

10 February 2018

Independent Scientific Panel Inquiry
Locked Bag 33
Cloisters Square
PERTH WA 6850

ATTENTION PANEL

I submit the following information for consideration by the panel of the Scientific Inquiry Into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation (Fracking) in Western Australia.

My focus is on the Dandaragan Shire district in particular and the area defined as the North Perth Basin in general. My family and I have farmed in the Dandaragan area since 1959 and I served on the shire council for 23 years.

In May 2016 I met with the then Minister for Mines and petroleum to discuss the issue of fracking in the Dandaragan Shire. At this meeting I made reference to a District Planning Strategy developed by the shire in 1994/95. I chaired the planning committee of seven councillors and staff and a panel which included O'Brien Planning Consultants, Lindsay Stephens representing Environmental Land Capability, Geof Klem from Department of Commerce and Trade and Peter Driscoll from Ministry for Planning. This completed plan used many references, including Appleyard SJ 1993 on ground water vulnerability to contamination in the Perth Basin, Balleau WP, and Passmore JR 1972, Briese EH 1978, Commander DP 1978, Harley AS 1975, Kern AM 1988, Playford PE 1976, and Lowry DC 1974, all involved in geological and hydrological related issues. Also Water Authority 1993 and 1994 referring to two groundwater issues. In all, over 60 references were consulted during the compilation of this strategy, with many highlighting the diversity of the shire area with the available water resources for agricultural production.

I have read the background papers for the new inquiry on the issue of fracking and also the recommendations of the Legislative Council Standing Committee Report No.42, plus numerous letters and comments in the media and Information Sheets from the Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP). What stands out in all this information is concern by the communities for the safety of water resources with regard to fracking and I can only hope that this new inquiry will regard this issue as the most important factor.

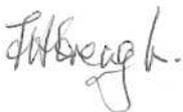
.../page 2

What is also apparent is the lack of consultation with communities in areas of the Perth Basin, therefore a lack of information to those communities. A telephone survey of 200 residents in the Perth Basin area by the DMP confirms that more information is needed about the exploration and production of unconventional gas – or any gas production at all. A survey carried out in the four communities of the Shire of Dandaragan, i.e. Badgingarra, Dandaragan, Cervantes and Jurien showed that over 90% of respondents were against fracking. The Legislative Council Standing Committee Report No.42 Recommendation No.2 suggested “a change in present regulations in order to give the community more confidence in the development and management of petroleum projects in WA by providing access to relevant information from project proponents”.

In general the DMP has produced many petroleum information sheets on most aspects of Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation. These sheets should now all be discussed and distributed at public meetings, especially in Dandaragan. I refer to DMP information sheets 3742, 3743, 3744, 3753, 3754, 3755, 3756 and 3757, also land access agreements as there are recent reports of access without permission - as has happened previously. Any public meetings should include Department of Water officers to explain how safe the drilling through aquifers to the gas below is achieved without risks of contamination and also the efficiency of cement and steel casing in the drill holes.

There has been much discussion in the media and elsewhere regarding the risks to water supplies by fracking with Report No.42 finding that risks by hydraulic fracturing are low and being well managed by government. Politicians and others have described the risks by fracking as extremely low, unlikely (meaning improbable) and negligible (meaning so low as to be not worth considering as a risk). Others have compared the gas fracking process as only having a small footprint compared to mining for ore, which is described as having a large footprint. The fracking process however is at depths of many thousands of metres which could lead to water contamination and spread over hundreds of kms, especially over the north and south Yarragadee aquifers. **Is that not a large footprint?**

In conclusion, I am enclosing a map from the “West Australian” (March 10th 2017). This map shows many areas in the state of WA where fracking would not intersect with aquifers. Because of this I would hope that this inquiry would recommend a ban on fracking in the Perth Basin which includes much of the prime agricultural areas of Western Australia.



Frank Creagh OAM JP
Honorary Freeman, Shire of Dandaragan

cc to LIBBY METTAM MHA.

"WEST" PRI-MARCH 10, 2017

ADVERTISEMENT

Our water, health and jobs are at risk from fracking

'Fracking' or 'hydraulic fracturing' is the process of unconventional gas mining. It involves pumping chemicals, water and sand deep beneath the ground at high pressure to fracture gas-carrying rocks.

The United State Environmental Agency released a major report (December 2016) showing that fracking causes permanent damage to water sources yet, NO formal Environmental Impact Assessment of any fracking activities has been undertaken in WA.

The unconventional gas industry is poised for a massive expansion across WA. It's already been granted numerous licenses to drill through the Yarragadee north and south aquifers, which supply PERTH's drinking water.

DANGERS

- Contamination of our water sources
- Serious health impacts
- Industrialisation of rural WA
- Tourism and agriculture jobs at risk
- Soil, water and air pollution
- Increased climate change
- Depletion of WA's water: Each frack uses between 360 and 1,100 truckloads of water



Vast areas across the Kimberley, Carnarvon food bowl, South West and Mid West are licensed for gas exploration and drilling. If fully developed, we could be looking at **40,000 wells in the Kimberley alone.**

Our important groundwater sources and internationally renowned food, wine and pristine environments require immediate protection.

