

The Geological and Bioregional Assessment (GBA) Program held the third Isa GBA region user panel meeting on 13 August 2020. This meeting was held virtually because of COVID-19 travel restrictions. It followed the release of the Stage 2 - Geological and environmental baseline assessment for the Isa GBA region by the Minister for the Environment on 15 May 2020.

The GBA Program distributed a report summarising the results of the Stage 2 - Geological and environmental baseline assessment to user panel members ahead of the third meeting. The summary report was designed to both support the meeting presentations and provide a plain English guide to help understand the key messages and knowledge presented in the Stage 2 report and technical appendices.

The full set of Stage 2 reports are available on the GBA website:

<https://www.bioregionalassessments.gov.au/assessments/geological-and-bioregional-assessment-program/isa-superbasin/isa-gba-region-stage-two-report>

This communique outlines the key topics discussed by user panel members during the meeting.

- The GBA Program thanked panel members for their patience while waiting for the third panel meeting to be held. The meeting scheduled for March 2020 was delayed due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.
- The GBA program reiterated the Minister for the Environment's decision to cease the assessment of the Isa GBA region. The decision to halt Stage 3 of the assessment was a result of insufficient geoscience data and information available from the region to accurately conduct the assessment at this time. The GBA Program is unable to undertake accurate assessments on the environment and water without being able to collect further data from the region.
- The GBA team thanked the panellists for their engagement and feedback throughout the panel process, and made it clear the team will be available to discuss the Stage 2 assessment until the end of the GBA program in 2021.
- Geoscience Australia and CSIRO presented the published results of the Stage 2 - Geological and environmental baseline assessment for the Isa GBA region, including the hazard identification and how causal networks can be used in the future.
- Industry noted the work undertaken through the GBA Program to analyse hydraulic fracturing risks in the Isa GBA region. The GBA Program found there was a low likelihood of well integrity failure and hydraulic fracturing impact. While these findings are supported by scientific studies, the GBA Program recognises the

community concern around these activities. These concerns were also recognised by industry representatives in attendance.

- Local councils queried what a 'strategic environmental area designated precinct' is and whether it is supported by legislation. Queensland Government officials informed the panel that it is a type of environmental management zone previously identified under the Queensland Wild Rivers Legislation.
- The GBA Program highlighted the importance of the entire region for traditional custodians.
- The GBA Program thanked the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation for providing a list of culturally significant flora and fauna following the last user panel. The GBA Program noted it was unfortunate traditional owner groups were unable to attend the third meeting.
- The GBA Program highlighted how the landscape scale risk assessment applied in Stage 3 for the other GBA regions can serve as a template for any future assessment in the Isa GBA region.
- Santos will continue stakeholder engagement to prepare for a targeted 2022-23 exploration campaign for up to two wells in Queensland and Northern Territory. This will involve activities such as geophysical surveying, water bore drilling and core hole drilling.
- Local councils highlighted their desire to see industry coming into the region but noted the need for genuine engagement and opportunities for the region. Councils look forward to working with industry to support regional communities.