

I am a plant scientist/ecologist with 20 years of experience with Western Australian native plants which I recently integrated in a book to showcase our magnificent flora to a broader audience (Lambers, 2014). I am passionate about the Southwest Biodiversity Hotspot, which is one of only 35 on Earth and of global significance, not just from an academic perspective, but also as a tremendous resource for agriculture, medicine, and ecotourism (Hopper, 2014). Having worked in our biodiversity hotspot for two decades, I am very well aware of major threats to it, namely habitat destruction, Phytophthora dieback, invasive plants, and feral animals (Coates *et al.*, 2014).

Fracking as envisaged by those who are keen to pursue it, obviously will not be restricted to areas that have been cleared for agriculture a long time ago. The recent request (2016) for permission to clear a significant area in Badgingarra National Park for the purpose of exploration makes it blatantly clear that those in favour of fracking by no means exclude National Parks. This poses an enormous threat to our biodiversity hotspot if the number of access tracks and roads through our precious National Parks and Reserves will increase. Not only does this mean significant destruction of habitat, but it will promote the spread of Phytophthora dieback, invasive plants, and feral animals, which all enter via access roads, as is well known within DBCA.

Fracking may provide short-term benefits for a few, but puts long-term benefits for the wider community at risk. Tourism is worth billions to WA, and what our tourists seek is the nature experience. If activities surrounding fracking diminish the value of our National Parks and Reserves, income from tourism will decline, as would the longer-term benefits for agriculture and medicine referred to above (Hopper & Lambers, 2014).

We do not need to extract fossil fuel based on fracking, because we have abundant alternatives in terms of solar and wind energy. The environmental costs of fracking are enormous, and if we would allow it to proceed, it would mean that Australia could not meet its targets captured in the climate change agreement signed in Paris.

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Hopper SD, Lambers H 2014. Human relationships with and use of kwongan plants and lands. In: Lambers H ed. *Plant Life on the Sandplains in Southwest Australia, a Global Biodiversity Hotspot*. Crawley: University of Western Australia Publishing, 285-305.

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Emeritus Professor Hans Lambers FAA, FRNAAS

The University of Western Australia

