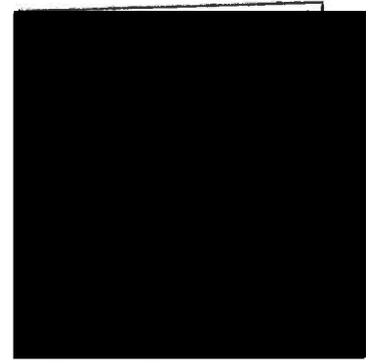


Dr Tom Hatton,  
Chair Independent Science Panel  
Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation  
Locked Bag 33  
Cloisters Square  
PERTH WA 6850



Sir,

Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Neil Ewart recently retired Chief Executive Officer of Yungngora Aboriginal Association (YAC). In this capacity I was present at most, if not all, of the consultative meetings between Buru Energy and the stakeholders of YAC and Noonkanbah Station. (Noonkanbah Rural Enterprises NRE) These meetings were held on site, initially with senior members of Buru Energy including Mr Mark Farabee (dec) who provided diagrams showing the "fracking" process that would be employed at the Asgard site. Mr Farabee explained his expertise in fracking gained over many years in the USA. Also present at these meetings were Drs' Manny Haghighi Petroleum Engineer, Adelaide University and Lynn Reid Groundwater Specialist CDM Smith, both the above were independent expert advisors to YAC and NRE funded by Buru Energy. Often there is scepticism regarding the "independence" of experts when they are funded by the interested party, namely Buru, I can however vouch for the independence of the two above having seen them in action. Also involved was Dr Daniel Torrey whom I never met as he was based in the USA.

A concern expressed a number of times by a community member, who had taken the time to research fracking, was the possible impact on groundwater by the chemicals used in the extraction process. Buru Energy together with the independent experts patiently and thoroughly explained that the chemical used was in such small quantities as to be almost non-existent and was injected many kilometres below groundwater sources. Again, time was taken to carefully explain the methods used and proven over many years in the US to protect groundwater supplies. Further to this, community members were taken to the drill site and shown the construction of the waste water dams and had explained to them how this water was contained.

I have over 35 years' experience working with aboriginal people primarily in remote regions of Australia. The majority, if not all, traditional and semi traditional aboriginal people will avoid confrontation of any sort no matter how minor it may seem to us. So when asked to give an opinion on any given subject which to them may offend the asker they will respond with "yes" in reality not having understood a word they heard. This is why they insist on having time for them to digest what they have heard "don't rush us" A lot of time is required to gain the trust of the people to a point where they will tell what they really feel. Because I had gained this trust some individuals would come to me and ask me to "break down" what they had heard, they hadn't understood, but were interested enough to ask the questions, which was significant.

Historically the Yungngora community has been (and still is) a proudly independent group built upon a firm Christian foundation led by the late Mr Cox.

Yungngora or Noonkanbah as it was known then, took on the might of an American oil search company (Amax) and later the WA government and blocked access to drilling teams on their land. Their opposition was not based on political motives, as some claimed, but on

their belief that God had given them this land, therefore they were charged to care for it. Unfortunately Amax and the WA Government, believed the powers of big business and Government, trumped the power of that "mob of blackfellows in the Kimberlies" and went ahead with little or no consultation and demanded access to proposed drill sites, bullied, threatened and jailed Mr Cox and Mr Biendurru (dec) senior Walmatjarri man. Contrast that with the approach of Buru Energy who in the words of Mr Cox "You fellers came and talked to us, you showed us what you want to do on our land, you didn't rush us" Further to this Traditional Owners (TO's) were employed to inform Buru Energy on areas of cultural significance, local men and women were employed in drill site preparation, fencing, security and cultural advice.

Despite some bitter opposition from external groups, the community, the Board of Directors of YAC and NRE, the members of Koolkarriya (TO's) remain strongly in favour of Buru Energy because they can see the economic and social benefits that will flow from the development and extraction of the gas reserves on their country.

In my capacity as CEO I was, among many other issues, responsible for the financial affairs of the community and witnessed a steady decline in funding from State and Federal agencies, with the closure of many mining jobs in the Fitzroy Valley ventures such as Buru Energy have begun, are now, and going forward, absolutely imperative for the continued existence and viability of communities such as Yungngora but for the wider economic and social benefit of the Fitzroy Valley.

I am yours sincerely



Neil Ewart  
07/02/18

PS. I am available on [REDACTED] if you have need to discuss any aspect of the above with me.