

Dr Tom Hatton,
Chair Independent Science Panel
Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation
Locked Bag 33
Cloisters Square
PERTH WA 6850

Dear Dr Tom Hatton and Panel members,

SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF FRACGING

I am a long term resident of Broome and I support hydraulic fracture stimulation being used to extract gas. The establishment of an onshore gas industry will benefit everyone in the State of Western Australia, and in particular will provide enormous social and economic benefits for those in Broome and the Kimberley.

Unlike many activists who are causing fear in the community about fracking, I live here, I employ staff, I pay tax, I pay shire rates, and I contribute to the community and economy of Broome. I do not support green activist groups coming into Broome, causing division and fear, spreading misinformation, and leaving the long-term residents to put up with poor employment prospects and poor infrastructure that otherwise exists with a strong and robust economy.

The onshore gas industry has the potential to provide Broome with a long term, low impact industry that employs locals and supports local businesses.

I urge the inquiry to recognise the negative impact that activist groups posing as environmental guardians have on regional communities, and the positive benefits that an onshore gas industry will have in this region.

Negative Community Impacts are Caused by Unaccountable Activist Groups

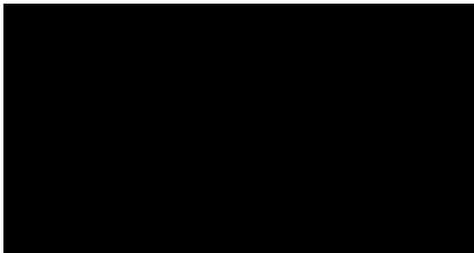
Concern in the community about hydraulic fracture stimulation has come from activist groups posing as experts in environmental matters. These groups have little to no qualifications to comment on a scientific matters yet constant pose as if they are experts in the subject matter. They target and prey on vulnerable groups, such as indigenous communities, farmers and pastoralists, who are naturally cautious about the effect of activities on the natural environment. These activist groups will go to no ends to mislead the public.

A recent example of the behaviour of green activist groups is Lock the Gate's allegation that Origin Energy covered up of information as part of the NT Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing.

"Given the scandalous nature of your allegations against Origin and the Inquiry which have now been proven to be wholly incorrect, it remains a matter of considerable concern that no apology has been proffered by you, on behalf of Lock the Gate, to Origin or the Inquiry. Failure to do so has the very real effect of impugning the credibility of yourself and Lock the Gate."

Lock the Gate is active in Broome and the Kimberley using the name Frack Free Kimberley.

SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY INTO HYDRAULIC FRACTURING IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



RE: ALLEGATIONS MADE BY LOCK THE GATE

I refer to your correspondence, on behalf of Lock the Gate Alliance (**Lock the Gate**), to the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing of Unconventional Reservoirs in the Northern Territory (the Inquiry)*, dated "9 February 2017" (sic).

Regrettably the Inquiry is unable to accommodate your request to phone-in and address the Panel during the public hearings in Tennant Creek.

As indicated by the Panel on 6 February 2018 during the public hearings in Darwin, the Panel does not accept that there was "a cover up of information by Origin Energy (**Origin**) as part of the NT Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing". Having regard to the chronology of events outlined by me on that day – especially the fact that both diagrams the subject of your letter have been in the public domain since 25 May 2017, the explanation given by Dr David Close on behalf of Origin, the purpose of the provision of the diagrams and what each sought to depict, the Inquiry does not intend to pursue the matter further.

In your letter you again impute a mischievous intention to the presentation and provision of the **two** diagrams. At no point has "incorrect information" been provided to the Inquiry. Moreover, and contrary to your assertion, the Panel and the public, including Lock the Gate, have had access "to accurate unedited versions of evidence" since at least 25 May 2017.

Given the scandalous nature of your allegations against Origin and the Inquiry which have now been proven to be wholly incorrect, it remains a matter of considerable concern that no apology has been proffered by you, on behalf of Lock the Gate, to Origin or the Inquiry. Failure to do so has the very real effect of impugning the credibility of yourself and Lock the Gate.

Please note that your letter and this response will be treated as a submission and published on the Inquiry's website.

Yours sincerely

These green activist groups usually have charitable status so they do not pay tax, their anonymous donors receive tax deductions for their donations, and state and federal governments provide grants which sustain these groups who then hinder and prevent legitimate resource projects from occurring. Many of their donors are based overseas and on the east coast of Australia, where they enjoy the convenience and benefits of well services urban areas. They do not contribute anything positive to the wellbeing of the local community.

These groups do not suffer any consequences for making misleading claims. They come into small towns, create unnecessary angst about proposed resource activities, and then leave once projects have failed. Meanwhile their donors continue to enjoy tax deductions while rural residents live with poor job prospects and infrastructure.

Therefore the Inquiry should recommend to the State Government that green activist groups need to be held accountable and made to be transparent. This is an appropriate recommendation that the Inquiry makes because the terms of reference of the inquiry includes community impacts. The negative community impacts come from the manipulation of vulnerable communities by these green activist groups.

These groups have a negative effect on small regional communities and a negative effect on the State of Western Australia because they prevent the creation of employment, prevent royalties from flowing to the state, and are a drain on the tax payer because governments provide funding to these groups. They need to have consequences imposed on them for misleading and manipulating the public and causing disruption to vulnerable local communities.

Inquiries

There have been many inquiries around the world and in Australia about hydraulic fracturing. All credible inquiries have arrived at similar conclusions, in that exploration for and developing gas and oil from hydraulic fracturing is unlikely to pose any significant risk to groundwater or to human health, providing that an appropriate regulatory regime is in place.

Long History of Oil and Gas in the Kimberley

The Kimberley has a long history of oil and gas activity. Wells have been drilled in the Kimberley since the 1920's and the industry has been an important contributor to the region for almost 100 years.

In Western Australia, more than 780 wells have been hydraulically fractured since 1958. Most of these were (around 750) in conventional oil and gas wells on Barrow Island in the 1960s. It is worth noting that Barrow Island remains one of Australia's finest A-Class nature reserves, even with the existence of the Gorgon LNG and domestic gas project.

Water Usage

Water is a resource that should be protected, but this does not mean that it cannot be utilised for industry. The reality in the Kimberley is that water is not a scarce resource, it receives an extraordinary amount of rainfall each year and aquifers are replenished.

Current consumption of groundwater in the Canning basin, primarily by the township of Broome and Derby, is estimated to be 33,134 mega litres a year which is less than 4% of the annual sustainable yield.

Buru Energy estimated that it would use about 31 mega litres of water for one of its previous hydraulic stimulation campaigns, 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.

Local Benefits

With an estimated 1000 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas in the Canning Basin, there is an opportunity to create a long term industry that does not have a seasonal boom and bust like the tourism industry that Broome is reliant on. Broome is heavily reliant on the tourism industry which has an annual boom and bust cycle that is not ideal for a sustainable economy.

Should the onshore gas industry establish itself it would contribute to economic prosperity for decades to come through direct jobs on a range of skill levels and indirect jobs through the multiplier effect when a new industry is created. Production from onshore gas would provide substantial revenue to the state government through royalty payments, which is unique to the onshore industry as the state government can miss out on these revenues if the production of gas is located offshore.

Broome is currently a hub for offshore oil and gas producers as well as a few onshore explorers. The oil and gas industry are a good industry to have in Broome. They use millions of dollars of local goods and services and employ many locals. They also support many events around town that add to Broome's uniqueness.

An onshore gas industry has the potential to benefit everyone in the Kimberley region for decades without harming its appeal or affecting existing

industries. Like many activities, hydraulic fracturing should be governed by a robust and appropriate legislative framework, but without being overly bureaucratic.

Thanks you for your time.

Robert Locke