

To the inquiry panel,

I am a concerned community member who has been motivated to write a submission outlining why I believe unconventional gas mining should be banned in WA forever. I am concerned about the health impacts on community and the negative impacts on flora and fauna.

Gas fracking has been proven to increase the health risks of cancers, neurological diseases, impact to the nervous system, aggravation of existing heart diseases, asthma, and irritation of the throat and eyes (O'Brien 2015; CHPNY 2016). A review that examined human impacts of exposure to the pollutants caused by gas fracking prompted fracking developments to cease in the U.K until further research was carried out (Hays & Shonkoff, 2016). This evidence clearly outlines that gas fracking is harmful to human health and with reports in the U.S stating that communities near fracking sites have experienced the above health benefits it is a wonder that WA has not learnt from this previous research. I believe that if fracking continues in WA, local WA communities will be exposed to the health risks, as backed by evidence and research.

My second major concern is the impact on flora and fauna. I have lived in WA for 13 years, have gained Australian citizenship and have come to cherish and love our beautiful landscape with our biodiversity being unique to anywhere in the world. Gas fracking has been proven to cause habitat fragmentation and disturbance. These long term and short-term habitat disturbances include the spread of invasive plant species (Brittingham, 2017), disturbance of sensitive habitats and species of conservation concern (Department of environment and conservation, 2008) and the uncertainty as whether ecological sites could recover after gas protects (Broomfield, 2012). Australia already has a huge problem with loosing or being close to losing vulnerable species, such as the well-known Bilby (endangered in Queensland), so any chance of threat to wildlife should be properly considered as we cannot afford to see any more of our wonderful wildlife face extinction.

With my concerns listed, I can conclude that the government should ban gas mining immediately. There is too much research which shows that our local communities will face health impacts if fracking happens in their community and the risk of damage on our flora and fauna is too high. Over the years we have seen the impacts on industry coming into WA and impacting our otherwise pristine environment. I hope industry will never have the chance to harm the environment via unconventional gas mining.

Kind regards,
Megan