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To: info@frackinginquiry.wa.gov.au
Subject: Submission re Fracking
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Submission from:

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As a grandmother and concerned citizen I wish to express my grave concerns about the following issues relating to any proposed unconventional gas fracture stimulation in WA.

Water

WA is the driest state in the driest habitable continent in the world. This industry is a massive consumer of our most precious resource, water. Every fracked well may require up to 20 million litres of water; 4,000 tons of prop pants and up to 200,000 litres of chemicals. (IEA 2012a:27. IEA 2012b:33)

According to Professor Ingraffea of Cornell University, very recently at the UWA Q&A Skype presentation put on by The Conservation Foundation, the industry is upscaling considerably in its operations via multi well pads. <http://www.psehealthyenergy.org/site/view/1180>

These extend the underground footprint by several kilometres for each pad. The water usage is also considerably larger, as the maximum gas extraction in the shortest time is the goal.

The water extraction by the fracking industry also puts at risk our agricultural sector in its competition for water. Food is of far greater importance than unconventional gas which is mostly for boosting export. Our off-shore gas is more than adequate for meeting domestic and export needs.

Not only is the extent of water usage much more than our environment can cope with, I am appalled that the industry pays nothing for the water use. How is it then that we private individuals are continually being told to use less water, whilst we must pay much more for it? I don't disagree with the latter, as water conservation is critical for our future survival, but why the stark contrast between corporate and individual citizen treatment?

The chemical usage (as referred to above) for the fracking process also puts our aquifers at risk for serious contamination. (EPA US 2016) (Lustgarten 2012)

Rich and Crosby (2013) were concerned about the oversight and exemption of TENORMs (technology enhanced natural occurring radioactive waste through anthropogenic means) in the State and Federal regulations. They analysed for the presence of these in soil and water (sludge) in an active and a vacated waste reserve pit in unconventional gas mining operations of the total Gamma, Alpha, Beta radiations for 13 radio nuclides, investigating the potential impact on the environment, occupational workers and the general public. These concerns were realised.

Health

Risks to public health through water, soil and air contamination through the life cycle of shale gas development are well documented. (Lustgarten 2012) (Angola 2016)

Dr. G McCarron published a paper looking at a large increase in air pollutants from 2007-2014 in Queensland from unconventional gas emissions. She enumerated huge increases in the atmosphere of nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide and formaldehyde. (McCarron 2018)

Conclusions

Whilst I have only touched on a small number of grave risks this industry poses to our fragile West Australian ecosystem, they are nevertheless critical ones. Water and health are key to our healthy survival.

I trust that the panel will recommend that unconventional gas mining will be permanently banned from the whole of WA.

For the sake of all west Australians we need to have **our** focus on a renewable and sustainable future.

References

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EPA United States (December 2016)

Are fracking wastewater wells poisoning the ground beneath our feet?

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Lustgarten Abrahn

Air pollution and human health hazards: Compilation of air toxins as acknowledged by the gas industry in Queensland's Darling Downs.

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McCarron G.