

Dear Sirs,

I wish to make a submission into the inquiry into hydraulic fracturing IN SUPPORT of the process.

My name is Jamie Cowdrey and I am a resident of Broome and the owner of a horticultural operation, approximately 16 miles east of Broome. I produce mainly pumpkins and honey for the local and interstate markets.

As the owner of a property relying on irrigation in the Kimberley I have a keen interest in the current debate on the merits of hydraulic fracturing for the extraction of oil or gas and its effect on the environment. As a result I have taken the time to inform myself of the impacts of fraccing on water usage.

I think that fraccing will be beneficial to the region, does not pose a threat to the environment, and can be complimentary to all existing industries in the region.

Separate to the science, the oil and gas industries have been good citizens for Broome, providing jobs, sponsorship, and economic opportunities.

## **IMPACT**

### **SOCIAL LICENCE**

The oil and gas industry in the Kimberley has more than earned its social licence.

Petroleum explorers and producers employ many locals in Broome and use many local services where possible. They also sponsor many community events that would not otherwise occur. They also pay Shire rates on their exploration permits which provides some relief to Broome ratepayers, as the exploration companies do not receive any direct Shire services.

Buru Energy, the local explorer proposing to use hydraulic fracturing to extract tight gas, has a 100% locally based workforce for its Kimberley operations, and uses many more local contractors. They have sponsored a number of events around town such as Broome's Chinatown Christmas Party, New Year's Eve fireworks, Broome Sports Awards, and the Shinju Matsuri Art Awards.

### **REGIONAL BENEFITS**

The Kimberley has the highest unemployment rate in Western Australia and faces significant social challenges, many of which will take decades to address. 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 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 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 town and region.

## **WATER**

The full list of chemicals used for the proposed hydraulic fracturing program were publicly available on Buru Energy's website for 3 years. These chemicals are commonly found in household products.

I have also seen hydrogeological maps showing that Broome's drinking water is not within or anywhere near the areas that are proposed for hydraulic fracturing.

I refer to the Yawuru expert report on fracking which concluded that *"Human exposures to the chemical additives, particularly for community members away from the occupational setting where the hydraulic fracturing is being conducted, are limited and would not be expected to produce adverse health impacts."*<sup>2</sup>

I am aware that the proposed fracking program for 2014 by Buru Energy was estimated to use about 31ML of water, which is less than 0.002% of the sustainable yield of the groundwater aquifers in the Kimberley. The water use at each well site is equivalent to the water contained in three Olympic sized swimming pools, and is less than the water required to irrigate 1hectare of sorghum crop annually. This is insignificant compared to the amount of rainfall that the region receives each year.

I am also aware that companies wishing to conduct hydrocarbon exploration must declare downhole chemicals used pursuant to regulation 15(9) of the *Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources (Environment) Regulations 2012*.

I have attended a function where I have watched Buru Energy's Managing Director drink the fracking fluid, and still see him at functions alive and healthy when he visits Broome.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://kdc.wa.gov.au/economic-activity/employment/>

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.yawuru.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Yawuru-Expert-Group-Consolidated-Report-on-Buru-Energys-TGS14-program-ID-48650.pdf>

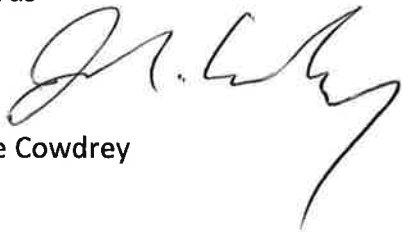
## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The area near Broome where hydraulic fracturing could be used to extract tight gas is remote. There is no human habitation in the area and the area does not have any tourism appeal. I have seen well pads and they have a very small footprint, especially when compared to the surrounding landscape.

Fracking occurred near Broome in 2010, and if the process was as environmentally harmful as activists would have Broome residents believe, there would have been ample time for problems to present for all residents to see.

There have been more than 14 inquiries into fracking in Australia which have concluded that hydraulic fracturing can be conducted safely. In particular the local native title holders of Broome, the Yawuru people, commissioned an independent expert report into fracking, which is publicly available.<sup>3</sup> The report concluded that "The overall findings that the impacts and risks associated with down-hole chemicals are limited (and that Buru Energy's controls are sufficiently protective) are reasonable and appropriate" and "Human exposures to the chemical additives, particularly for community members away from the occupational setting where the hydraulic fracturing is being conducted, are limited and would not be expected to produce adverse health impacts."

Regards



Jamie Cowdrey

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<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://www.yawuru.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Yawuru-Expert-Group-Consolidated-Report-on-Buru-Energys-TGS14-program-ID-48650.pdf>

## 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*