

D. Coal seam gas in Australian jurisdictions

Figure D1
Status of coal seam gas activities in state or territory

State or territory	Status
Victoria	<p>Victoria imposed a moratorium on coal seam gas (CSG) exploration in 2012, and introduced the <i>Resources Amendment Legislation (Fracking Ban) Act 2017</i> which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bans hydraulic fracturing (fracking) • prevents the exploration for, and production of, coal seam gas (and other unconventional gas) • imposes a moratorium on any petroleum exploration and petroleum production in the onshore areas of Victoria until 30 June 2020 • does not affect exploration and production for offshore gas, including drilling from onshore to offshore. <p>The Victorian Government said the fracking ban formed part of the response to the 2015 parliamentary <i>Inquiry into Onshore Unconventional Gas in Victoria</i>, which found a lack of community support for fracking. The government also referred to the 'clean, green' reputation of their agricultural sector, which employs more than 190,000 people.</p>
Tasmania	<p>Tasmania declared a five-year moratorium on fracking in March 2015, following a one-year moratorium introduced in March 2014. In March 2018, the government extended the moratorium until 2025.</p> <p>The government permits exploration activities for hydrocarbons but does not allow fracking to be used. The Tasmanian Primary Industries Minister cited potential negative impacts on rural communities and farming families, landowners' rights, and public and environmental health. The minister claimed the decision would 'protect Tasmania's reputation for producing fresh, premium and safe produce'.</p>
New South Wales	<p>New South Wales enacted coal seam gas exclusion zones in October 2013, to make residential areas 'off limits' to new coal seam gas activity. In January 2014, additional exclusion zones were introduced for future residential growth areas, seven rural villages and critical industry clusters in the Upper Hunter. The exclusion zones establish a two-kilometre buffer.</p>
South Australia	<p>The South Australian Government imposed a 10-year fracking ban across the Limestone Coast region in November 2018, while allowing the practice to continue in other regions. The Limestone Coast region is regarded as an agriculturally rich area.</p>
Western Australia	<p>Western Australia lifted a statewide ban in November 2018 to allow fracking in areas with existing petroleum licences. Fracking is not permitted in the remaining 98 per cent of the state. The decision follows an independent inquiry that made 44 recommendations, which will result in several regulatory changes. All of these recommendations are to be implemented prior to granting any fracking approvals.</p>
Northern Territory	<p>The Northern Territory lifted a moratorium on fracking in April 2018, following a scientific inquiry that found environmental, social, health, cultural and economic risks could be reduced to acceptable levels if 135 recommendations are implemented. New regulations will be accompanied by new powers to sanction non-compliance and increased criminal penalties for environmental harm.</p>

Source: Queensland Audit Office.