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Cc: Minister.Dawson@dpc.wa.gov.au; wa-government@dpc.wa.gov.au; Minister.McGurk@dpc.wa.gov.au
Subject: Fracking Inquiry
Date: Monday, 19 March 2018 3:36:38 PM

I am a member of the public, a practising lawyer and a person keenly interested in the protection of our environment.

I am concerned about the impact on our environment of fracking. It has been banned, or there are moratoriums, in Victoria, Tasmania, US states of Maryland and New York and the countries of Scotland, Wales, Germany and France. It is a stupid and dangerous process. It is unsafe. It should be banned in Western Australia. .

I have visited areas in the Kimberley where fracking is proposed. It is on land that is precious to us all, most particularly the local aboriginal communities. I have listened to them and I have been overwhelmed by their concern as to what fracking will do to their land. We should all listen to them and not be swayed by the big dollars of mining companies.

Modern fracking techniques make it a risky process to our land and water resources. It requires the use of massive volumes of water and large quantities of chemicals, some of which are toxic and some which have not yet had their toxicity tested. The process produces large volumes of toxic wastewater.

Shale gas wells must pass through underground aquifers. Failure can lead to contamination of these water resources.

Fracking cannot be done safely. If it is established in the Kimberley or Mid-West appropriate monitoring and compliance is likely to be impossible due to resource and budgetary constraints in Government Departments.

The risk of wells leaking is real. A study in Pennsylvania last year found that 6% of gas wells leaked in the first year and up to 75% of existing wells could have some form of integrity failure (*Marine and Petroleum Geology, 56, Oil and Gas Wells and Their Integrity, Davies, Almond et al*).

Some of the chemicals used in fracking are toxic even in small doses. It is a myth to say they are no more unsafe than household chemicals. If these chemicals find their way into the water supplies then it is a serious risk to our safety and health.

It is also a myth to say chemicals are only used in small amounts. However large volumes of water are required and a typical 15 million litre fracturing operation would use 80 to 330 tons of chemicals!

Another myth is that the gas industry will create jobs. The majority are for the short construction phase and are not ongoing. The gas industry employs only 0.2% of the Australian workforce.

Thank you,

Roger Sands,

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