

18 March 2018

Independent Scientific Panel Inquiry
Locked Bag 33
Cloisters Square
PERTH WA 6850

Dear Panel Members

Independent Scientific Panel Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation in Western Australia 2017.

I write in response to invitations by this Inquiry as the former President of the Broome Chamber of Commerce & Industry for 7 years from 2008- 2015.

During this period Broome had high expectations that Woodside would proceed with the establishment of an on-shore LNG processing facility at James Price Point some 60km north of Broome and that INPEX would use Broome as a major supply base. That would lead to the important development of many support industries.

During that latter period Buru Energy Ltd became highly visible as an onshore explorer for tight gas using the Hydraulic Fracturing technology.

In my role as President over a period of 4 years I attended many workshops, briefings and seminars from both Government and Development Stakeholders dealing with major issues surrounding the development of the gas industry in the Kimberley. The Chamber sponsored public and other meetings to inform the community of each project.

Consequently, I have a reasonable technical understanding of the industry and the technologies employed.

There are many economic papers that support the development of the gas industry in the Kimberley. Broome is a natural hub to host that industry and, in fact, there is widely held belief that resource industry development is required, and is necessary, to underpin the development of Broome and the Kimberley going forward for many years.

As a long-term Broome resident and business owner/operator for over 20 years I support the gas and resource industry and I support hydraulic fracturing.

Your Inquiry will, no doubt, receive many submissions dealing with the long history of hydraulic fracturing in Western Australia and in other parts of Australia and the world.

Your Inquiry will also, I suspect, receive many submissions against the use of this technology by activist groups dealing with the process itself, water issues, chemical composition of drilling fluids etc.

The role of activist groups in undermining the commercial activities of such companies as Woodside and Buru Energy is well documented. It needs to be clearly understood by your Inquiry that the mainly scare tactics used can cause significant economic and social disruption to a community.

Many in the Broome community (and elsewhere) got behind Buru Energy in its quest to find commercial quantities of gas using hydraulic fracturing by buying shares in the ASX listed Buru Energy Ltd.

Yet, the actions of activist groups have gone largely unchecked in the Kimberley Region and is also the case in other parts of Australia.

These actions cause significant financial loss to shareholders and other stakeholders that are prepared to put up investment dollars in a very risky environment.

So, while the terms of Reference of this Inquiry are focused on scientific issues it is this submission that the economic and social considerations are equally important. Without investment risk capital any consideration of whether scientific issues support the technology is largely academic.

It is submitted that the outcome of the Inquiry should be that the scientific outcomes leave no-where to go for the activist groups in putting forward misleading information to the wider public in the framing of scare tactics against the use of this important and tried technology.