



29 August 2022

Committee Secretary  
Environment and COMMUNICATIONS References Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
by email: [ec.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:ec.sen@aph.gov.au)

### **INQUIRY | OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION IN THE BEETALOO BASIN**

The First Nations Justice team at GetUp welcomes the opportunity to once again engage in the Senate inquiry into oil and gas exploration and production in the Beetaloo Basin.

This submission is in addition to the submission lodged in July 2021 which primarily focused on the impact of this project on First Nations communities, including the Traditional Owners of this land. While in name this inquiry is looking at the Beetaloo Basin activity, the actual drilling and exploration associated activities will have a wider impact on connected basins, most critically the McArthur Basin.

Since Traditional Owners from across the Beetaloo Basin attended online hearings, and travelled thousands of kilometres to Darwin for the hearing in March 2022, unprecedented revelations have emerged concerning the management of the resources portfolio which administered several grants under the scheme.

From as early as April 2021, former Prime Minister Scott Morrison appointed himself joint-powers over the resources portfolio. During this time, two large proportions of the public funding under the Beetaloo Cooperative Drilling Program were granted to two fracking corporations (\$19.4 million to Imperial Oil & Gas - subsidiary of Empire Energy, and \$7.5 million to Sweetpea Resources - subsidiary of Tamboran Resources).

While the circumstances surrounding the former Prime Minister's self-appointment are still coming to light, at the time of writing we know that at least one decision in this portfolio was made in this time period at his discretion as joint-minister.

All funding and approval decisions made during this time were made without the public knowing who was really calling the shots, and they must be reviewed as part of this inquiry.

Sincerely,

**Amy Gordon**

First Nations Justice Campaign Director

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