

# MEDIA RELEASE

## AMA NT Condemns Two-Decade Gas Leak Secrecy; Calls for National Regulatory Response

The Australian Medical Association Northern Territory (AMA NT) today expressed concerns for the health of Darwin & Palmerston residents following reporting that the Darwin LNG plant has been leaking methane for nearly two decades. The failure of both ConocoPhillips and Santos to disclose the leak in a timely manner constitutes a profound breach of public trust and has potentially exposed the community to significant health risks.

Reports today revealed that the LNG facility has been leaking vast quantities of methane since 2006. Methane is a volatile organic compound (VOC) and a potent greenhouse gas. Volatile organic compounds are associated with a range of health problems. They irritate the mucous membranes - eyes, nose, throat and lungs - leading to exacerbations of lung disease such as asthma attacks. Long term exposure to VOCs cause injury to the liver, the kidneys and increase the risk of cancer. Methane specifically is a precursor to ground-level ozone, a toxic air pollutant that irritates the lungs. As a greenhouse gas, methane speeds up climate change, which results in an increase in extreme weather events and an increase in the global burden of disease.

"The failure of the industry to contain these emissions and of the regulator to protect the public is a perfect storm for a public health disaster.", said Dr. John Zorbas, President of the AMA NT.

"Realistically, we need a unified national approach to the regulation of health hazards like volatile organic compounds and other air pollution. Emissions don't sit inside borders drawn on a map".

### Media Contact:

Fiona Crombie

0419 827 350

[fcrombie@amant.com.au](mailto:fcrombie@amant.com.au)