

WA Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation in WA 2017 Submission

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1. Personal Details

- I am a concerned community member. I became aware of fracking in the Moora area in 2014 or 2015 when an acquaintance mentioned to me that the Gas and Oil Industry had begun onshore drilling exploration for underground gas in Central Midlands region. I am now a part of the Frack Free Central Midlands community group.
- My motivation for making a submission is the public meeting that occurred in Moora two or three years ago, bringing the community's attention to the process of fracking and an American farmer from Wyoming speaking of his personal experience of fracking on his land and how it impacted his livelihood in a negative manner and his deteriorating family's health and wellbeing following fracking occurring on his property.
- I am concerned about unconventional gas mining (including fracking) in WA because EP 494 and EP 321 R4 is near the rural town Moora. In Moora, there is a water aquifer just outside of town, known as Kolburn, which would be permanently polluted by the dangerous chemicals used in the fracking process. This aquifer is the major source of water for the region, especially the Moora town site.
- This will affect my son and I because we are reliant on local produce from the region for consumption of food sources and the financial microeconomy to support our lifestyle. Moora and surrounding regions is an important food source for Western Australia, Australia and export markets.
- I obtained this information because its common knowledge that Moora is in the Wheatbelt area, which is an agricultural farming community, and solely reliant on the land for resident's livelihood from broad acre farming, horticulture, self-employment and new industries, such as camel milk production.

2. Summary of key points

- My conclusions are based on a massive amount of high level, credible, peer-reviewed information prepared by eminent people and organisations, which is complemented by personal stories and experiences. While the industry claims it is credible, honest, transparent and consultative, in real life this is far from the true situation.
- Extensive surveys conducted by 'Lock The Gate' clearly demonstrate the community does not want unconventional gas. Moora residents are opposed to the landscape being destroyed, especially the traditional land owners and we do not want to suffer the health and environmental problems associated with fracking. There is no reason to allow unconventional gas development. Contrary to what the gas companies claim, it does not add jobs, and has little or no economic benefits to West Australians. Even if it did generate jobs and economic benefits this cannot be justified compared to the damage it will do to the land, broadacre agriculture, horticulture, businesses reliant on the agriculture sector and the community.

3. **Impact on horticulture, focusing on the fruit industry in Central Midlands area**

- EP494 and EP321R4 are in key areas within the Shire of Moora and Shire of Dandaragan regions, where the Kolburn Aquifer is located and key horticultural business to our region, such as Moora Citrus and Rainbow Ice which are dependent on our high-quality water sources to sustain their supply of high quality products. Any risk of damage to the water sources by the companies allocated exploration licences to locate gas reserves within the area and any subsequent future fracking puts at risk our water supply.
- Threat to horticulture in WA.
In Moora and the surrounding regions, large areas of highly productive farmland are under threat from Unconventional Gas mining. This activity has the potential to severely disrupt virtually every aspect of fruit production and potentially even remove all agricultural production from the land.
- Landholders will lose millions every year by hosting unconventional onshore gasfields
Marinoni & Garcia (2016) CSIRO report found the alienation of productive farmland for Coal Seam Gas infrastructure in Queensland resulted in losses in gross economic returns of up to 10.9%. The total losses to gross revenues varied between \$1.32m and \$3.29m per property and averaged \$2.17m per farmland. 'Lock the Gate' states that the methodology was estimating economic losses based solely of reduction in land area. Business interruption due to disruption to business operations, dust generation, spills and leaks of waste-water, the spread of weeds or lost time due to health issues associated with Coal Seam Gas processes weren't included in the costing for economic losses to landholders. Therefore, total losses to landholders is undoubtedly much higher than estimated by the CSIRO report.

4. **Conclusions and Recommendations**

- Unconventional gas mining and fracking is harmful to health.
Communities living near gasfields in Queensland and the USA have reported serious health issues following the commencement of unconventional gas operations. These conditions include respiratory ailments, nose, throat and eye irritations and neurological conditions.
- Water and chemical use and wastewater production from fracking places WA's vital water resources at risk from contamination and depletion.
Our state is one of the driest places on earth and climate change is already leading to decreased rainfall in southern WA. Our land and environment are under growing pressure from a lack of fresh water. We cannot afford to put our precious groundwater at risk in the short to long term from the unnecessary fracking industry.
- Continue with conventional and off-shore drilling gas mining
- Landholder and Traditional Owners don't have the right to refuse access to oil and gas companies in WA.
This creates stress and leaves individuals and communities worried about their financial security and their ability to farm their land. The rights of large oil

and gas companies are unfairly in their favour in relation to landholders' rights. Human rights are being ignored for a resource that is no longer strategically vital as it can be replaced by renewable forms of energy generation.

- Research into the economic and social impacts of the unconventional gas industry in Queensland has shown that the industry as led to a reduction in community well-being and social cohesion.

It also caused a deterioration in local skills and infrastructure; few additional local job opportunities and limited economic benefit to the wider economy.

- Unconventional gas fields in Queensland have seen a reduction in farm productivity, efficiency, land values and credit availability to landholders.
- Fracking leads to large deliberate and fugitive emissions of methane, adding to climate change.
- I believe fracking will destroy the landscape and is not safe. The problems associated with fracking are not controllable, and self-regulation or government regulation are simply not capable of preventing all the risks associated with fracking.

Recommendations

- I urge the inquiry to make recommendations to permanently ban fracking and all unconventional gas mining in Western Australia.
- I oppose unconventional gas mining and fracking in Western Australia.
- I recommend that the State Government of Western Australia establish a fund account solely for the purposes to provide drinking water on a short term basis to the Shire of Moora and Shire of Dandaragan if the table water and aquifers are polluted by the oil and gas companies and to build infrastructure to provide scheme water from the metropolitan area water supplies to the Shire of Moora and Shire of Dandaragan on a permanent long term basis.

References

Marinoni, O & Garcia, J. Navarro (2016) '*A Novel Model to estimate the impact of Coal Seam Gas extraction on agro-economic returns* in Land Use Policy V 59, 31 December 2016 pp 351-365 (source <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S026483771630076X>)

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