

Submission: WA Independent Scientific Panel Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation in Western Australia 2017 - 2018

As you drive to Dandaragan, 200 kilometres north of Perth, you could not fail to notice that most of the land is in food production. It is a food bowl with enormous potential. Fruit, vegetables, grains, meats – are all grown here. We (my family and I) like many other members of this community have respected and nurtured this land into producing quality food. Fracking (Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation) or unconventional gas mining is invasive and involves the entire landscape. Closely spaced wells, kilometres of piping, 24 hour lighting, waste water dams with poisonous chemicals, trucks laden with toxic chemicals and total deprivation of privacy. It is our concern as to how would farm production capacity be sustained with such constraints placed on it? Ultimately land values would likely fall and loans would become implicated (1). We would very likely leave - and that is when communities start to fall apart (2).

If we stayed – could we be guaranteed that our groundwater would not be contaminated or depleted, that our air would not be polluted from venting, flaring and wastewater evaporation? That we would not develop serious health issues as demonstrated in communities living in Queensland gasfields (3), North American gasfields (4) (5) and many other places all over the world. The State Government has a duty of care to scientifically (nationally and internationally) investigate these potential impacts on land, air, water and social environments before issuing exploration permits (6).

The state government's water for food initiative (7) pledged “...assist to *diversify and strengthen the State and regional economies, and it will contribute to the State goals of doubling the value of agricultural exports by 2025.*” The possibility of this happening will be severely compromised as prime agriculture lands within the Perth exploration basin have been placed under exploration permits. The bill known as the *Water Trigger* (8) recognized water resources of national environmental significance and was passed in 2013 with bipartisan support - ensuring large coal mining and coal seam gas projects are subject to appropriate conditions relating to impacts on a water source. Unfortunately the *Water Trigger* bill does not apply to the relatively new and unconventional extraction (fracking) of shale and tight seam gas. This lack of disclosure and absence of independent scientific baseline monitoring, poses a genuine concern to landholders and the wider population, as we all have a fundamental right to **clean water** – it is our most precious commodity.

Landholders want the power to veto gas fracking companies from accessing their land, as occurs with other mining explorations. As “... *access to private land by petroleum title holders cannot be denied*” - the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources Act 1967 (9) (10) is depriving landholders of their rights. There is abundant evidence of this self-regulated industry disrespecting people, their land and their communities. Lack of consultation, dishonesty, weed introduction – these and many more incidences have all been well documented (11). People need the right to say no.

There is scientific research recognising that hydraulic fracturing has caused serious problems all over the world (12). At community meetings we have attended the

industry pitch “the risks can be managed”; “groundwater and surface water contamination is very low”; “no significant impact”; “some minor incidences have occurred”. Even that old chestnut “the chemicals we use you can find under your kitchen sink” - still gets trotted out. What is very low? What is not significant? What is a minor incident? Fracking has the potential to compromise agriculture and in our case it will be abuse **of prime agricultural land**. Hydraulic fracturing of gas has been banned, or had a moratorium placed on it in countries all over the world including Australia. Now a growing number of communities all over Australia are saying **NO** to fracking and my family and I are very proud to be living in one of them! **We want a total ban on fracking in Western Australia!**

The references below are a few of the thousands that can be sourced on the internet. Respected scientists, personal stories, dedicated researchers - it’s all available to read. People worldwide are educating themselves as to the truths surrounding hydraulic fracturing; and that to us is a **moral** thing to do.

Delys Fox



References:

1. (Rabobank) submission to the senate Inquiry into the management of the Murray-Darling Basin – impact of mining coal seam gas
www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=5bfff958-7e81-41e7-94d3...
2. Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith and Dr Rye Senjen: Hydraulic Fracturing in Coal Seam Gas Mining: The risks to our health, communities, environment and climate
3. Qlds Story - CSG Free North West NSW <https://www.csfgreenorthwest.org.au/qlds>
4. Concerned Health Professionals of NY concernedhealthny.org/
5. Duke Study on shale gas and fracking sites.nicholas.duke.edu/avnervengosh/duke-study-on-shale-gas-and-fracking/
6. Haswell (2017) Health concerns associated with unconventional gas mining in Western Australia <http://apo.org.au/node/74194>
7. Water For Food – About
<http://www.drd.wa.gov.au/projects/Agriculture/Pages/Water-for-Food-initiative.aspx>
8. Water resources – 2013 EPBC Act amendment www.environment.gov.au/epbc/what-is-protected/water-resources
9. Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources Act 1967
https://www.slp.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrttitle_704_homepage
10. Land Access – Department of Mines and Petroleum
www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Petroleum/Land-access-4236.aspx
11. Lock the Gate Video: A fractured country, An unconventional invasion
12. 10 Years of Fracking: It’s impact on our Water, Land and Climate
<https://www.ecowatch.com/10-years-of-fracking-its-impact-on-our-water-land-and-climate>

