

Dear Fracking Inquiry Panel Members,

We are Direct Action WA and we would like to express our concerns the potential fracking industry being opened up in WA. Direct Action WA is made up of community members who recognise that our leaders are not leading us in a safe direction away from catastrophic climate change and are doing our part to have our voices heard of the noise of big industry. We know, through reading the science and speaking to the farmers and locals who have lived through fracking and seeing firsthand what devastating impacts it can have on humans and the environment alike.

We are horrified at the stories coming out of the USA and closer to home, NSW and QLD. Families on the Darling Downs in Queensland have health problems through living close to the gas mining (1.3). They are no longer able to drink the water, with instances where gas was emitted from their water supplies. The presence of gas mining on their properties and the transformation of their prime agricultural land to an industrial zone which operates 24 hour a day has devastated their lives, and it has affected their mental as well as physical health. Their properties and livelihoods are ruined. The value of their properties has reduced drastically, preventing them from selling and moving on.

Then there is the awful story of Nood and Narelle Nothdurft – living in the heart of a gas field (2.5) Their 860 acre farm was transformed into an industrialised gas field, with 4 processing plants and 7 gas wells. Within a 2.5km radius of their home there are 30 wells, 37 high point vents which vent methane 24/7/365, and hundreds of km of water and gas pipelines. There are 4 vents within 80m of their home with signs indicating the gas is flammable, explosive and dangerous. The gas company said it was only venting air, but FLIR camera images showed it was methane and VOCs. There is an unbearable noise generated from the gas infrastructure, with dust and methane emissions. Their children suffer from incredible health problems – severe headaches, vomiting, metal taste in their mouths, sore limbs, nasal problems.

These farmers have no say in what happens on their farms anymore. This is what will happen to our farmers in WA. Our food production will be devastated, or farmers will be broken, and our water will be contaminated. Farmers have no power to stop these companies coming onto their land and destroying their livelihoods.

We, as a community, stand behind our farmers and we will be ready to act if our government fails us and refuses to think to the future. We need a total ban on fracking now. We need to act now.

References:

1.3 Lock The Gate video: A fractured country, An unconventional invasion.

http://www.lockthegate.org.au/our_films

2.5 Nothdurft's story Qld <https://vimeo.com/106788676>