

Submission to:

WA Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation in WA 2017-2018

Name: Ian Minty
Email address: [REDACTED]
Phone number: [REDACTED]
Postal Address: [REDACTED]
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I am a Farmer and Landowner and have spent over 40 years building up my farm in the Dandaragan area. I have for several years now been actively canvassing against the Exploration and Drilling for unconventional gas as I do not believe it has any place in this prime producing farming area.

Firstly I point out there is no social licence for gas exploration in this Midwest area. Four surveys have been conducted (Dandaragan, Jurien, Cervantes and Moora), all showing about 95% of the population are completely opposed to fracking.

I am not a scientist but refer you to over seven hundred scientific papers on this subject, all peer reviewed and all critical of the current technology. Seven hundred scientists cannot all be wrong.

Our State Government has already acknowledged the great risk to health, the likelihood of pollution, by banning fracking in the South West, the Swan Valley and Metro area. It is no less a health hazard and pollution risk north of Perth than south of Perth. Our children and unborn babies are no less precious to us than children in Perth and South West are to parents there. Further, this could be deemed to be an act of discrimination against the population in the north of the State. How, as citizens of this country, are we being treated fairly and equally?

I sincerely urge the Inquiry Panel to recommend against fracking and to take a long term-view for the sake of future generations.

The Water Minister Kelly on radio recently was urging householders to keep water usage to a minimum as every drop was precious. I totally agree with this – how do we reconcile his request with the millions of litres needed to frack each well?

I point out that if fracking is allowed in our area, that Landholders be advised to have their properties valued by two Licensed Valuers and existing water supplies to be sampled, such samples to be kept and verified by a J.P. This is in addition to what should be done as a legal requirement by the Permit holders prior to proceeding with any work on properties.

If property values drop, as they seem likely to judging by what has happened elsewhere after fracking, a group of landowners here have the means to spearhead a Class Action in the High Court against the State Government as issuer of the permits/licences, citing the Court's judgment in the Graham Farmer Freeway Citizens v the Richard Court Government for damage done to property by the construction of the tunnel. The Court ruled 6 to 1 against the State Government. This ruling

was that if Governments, State or Federal, acquired land for infrastructure, full and fair compensation be paid. Likewise, if damage was caused to private property during or because of construction, that full and fair compensation is to be paid. The State did not appeal, so that set a precedent which can be used if need be in the case of fracking.

As a proud and stubborn Scot, I will bend the knee to no-one, but for the health and wellbeing of the innocent Primary and Kindy kids and unborn babies, I would get down on my knees and plead with you to use your common-sense and recommend that fracking onshore, not be allowed.

Where there is the slightest risk of water contamination we cannot take any risks. We are on the driest side of the driest Continent in the world. We are the earth's custodians for a short time and we ought to try to leave this land in a better condition than it was when we acquired it. The opposite will be the case if fracking is allowed.

You have the opportunity to do a great service to the WA community by recommending fracking not be allowed. As I have said, if it's not acceptable in the Swan Valley and South West, it's not acceptable here. It's supposed to be 1 Vote 1 Value under Jim McGinty's amendment to the Electoral Act. Should that be conveniently overlooked – expect a constitutional challenge.

<https://www.constitutionalcentre.wa.gov.au/ForSchools/Backgroundinformation/DemocraticProcessesVoting/Pages/OneVoteOneValue.aspx>

MY RECOMMENDATIONS SHOULD A BAN NOT BE IMPOSED:

All access, right from the initial entry on land for exploration and ongoing right through until cleared after rehabilitation, the Permit Holder to do/provide/carry out the following compulsory requirements:

1. Provision to all property owners proof of current Public Liability Certificate of Currency and Workers Comp insurances, stating limits and allowing unlimited number of claims; also the Underwriter's contact details, plus certificate of cover for all trucks, rigs, vehicles etc.
2. No access to personnel without police clearance.
3. All vehicles and machinery to go through high pressure wash-down prior to entry, every time. (of course, more precious water....)
4. Have property valued (sworn valuation) prior to any activity by gas company, all water sources tested and samples kept - any change of quality or loss of flow deemed to be company's fault and rectified at company's expense.
5. All livestock to be Veterinarian certified prior to access and any deterioration to be gas company's liability.
6. Bond deposited into Solicitor's interest bearing trust fund to 75% of value of property, interest added to principal to take into account CPI. Held for minimum of 5 years after cessation of extraction.
7. A complete list of chemicals that will/may be used in fracking on the property - a Bio Security concern.