

Inpex prosecuted for emissions under-reporting

by [Independent Staff](#) | Aug 5, 2026 |



Japanese gas company Inpex has been charged by the NT Environmental Protection Authority over alleged under-reporting of emissions from its Ichthys LNG facility in Darwin, which an independent review found had been “systematically underestimated”.

NT EPA chair Dr Paul Vogel said the environmental watchdog had commenced prosecution, with charges relating to an alleged failure to comply with licence conditions by under-reporting benzene and toluene emissions between 2019 and 2024.

After Inpex admitted it had miscalculated emissions last October, the NT EPA [commissioned independent consultants Air Environment to review the company’s data](#) and reporting systems, as well as measure air quality.

Dr Vogel said the agency would make no further comment while the matter was before the courts.

Documents [obtained through freedom of information laws by Climate Integrity](#), a research and advocacy not-for-profit, revealed in early July that the medical advisory committees from Royal Darwin Hospital and Palmerston Regional Hospital warned newly elected Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro in September 2024 that Inpex’s plant, which processes LNG for export alongside Santos, was emitting dangerous levels of toxic pollution.

The documents said LNG producers had not been held accountable by the previous Labor government, which had not imposed pollution limits on the industry.

This followed revelations Inpex had “systematically underestimated” toxic emissions from its Ichthys plant, revising figures from 4.12 tonnes to 556.9 tonnes for 2023-24.

The plant's emissions for 2021-22 were later reported at 11,000 tonnes, far exceeding the initial estimate of 500 tonnes.

It was only in June that the NT Government announced it would require operators to conduct full-time ambient air quality monitoring for volatile organic compounds, including known carcinogen benzene.

The World Health Organisation states that there is “no safe level of benzene exposure that can be recommended” for humans. Despite this, the government has permitted LNG processors to emit air pollutants over a densely populated area.

Environment Centre NT senior climate campaigner Bree Ahrens said the NT EPA had done the right thing by charging Inpex, but added the gas industry wanted to massively expand its operations on Darwin Harbour through the Middle Arm industrial precinct, which a 2022 report found could result in a more than 500 per cent increase in air pollution caused by fine particulate emissions, a fourfold increase in cancer risk, and 15 additional premature deaths per year.

“This is a massive win for Darwin residents who have been exposed to toxic pollution from the gas industry for far too long,” Ms Ahrens said.

“Finally, we see Inpex being held accountable for massively underreporting the amount of toxic pollution it's pumping into Darwin's air.

“Workers, community members, and health experts have been warning for years that Santos and Inpex are polluting Darwin's air with impunity.

“In the coming months, the NT EPA will have the opportunity to introduce licence changes for Inpex and Santos to cap toxic emissions. Darwin and Palmerston residents want to see the NT EPA use its full powers to make sure this never happens again.”

A date for when the matter will be in court was not announced.

The NT EPA granted Ichthys LNG an environment protection licence on December 13, 2017, allowing the release of emissions and requiring annual reporting of total emissions to air in tonnes.