

To whom it may concern,

I SUPPORT hydraulic fracturing.

My name is Owen Finger and I am the owner of Debessa Station, about 180km north east of Broome.

As a pastoralist in the Kimberley I have an interest in the current debate on the merits of hydraulic fracturing for the extraction of oil or gas and its effect on the environment. In particular I am interested in water as I am reliant on to graze my cattle. I have read parts Buru Energy's EPA referral for their proposed fracing program.¹ After informing myself of the science of hydraulic fracturing I am comfortable with the process and welcome it in the Kimberley.

Please see my points below about community impacts in support of hydraulic fracturing.

GAS RESOURCES IN THE KIMBERLEY

It is estimated that 1000 trillion cubic feet of gas could be contained in the Canning Basin.² This is a significant opportunity for residents in the Kimberley for employment and commercial opportunities, and also for the region to benefit from increased infrastructure.

In such a remote region with limited employment opportunities and industry, it would irresponsible for the inquiry to recommend and the state government to ban a process that could extract the tight gas, that could sustain an industry for up to 40 years.

The amenity and enjoyment of the areas where gas exploration occurs will not be affected. The area where fracing could occur is very remote and occur in flat, featureless areas, with no unique features. They certainly don't hold tourism potential. I can say this because my pastoral station resembles the same land as where local gas exploration proponents have proposed to frack.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED

It is not the fracing industry that has a negative impact on communities, it is the unaccountable activists who cause fear and division in rural communities while they enjoy the benefits and conveniences of living in major cities.

The inquiry should recognise that the negative reputation of hydraulic fracturing is largely because of irresponsible activist groups who are barely regulated and do not suffer any consequences for misleading the public.

¹ Available at:

http://www.epa.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Referral_Documentation/EPA%20Referral%20TGS14%20%20Attachment%202%20Supplement%20to%20EPA%20Referral.pdf

² The Facts about natural gas and fracture stimulation in Western Australia, available at:

http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Documents/Petroleum/The_Facts_about_Fracking_Brochure.pdf

These groups deliberately mislead the public, causing delays and additional costs to resource projects, or deterring investment in resource projects all together.

I note that the opponents of the industry largely source their information from emotive sources using evidence that would not withstand scientific scrutiny. Examples of this include promoting the common myth is that water taps will catch on fire due to hydraulic fracturing and that there will be 40,000 wells drilled in the Kimberley. These myths are incorrect and cause fear and division, but the activists who promote these lies are not accountable and do not suffer any consequences, yet the region these activists stir up fear in suffers from lack of employment and economic activity caused by activists' behaviour.

Resource projects are major employers and investors in regional areas, whereas the activist groups do not pay taxes or royalties, employ few people, and are often the recipients of large government grants. The activities of activist groups leaves the state government to fund employment programs and fund infrastructure in regional areas that otherwise could be funded by private organisations. These groups are often based in well serviced urban areas like Perth and Melbourne, yet stir up division and fear in regional areas.

I am satisfied that given the high level of environmental scrutiny applied to the resources industry in WA and the Kimberley in particular, that fraccing can be carried out in this region without having any detrimental effect on the environment in general and in particular to the aquifers on which I am reliant upon for my livelihood.

The inquiry should make a recommendation that activist groups should not be funded by the state government as they are a dishonest group who are having a negative impact on communities in the Kimberley.

SOCIAL LICENCE

The oil and gas industry is welcome in the Kimberley and has contributed more to the region that the environmental activists ever will.

The oil and gas industry has a social licence, whereas the activists trying to ban hydraulic fracturing are constantly misleading the public and have a negative impact on the livelihoods of local people do not. The activists do not have a social licence and should be the ones who are being investigated.

The Kimberley has the highest unemployment rate in Western Australia and faces significant social challenges. A lot of these social issues are best addressed by providing people with meaningful employment. The unemployment rate in the Kimberly has grown to 12.2% in 2015 which is double the State unemployment rate. The breakdown of unemployment by Local Government Area can be seen in the Kimberley Labour Forces and Unemployment table in the attachments to this letter.³

It is my understanding that the amount of gas that is present in the Canning Basin could sustain a 40 year industry. This would provide a significant amount of long term jobs that

³ <http://kdc.wa.gov.au/economic-activity/employment/>

would retain Broome's youth, who may otherwise have to leave town to secure long term skilled work.

The resource industry has been a positive influence in the region, sponsoring numerous events that would otherwise would not occur. It also employs a number of long term residents, in a region which has too many short term government and itinerant workers. A long term work force means long term residents who will stay and commit to the towns and region.

AGRICULTURAL BENEFITS

Oil and gas exploration on a pastoral station requires water bores and access tracks. Often these water bores and access tracks are often handed over to pastoralists at the end of resource exploration activities, enabling greater productivity on pastoral lands by pastoralists.

The Federal Government's live export ban in 2011 was devastating to the Kimberley cattle industry imposed a live export ban on cattle. It placed extreme financial difficulty on many pastoral families in the region. The pastoral industry also experiences fluctuations in the price of cattle. Having gas exploration companies operate on pastoral stations allows for pastoral lease holders to earn alternative or additional income.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The Yungngora people in Noonkanbah community have had their experts advise on the risks of hydraulic fracturing and have welcomed the technique to occur within the areas that they hold native title (see attached letter).

They have recognized that they need jobs and that economic benefits come from having an industry operate in their area.

Thank you for your time

Owen Finger

Kimberley Labour Force and Unemployment as at March 2015

| Population Centre | Labour Force | Unemployed People | Unemployment Rate |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Broome | 10,208 | 806 | 7.9% |
| Derby-West Kimberley | 3,991 | 722 | 18.1% |
| Halls Creek | 1,489 | 494 | 33.2% |
| Wyndham-East Kimberley | 5,308 | 547 | 10.3% |
| Kimberley | 20,996 | 2,570 | 12.2% |
| Western Australia | | | 5.2% |

Source: Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – Small Area Labour Markets

11 September 2015

The following is a joint statement released today by Yungngora Chairwoman, Caroline Mulligan and Koolkarriya Committee Chairman, Ronnie Lormada.

We the Yungngora People are the recognized Native Title holders for Noonkanbah Station. Our lands around Noonkanbah have been our traditional lands for many thousands of years.

Buru Energy has recently completed their fracking operation on our country. We allowed this to happen after speaking to many experts about the effect of this activity on our country and the environment. Our experts looked at Buru's plans and let us know this is a safe activity if it is done properly. We trust Buru to do this properly.

"My hope and dream for the community and for the people as well is mainly getting young people involved in the workforce, getting them involved in looking after their country and with Buru it has been a really strong start with us and for the future."

"It has been great to see our young people work closely with Buru and we have that connection."

The following is a statement from Thomas Skinner, Chairman of the Yungngora native title corporation.

We are the new generation of Aboriginal owners that speak for our country and have the support of our old people. We have set up Koolkarriya as a business council that represents the seven clan groups of our Traditional Lands. The council really connects with Buru Energy so that we can have future work and opportunity for our young people.

The reason we selected the people on the business council is so that they can feed back to their own people that they can have their own business going as well. If Buru Energy get cranked up, that is really good for us.

We really want to keep this place going. We want to keep our young people safe from alcohol and the new drugs coming into the Kimberley. This is what is killing our people. Mining is giving us job opportunities to work on our own land. We need training and job opportunities for our kids future.

A mining company like Buru Energy come in here, they give opportunity and work. We want this.

Alcohol and drugs is killing our people – not mining or oil and gas.

WE NEED THESE NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

We welcome Buru.



**Yungngora
ASSOCIATION INC**