

Mining companies race to frack before the wet



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Local News



 The drilling rig to be used in the exploration for onshore gas. Picture: Santos.

Mining companies are in a race to beat the wet season.

The big companies are in the process of moving heavy equipment from across the country into the NT to do their drilling of exploratory wells.

Santos has applied for another permit to start fracking its wells near Daly Waters this year.

It has given itself until December to do the work.

Fracking is designed to release gas trapped in dense shale rocks up to four kilometres underground.

It involves pumping water mixed with sand and low concentrations of chemical additives under pressure to fracture the shale. This creates tiny pathways in the rock that allow the gas to flow into the well and be brought the surface.

Origin Energy is also racing the clock on its wells, keen to trying fracking for the shale gas as well.

Empire Energy wants to drill but not frack before the wet. Santos has made a fresh application to continues its exploration. Its first application for drilling was approved back in July.

This new application is for the fracking of these wells, expected to take two months from November and into December.

Meanwhile, Primary Industry and Resources Minister Paul Kirby this morning announced the value of mineral production in the NT for the past year was the highest on record at \$4.92 billion.

This announcement, made at NT Resources Week during the Minister's Mining the Territory address, signals a 10% increase from last financial year, and the third straight year of record production figures.

The Government last year announced mineral production had exceeded the \$4 billion mark for the first time, while the year prior recorded what was then a record production value of \$3.63 billion. This means there has been a \$1.29 billion increase in the value of Territory mineral production in just over two years.

The Mining the Territory conference forms part of NT Resources Week, which is taking place at the Convention Centre today and tomorrow and includes the South East Asia Australia Offshore and Onshore Conference and for the first time the Environmental Management and Logistics Forum.

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