

Clarification of claims in ABC Radio report

Empire Energy is concerned about claims made in an ABC Radio AM story broadcast this morning, including that the discovery of Aboriginal artefacts by Traditional Owners outside but adjacent to an operational area was not reported to authorities.

The story only partially reported our response to these and other claims.

In the interests of completeness, these are the comments provided to the reporter by Empire Energy Managing Director Alex Underwood:

- *Empire has demonstrated our commitment to sustainable operations, transparency and accountability in the 12 years we have been active in the Beetaloo Basin.*
- *We are committed to genuine engagement and concern for cultural values.*
- *We take our commitments very seriously.*
- *We place a high priority on our compliance and we work under the very thorough NT regulatory regime – without doubt the most robust in Australia.*
- *We have met and corresponded with stakeholders across the region, including the Nurrdalinji Aboriginal Corporation. They have not raised the issues you refer to with us.*
- *All issues you refer to were reported by Empire as part of our regular reporting to the NT Government – demonstrating the system's transparency.*
- *It is important to note that none of these issues resulted in any material environmental harm.*
- *Specifically, I want to make clear:*
 - *No artefacts were moved by anyone other than Traditional Owners under their own initiative. The artefacts referred to were not on Empire's operational areas.*
 - *No fluids were spilled from tanks or sumps, and all contingency provisions served their purpose – ullage for rain, leak detection for liners. All worked to ensure no harm to the environment.*
 - *Gouldian Finch habitat has been protected at all times, and no finches have been disturbed or harmed.*
- *The fact that Empire has reported all these incidents, that any necessary remedial action has been taken and that all incidents have been publicly reported shows that the safeguards the NT Government has put in place to protect the environment and allow sustainable development of its gas resources are working.*
- *Empire is committed to ensuring that continues to be the case.*

This morning's story claims Empire Energy did not report the discovery of artefacts at the time they were found. That claim is false. The contractor who was on site at the time immediately reported the discovery in writing to the Northern Land Council.

We will continue to be accountable to Traditional Owners on whose land we operate.