operations Unit has). He says notifying the cattle lease owner and monitoring the site would have been best practice, and this wasn't done. What's your response to that?
- Dr Wright makes the general comment that the lack of transparency around the Jan 16 PINs, and the department's lack of monitoring around the site, and its initial rejection of the March 14 complaint about water being pumped into a paddock is a sign of poor environmental regulation in the early stages of the shale gas industry. What's the minister's response to that?

Please attribute the following to a department spokesperson:

- Mr Wright's observations do not take into account the entirety of the regulatory regime for the onshore gas industry, and in particular the requirement for a mandatory agreement between the gas company and the pastoral leaseholders. This is a private agreement that sets out how those parties interact. The environmental regulator is not a party to that agreement.
- There is no requirement to notify stakeholders when penalty infringement notices are issued.
- There was no environmental harm in relation to the incidents that were the subject of the infringement notices.
- The regulator followed its regulatory processes and requirements under the Regulations. More information on the Division's approach to issuing penalty infringement notices is available in the Division's [Enforcement guideline](#)
- All penalty infringement notices issued under the Petroleum Act are published in the annual report.
- The additional information received in April is being investigated and samples have been taken by the Department.

Kind regards,

**Edwin Edlund**

Director, Communications and Media  
Executive & Business Services  
Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government

Goyder Building, Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston  
PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

P: § 11C  
M: § 11C  
E: [edwin.edlund@nt.gov.au](mailto:edwin.edlund@nt.gov.au)



Stay up to date and connect with Environment, Parks and Water Security



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**From:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 17 May 2023 3:10 PM  
**To:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

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Thanks Laura

---

**From:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 17, 2023 3:27 PM  
**To:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,

Sorry for the delay. These PINS will be reported in the DEPWS Annual Report.

Cheers,

**Lauren Crawley** / Media Manager

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government

Level 4, Goyder Building, 25 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston  
PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

§ 11C / § 11C

---

**From:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 17 May 2023 10:10 AM  
**To:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

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Hi Lauren –

One more question – were these PINs made public? Was there any listing on a website or public announcement? I can't find anything online – but I may be looking in the wrong place.

Peter

---

**From:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 15, 2023 4:47 PM  
**To:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,

Sorry for the delay.

Two PINs were issued on 16 January 2023 for a breach of regulation 31(1) of the Petroleum (Environment) Regulations. The PINs relate to:

1. The application of approximately 314,000L of drilling sump wastewater onto land across the Maverick 1 well pad in October 2022 for dust suppression. This was raised by the ABC in their email but they referred to the wrong date.
2. The transfer and storage of approximately 31,460 L of drilling sump wastewater into an unlined earthen sump (turkey's nest) in October 2022 (issued 16 January 2023).

The PINs have been paid in full. An amount of \$3280 was paid for each PIN.

Sampling was done for both incidents and no harm was detected.

##

Kind regards,

**Lauren Crawley** / Media Manager

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government

Level 4, Goyder Building, 25 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston  
PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

s 11C /s 11C

---

**From:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Monday, 15 May 2023 1:52 PM  
**To:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

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Hi Lauren –

Any update on this request for more details about the penalty infringement notices?

Regards,

Peter

---

**From:** Peter McCutcheon  
**Sent:** Friday, May 12, 2023 12:06 PM  
**To:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hello again Lauren –

Yes I do have one question. Can you please provide me with any more details of the penalty infringement notices (when they were issued, details of the breach, and fine etc)?

Regards,

Peter

---

**From:** Lauren Crawley <[Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au](mailto:Lauren.Crawley@nt.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 12, 2023 11:46 AM  
**To:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Cc:** Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,

Sorry for the delay. Please see information to be attributed to a spokesperson for the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security

- The incidents were reported to the regulator as per regulatory requirements.
- In relation to the October 2022 incident, the regulator has issued two penalty infringement notices.
- The November 2022 and March 2023 incidents are under investigation and no further comment is made at this time.
- The regulator undertakes all compliance and enforcement activities in accordance with its [Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#), [Enforcement Guideline](#) and prioritises the activities set out in its annual [Compliance Plan](#).

The Minister's office will be responding separately. Let me know if you need anything else.

Kind regards,

**Lauren Crawley** / Media Manager

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government

Level 4, Goyder Building, 25 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston  
PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

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**From:** Lauren Crawley  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 10 May 2023 11:31 AM  
**To:** 'Peter McCutcheon' <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

Hi Peter,

We're onto it.

Cheers,

**Lauren Crawley** / Media Manager

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government

Level 4, Goyder Building, 25 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston  
PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

§ 11C / § 11C

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**From:** Peter McCutcheon <[McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au](mailto:McCutcheon.Peter@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 10 May 2023 10:15 AM  
**To:** Anne Lobo <[Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:Anne.Lobo@nt.gov.au)>; Media DEPWS <[Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au](mailto:Media.DEPWS@nt.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

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Sorry – one more thing. I see there was third alleged incident – Nov 27/28 2022 at the same place – stormwater and sediment from a retaining pond escaped after a heavy downpour. Again – was any investigation launched/action taken? How seriously does the department view this alleged breach?

Peter

---

**From:** Peter McCutcheon  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 10, 2023 10:37 AM  
**To:** [anne.lobo@nt.gov.au](mailto:anne.lobo@nt.gov.au); [media.depws@nt.gov.au](mailto:media.depws@nt.gov.au)  
**Subject:** 730, ABC TV: Beetaloo Basin

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Regards,