

I place a high value on the protection of our state's natural environment and cultural heritage. Beyond individual plants, animals and places, this extends to our water, food, air, biodiversity, climate, our rural and natural landscapes, and our living Aboriginal culture and connection to country.

I do not believe that gas fracking can be done anywhere in WA without unacceptable impacts on these values.

Pollution of air and water, impacts on biodiversity, industrialisation of landscapes, and increased climate change are all inevitable and irreversible consequences of an unconventional gas industry. Many of these impacts cannot be avoided or managed through regulation. The uncertainty about effectiveness and feasibility of regulation to provide comprehensive monitoring and protection against cumulative environmental contamination is stark and evident. There is no proven long term solution to the challenge of Waste Disposal, of chemicals and toxins many of which are potentially harmful. There are multiple instances recorded of well- casing failure. ( Hays J.,Shonkoff S, )

As an active member of Doctors for the Environment Australia ( DEA), I would also wish to emphasise the health impacts of fracking. Health effects in Australia, particularly those of a significant psychosocial nature (2016 ) have been documented. However the greatest evidence of unfavourable health effects is from the US where some 15.3 million Americans live within one mile of one or more unconventional gas or oil wells. Fracking has proceeded there since 2000. ( Potential Public Health Hazards, Exposures and Health Effects from Unconventional gas and Oil Wells; John L Adgate, et al, Environ.Sci Technology, 2014, 46(15), pp 8307-8320.

There are at least three published studies reporting negative birth outcomes to mothers in well proximity. That is, decreased birthweight and some increase in birth defects. Increased rates of hospitalisation and exacerbation of respiratory disorders, like asthma, are said to have occurred. ( Rasmussen SG. JAMA Intern Med. 2016 .)

The development of new fossil fuels including gas will increase carbon pollution and is inconsistent with international agreements on climate change. Our state has plentiful renewable energy resources and more fossil fuels are not needed.

Therefore, I call on the Independent Scientific Panel Inquiry to recommend a permanent, legislated ban on fracking and unconventional gas activities across WA, and to recommend the development of renewable energy resources to meet the state's energy needs.

Yours sincerely, Ian Walpole