



Independent Scientific Panel Inquiry  
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**SUBMISSION TO WA SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY INTO  
HYDRAULIC FRACTURE STIMULATION IN WA 2017**

Name Judith M. BROWNE



Since being allocated a Conditional Purchase (CP) block at Warradarge in 1966 our family has farmed in this region – as farm manager of a livestock enterprise 1968-1980 from 1980 onwards full time on our own property (Victoria Location 10825) on the Green Head-Coorow Road. We have celebrated 50 years as farmers in this area.

In a practical scientific way, by trial and error, we have learnt how fragile and complex our soils are to farm and how vital the underground water is to any farming, in particular to a livestock enterprise producing beef and sheep.

I am motivated to address the inquiry by the fact that so many areas in Western Australia, which are suitable for livestock farming, have been taken over by urban development; other areas once producers of livestock are now solely producing cereal crops. This fact leaves the Mid-West Coastal Plains an important source of food long term **only** if the water supply is not diminished or reduced in quality.

It is of concern to me that no scientific studies can guarantee that Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation **will not** disturb or interfere with the water aquifers as they exist leaves us no choice but to say **NO** fracking. The risk to vital food production cannot be taken. In the end people cannot eat gas; livestock provides vital protein.

In our West Coast area huge areas of natural bush are kept for the purpose of the honey industry. This industry relies heavily on the underground water aquifers. Bees are annually wintered on the Beekeeper Reserve at a time when the industry is being ravaged in most countries in the world.

Scientific Studies by CRA Exploration Pty Ltd proved that the Hill River Project would have significantly dropped water levels in the aquifers of this region.

The fact that so many of the instigators of gas producing entities are not adequately covered by binding regulations or are not forced to compensate for injury to other industries makes local people extremely wary of industries propaganda.

Bad treatment of local people going about their lawful enterprises, such as our neighbours who have had dealings with the fracking company AWE Limited, needs no scientific study. Stress can, and does, have bad health outcomes.

Only this week news broadcasters have announced that Adani in Queensland has falsified scientific data – no doubt there will be no penalties! I don't need to be a scientist to understand perfidy.

In conclusion it would seem to any thinking person that it is irrational to go ahead with an industry which could destroy existing industries, beef (grass fed and feedlots); sheep meat; disruption to wintering bees; all of which are important to food security.

Australia is a very dry continent, any threat to the water security is a threat to human activity and businesses using water in the area. Problems with water will affect the coastal communities which depend on our aquifer – Leeman, Green Head, Jurien Bay and Cervantes.

The Bureau of Meteorology of Western Australia says that Western Australian rainfall has dropped since 1962. Run off has greatly diminished. Water for Perth is produced largely from desalination and underground sources (ABE, 13 Feb 2018).

Community members are sceptical of large fracking companies that treat our communities, and our environments, without respect or justice. The companies do not give landowners a basic fair go.

To conclude: *Precautionary Principle*

- People and animals cannot eat or drink gas or the money generated by fracking.
- Water is vital for life.
- To change the flow or pollute the aquifers is an unacceptable risk.
- Fracking – Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation – in Western Australia is too big a risk for the fragile soils and aquifers of the Mid West Coastal Plains.

For your consideration.

*Judith M Browne*

J.M. Browne