Submission to:

WA Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation in WA 2017

I am neither from a farming community nor a scientist but a concerned WA citizen who wonders why we in are still considering the development of fossil fuels, in this case unconventional gas development. I have read and heard all the claims from the Gas Industry and listened to many who are living with unconventional gas mining on their land. On balance there seems little evidence as to the benefits from this form of mining.

A number of claims can be refuted:

* **Unconventional gas will provide tremendous economic benefits to our local communities.**

The evidence indicates that there are very little benefits to the local communities. The number of those employed in the industry is very small and usually at the construction phase. Australia profits little from coal and gas as 83% of the industry is foreign owned, most of the gas is shipped overseas and these large companies pay little tax.

* **There is little impact on the area where the fracking takes place**.

The area is industrialized by the gas wells both above and below ground and a vast network of access roads, pipelines, wastewater dams and treatment plants are needed. Valuable agricultural and horticultural land is lost.

* **The reliability of the fracturing technique**

Companies tell us that they are using “best practice” but there is growing evidence indicating that there are inherent engineering problems including unpredictable fracturing, increased seismic activity, casing problems, leaking of the wells amongst other issues.

* **The chemicals used are “safe”**

Many of the companies using fracturing will not reveal what chemicals they are using and to date there has not been sufficient assessment of the long term effects of such chemicals to the groundwater and to the local populations. Many Fracturing chemicals are known to be toxic.

* **Water usage**

A single shale gas frack used 11-34 million litres of water in the fracking fluid. In an increasingly dry continent it seems extraordinary that WA would risk our water supply instead of using it in agriculture.

* **Unconventional gas will reduce carbon emissions**

Research indicates that Methane is much more (34 times) potent than carbon dioxide. Methane leaks have been reported and observed in a number of gas fields such as in Queensland.

In contrast to Unconventional gas Australia is on the cusp of an energy boom of renewables with storage power. The cost of renewables is plummeting. These technologies create new sustainable jobs. To effectively tackle climate change Australia needs to embrace renewables, both at home and to develop new industries.

Renewable energy and storage technologies are efficient, reliable and increasingly cost effective. What WA needs are credible government policies that support their uptake, not Unconventional Gas.

I urge you to ban unconventional gas mining in WA

Gas leaks and methane.

https://www.theguardian.com/Environment/2014/Jun/20/Fracking-Wells-Pennsylvania-Leaking-Methane

Fleming and Measham, (2014) Local economic impacts of an unconventional energy boom: the coal seam gas industry in Australia, The Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics, 59(1), pp. 78–94, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-8489.12043/full

Fleming and Measham (2014) Local economic impacts of an unconventional energy boom, p78-94

Rabobank (2011) Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the management of the Murray-Darling Basin – impact of mining coal seam gas http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=5bfff958-7e81- 41e7-94d3-c1f463ce8c26

Well integrity. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4121783/

Climate Council Report. Fully Charged: Renewables And Storage Powering Australia 2018