

SUBMISSION TO THE SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY INTO FRACKING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FROM: Liz Hemsley

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I feel compelled to submit my thoughts and feelings on the subject of fracking in WA. As a former resident of Toowoomba in Queensland and a recent addition to the population of Capel in Western Australia, I am concerned to see history advancing at an alarming rate in pursuit of “the gas rush” that seems to be currently invading Australia.

Once upon a time there was a beautiful city called “the garden city of the Darling Downs”. The soil in that area and surrounding parts of south Queensland was unbeatable for nurturing things above the ground – animals and crops, not to mention incredible flowers!

Today, I have been horrified to see aerial maps and photos of that part of the state, showing the proliferation of mining operations encroaching on some of the most arable agricultural land in the country, seeking the underground riches that we are being told are essential to our economy.

While our unique little pocket in the south west of Australia may not have the rich alluvial soil of our Queensland neighbours, we have a climate and a tourist industry with many attractions, including the production of wines which compete with wineries around Australia. Our rare species of wildflowers attract visitors from everywhere. Tourists, both Australian and international flock to this area.

The mining infrastructure displayed in maps and photos from southern Queensland and northern New South Wales don’t necessarily indicate that the process of “fracking” is always used to extract gas from the unwilling earth. Other processes of mining for unconventional gas are equally ugly and harmful and destructive of the “land” which we choose to inhabit, not to mention the water we drink. Capel has the best drinking water I have tasted anywhere. Any disturbance of our precious aquifer would be devastating.

Only a complete ban on the mining of unconventional gas will ensure that we, our children and our grandchildren will continue to reap the benefits of living in a magic and healthy part of Australia.