

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 member,

### **SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF FRACCCING**

I am a long term resident of Broome and I support and am excited about fraccing. The establishment of an onshore gas industry through the utilisation of fraccing has the potential to positively impact the Kimberley for decades.

Unlike many activists who are causing fear in the community about fracking, I live here, I pay tax, I pay shire rates, and I contribute to the community and economy of Broome. I support fraccing, I do not support green activist groups coming into Broome, causing division and fear, 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.

I urge the inquiry to take a fact based approach to the science of hydraulic fracturing, but also recognise the negative impact that activist groups posing as environmental guardians have on regional communities. Even if the Inquiry recognises that hydraulic fracturing was the safest practice in the world, these 'environmental' antagonist groups will not stop interfering with local communities because they do not have any consequences for spreading misinformation.

### **Inquiries**

There have been many inquiries around the world and in Australia about hydraulic fracturing recently. Virtually 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.

### *Local Reviews*

In 2014, Nyamba Buru Yawuru, on behalf of the Yawuru Prescribed Body Corporate and Yawuru Community, engaged independent peer review specialists (the 'Yawuru Expert Group') to undertake a review of Buru Energy's proposed 2014 hydraulic fracturing project at the Yulleroo 3 and Yulleroo 4 gas wells in the Canning Basin. The Yawuru people are the native title holders around Broome. Buru Energy is an oil and gas explorer proposing to use hydraulic fracturing to extract gas from an area approximately 700km east of Broome.

The expert panel concluded that:

- Reviewing the documents provided by Buru Energy, it appears that all different measures and considerations are in place in order to address the environmental issues associated with the operation, before, during and post the fracturing operation. From a geomechanical point of view, stress analysis has been professionally performed and accordingly the potential for any upward fracture height growth appears to be unlikely.
- The risk assessment approach is generally consistent with current DMP Guidelines and is a commonly used scientific approach for hazard evaluation.
- 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.
- 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.

In 2015 the Yungngora people, the native title holders for the land around Noonkanbah community had their experts examine Buru Energy's intended fracking program.

They concluded that hydraulic fracturing was safe and presented many opportunities for their youth.

11 September 2015

**The following is a joint statement released today by Yungngora Chairwoman, Caroline Mulligan and Koolkarriya Committee Chairman, Ronnie Lormada.**

We the Yungngora People are the recognized Native Title holders for Noonkanbah Station. Our lands around Noonkanbah have been our traditional lands for many thousands of years.

Buru Energy has recently completed their fracing operation on our country. We allowed this to happen after speaking to many experts about the effect of this activity on our country and the environment. Our experts looked at Buru's plans and let us know this is a safe activity if it is done properly. We trust Buru to do this properly.

"My hope and dream for the community and for the people as well is mainly getting young people involved in the workforce, getting them involved in looking after their country and with Buru it has been a really strong start with us and for the future."

"It has been great to see our young people work closely with Buru and we have that connection."

**The following is a statement from Thomas Skinner, Chairman of the Yungngora native title corporation.**

We are the new generation of Aboriginal owners that speak for our country and have the support of our old people. We have set up Koolkarriya as a business council that represents the seven clan groups of our Traditional Lands. The council really connects with Buru Energy so that we can have future work and opportunity for our young people.

The reason we selected the people on the business council is so that they can feed back to their own people that they can have their own business going as well. If Buru Energy get cranked up, that is really good for us.

We really want to keep this place going. We want to keep our young people safe from alcohol and the new drugs coming into the Kimberley. This is what is killing our people. Mining is giving us job opportunities to work on our own land. We need training and job opportunities for our kids future.

A mining company like Buru Energy come in here, they give opportunity and work. We want this.

**Alcohol and drugs is killing our people – not mining or oil and gas.**

WE NEED THESE NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

We welcome Buru.



**Western Australia**

Western Australia previously had an inquiry in to fracking in 2015.

The findings included that:

- The Committee finds that when horizontal drilling and multi-well pad technology are used during hydraulic fracturing for unconventional gas, the surface footprint of the process is decreased, therefore also minimising the environmental impact of hydraulic fracturing.
- The Committee finds that, prior to the commencement of this inquiry, the Department of Mines and Petroleum had taken action to assess the readiness of the agency to deal effectively with the regulation of the onshore shale gas industry, including exploration and production and took action to strengthen its regulatory framework for onshore gas exploration.
- The Committee finds that there are sufficient safeguards and water source protection policies in place to protect Public Drinking Water Source Areas in Western Australia without the introduction of a 1.5 kilometre buffer zone between water source areas and unconventional gas activity.

### *Other Reviews*

#### **ACOLA**

In 2013 the Academy of Learned Sciences published their report titled “Engineering energy: unconventional gas production”. In the summary of the report it stated:

*“A large number of impacts are possible, but the likelihood of many of them occurring is low and where they do occur, other than in the case of some biodiversity impacts, there are generally remedial steps that can be taken...”*

#### **New South Wales**

While focussed on Coal Seam Gas hydraulic fracturing, which is different to hydraulic fracturing for tight gas New South Wales The Chief Scientist and Engineer (CSE), Professor Mary O’Kane, delivered her Independent Review of Coal Seam Gas Activities in NSW - Study of Regulatory Compliance Systems and Processes for Coal Seam Gas to the NSW Premier on 30 September 2014 (the final of three volumes).

The CSE found that CSG mining in NSW was manageable subject to appropriate safeguards.

## **United Kingdom**

The UK had a very rigorous inquiry carried out by the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering specifically to do a report on hydraulic fracturing and shale gas. Professor Sir Mark Walport UK Chief Scientist gave a speech predominantly focussed on Risk and Innovation in Germany in September 2014, summed up the findings, with the following:

- “There are really 3 science and engineering concerns about hydraulic fracturing (fracking). The first of these is: will it cause earth tremors? The second is: will you get contamination of the water table? And the third is: will there be fugitive release of the methane gas? (In other words if you leak all the gas then you lose the advantage of it as a fossil fuel). And what the science and the engineering tells you is that this is a drilling technology and no drilling technology is completely risk-free. But if it is done well, if it is engineered well, if it is governed well, then it is as safe as any other form of drilling, recognising that there is no ‘free lunch’, there is nothing that is completely risk-free.” He went on to note “Those are the engineering concerns, and that’s what the Royal Academy of Engineers’ report said and actually multiple other reports have all essentially said the same thing. But the public or publics who are protesting, at least in some parts of the world, about fracking are coming at it from a different angle. They’re coming at it from the values angle and from the ‘my pain, your gain’ angle. And so there’s a group that dislike fracking because they dislike fossil fuels, there’s another group that dislike fracking because they actually just don’t like big companies, and then there’s a third group who just don’t want the inconvenience of having something industrial happening in their back yard.”

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In line with the UK Inquiry and the recommended outcomes, the UK Infrastructure Bill 2014- 15, was passed through the UK Parliament, and it, which among other things will permit fracking below 300 meters in the UK.

## **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.

### **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 very reliant on.

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.

### **Community Concerns Caused by Unaccountable Activist Groups**

Concern about hydraulic fracturing has come from the anti-fracking antagonist groups targeting and preying upon vulnerable groups, such as the remote indigenous communities and remote pastoralists, who may have limited knowledge of the industry and the science involved and be easily misled or influenced by misinformation intended to instil heightened fear and anxiety.

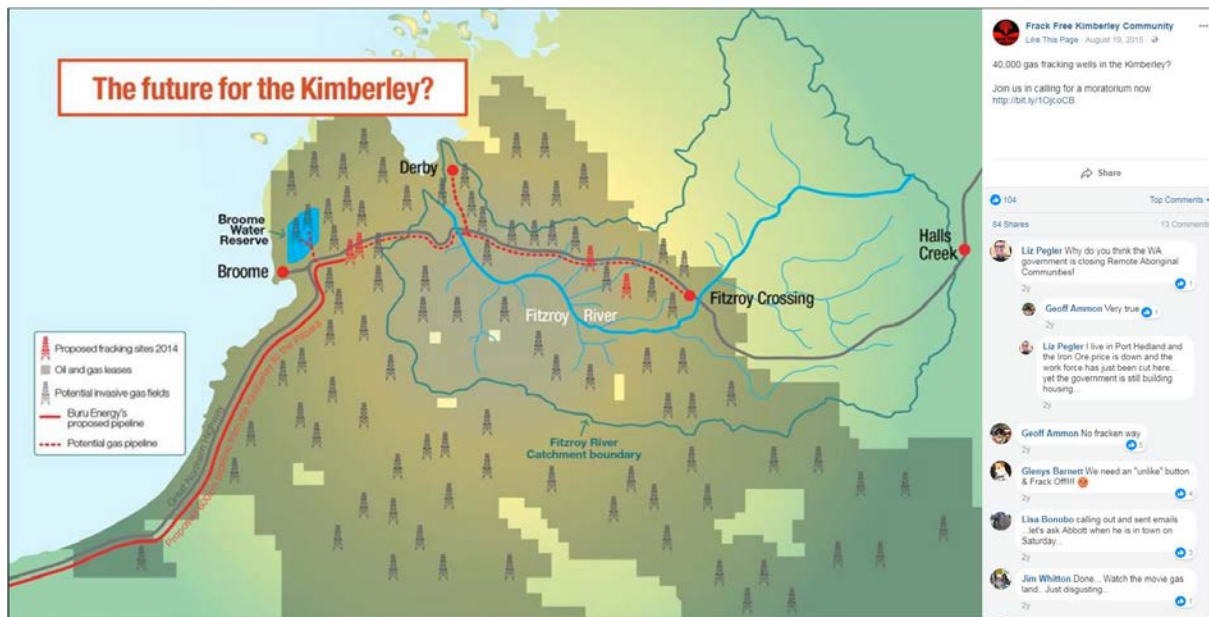
I do blame these activists for instilling a false sense of fear and anxiety and exploiting these trust issues in regional communities. These green activist groups usually have charitable status so they do not pay tax, their supporters receive tax deductions for their donations, and state and federal governments provide grants which sustain these groups who then hinder and prevent legitimate resource projects from occurring. They are a negative influence on our community.

These groups do not suffer any consequences for making misleading claims that cause community angst. 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.

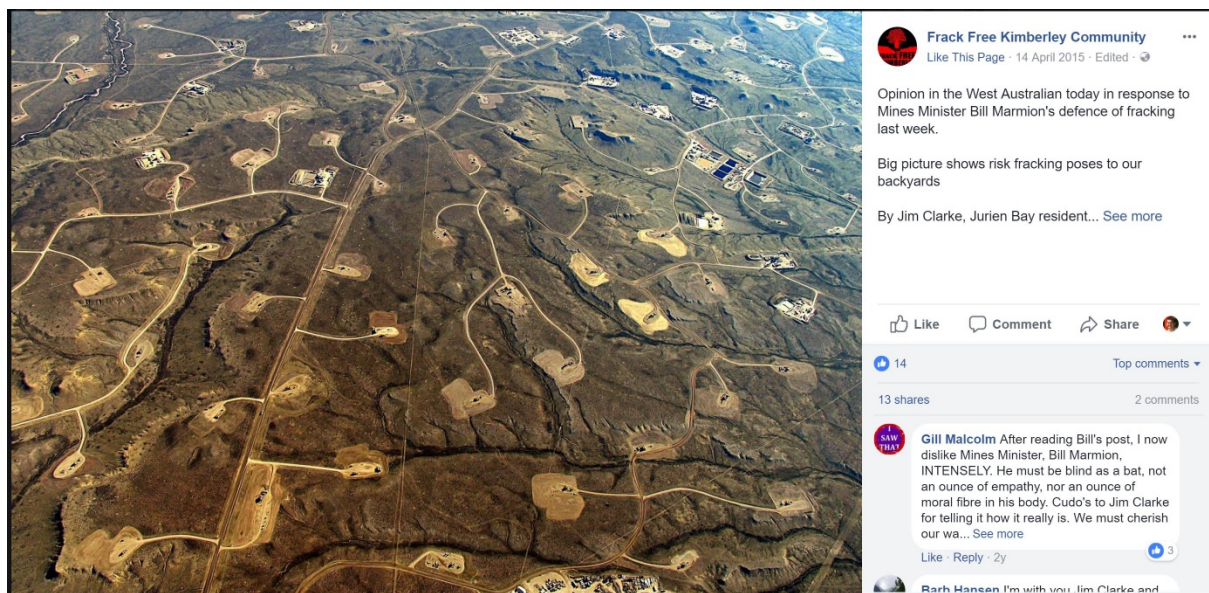
Frack Free Kimberley, a subsidiary of Lock the Gate Alliance, is the main offender, however other Groups such as the Conservation Council of Western Australia and Environs Kimberley are equally as guilty.

Examples of the misleading behaviour include stating that there will be 40,000 wells dotted along the Kimberley, including showing a map with fracked wells on Broome's water supply which is blatantly incorrect





Another common image that is used to mislead the public by Frack Free Kimberley/Lock the Gate is a photo of a densely populated gasfield, presumably in the United States.

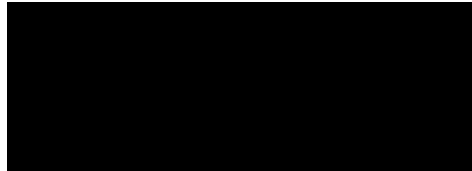


This does not represent what would occur in the Kimberley and is deliberately misleading to incite concern. Buru Energy have indicated that around 10 well pads will be required for their Yulleroo project, spread over a large area. In any event, the Kimberley is so large and the areas in the Canning Basin where there has been oil and gas exploration are remote and featureless with no residential areas nearby.



It would be appropriate for the Inquiry to recommend to the State Government that green activist groups are held more accountable. This is an appropriate recommendation that the Inquiry makes because the terms of reference of the inquiry includes community impacts. The major community concerns come from the misleading and devious behaviour of the activist groups manipulating fear about hydraulic fracturing, not hydraulic fracturing itself. A recent example of the behaviour of green activist groups is Lock the Gate's allegation to the Northern Territory's Scientific Inquiry into Fracking where Lock the Gate claimed that there a cover up of information by Origin Energy as part of the NT Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing. This was found to be completely false and the Inquiry demanded an apology. Independent Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing.

# 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.

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

Yours sincerely

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.

It is my hope that the Inquiry ignores the misleading claims from the activist groups and focusses on the real science about hydraulic fracturing. 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. The inquiry should also recommend that activist groups need to be subjected to a similar robust legislative framework that ensure that they are not abusing their charitable status.

Sincerely

Patrick Marcus