

Chair Independent Science Panel
Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation
Locked Bag 33
Cloisters Square
PERTH WA 6850

Dear Panel

SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF FRACKING

My name is Mike Windle. I am a Broome resident and I support fracking. The establishment of an onshore gas industry through the utilisation of fracking has the potential to positively impact the Kimberley for decades.

While I support fracking, I do not support non-transparent green activist groups who come into regional towns, cause division and fear, and leaving the long-term residents and their children to put up with poor employment prospects and poor infrastructure that otherwise exists with a strong and robust economy.

I urge the inquiry to take a fact based approach to the science of hydraulic fracturing, but also recognise the negative impact that unqualified activist groups posing as environmental guardians have on regional communities. These groups will say and do anything to push their agenda because they do not have any consequences for spreading misinformation.

Inquiries

There have been many inquiries around in Australia about hydraulic fracturing recently. All have arrived at similar conclusions, in that exploration for and developing gas and oil from hydraulic fracturing is unlikely to pose any significant risk to groundwater or to human health, providing that an appropriate regulatory regime is in place.

Western Australia

Western Australia previously had an inquiry in to fracking in 2015.

The findings included, amongst others, that:

- The Committee finds that when horizontal drilling and multi-well pad technology are used during hydraulic fracturing for unconventional gas, the surface footprint of the process is decreased, therefore also minimising the environmental impact of hydraulic fracturing.
- The Committee finds that there are sufficient safeguards and water source protection policies in place to protect Public Drinking Water Source Areas in Western Australia without the introduction of a 1.5 kilometre buffer zone between water source areas and unconventional gas activity.

Other Reviews

New South Wales

While focussed on Coal Seam Gas hydraulic fracturing, which is different to hydraulic fracturing for tight gas New South Wales The Chief Scientist and Engineer (CSE), Professor Mary O’Kane, delivered her Independent Review of Coal Seam Gas Activities in NSW - Study of Regulatory Compliance Systems and Processes for Coal Seam Gas to the NSW Premier on 30 September 2014 (the final of three volumes). The CSE found that CSG mining in NSW was manageable subject to appropriate safeguards.

Long History of Oil and Gas in the Kimberley

The Kimberley has a long history of oil and gas activity. Wells have been drilled in the Kimberley since the 1920’s and the industry has been an important contributor to the region for almost 100 years.

In Western Australia, more than 780 wells have been hydraulically fractured since 1958. Most of these were in conventional oil and gas wells on Barrow Island in the

1960s. It is worth noting that Barrow Island remains one of Australia's finest A-Class nature reserves, even with the existence of the Gorgon LNG and domestic gas project.

Local Benefits

With an estimated 1000 trillion cubic feet of gas in the Canning Basin, there is an opportunity to create a long term industry that does not have a seasonal boom and bust like the tourism industry that Broome is very reliant on.

Should the onshore gas industry establish itself it would contribute to economic prosperity for decades to come through direct jobs on a range of skill levels and indirect jobs through the multiplier effect when a new industry is created. Production from onshore gas would provide substantial revenue to the state government through royalty payments, which is unique to the onshore industry as the state government can miss out on these revenues if the production of gas is located offshore.

Broome is currently a base for offshore oil and gas producers as well as a few onshore explorers. The oil and gas industry are a good industry to have in Broome. Although the industry is small they punch above their weight in community contributions. They use millions of dollars of local goods and services and employ many locals. They also support many events around town that add to Broome's uniqueness.

Water Usage

I am not concerned with the amount of water used for drilling fracking wells.

Water in the Canning Basin aquifer system is replenished by rainwater each year during the wet season. The aquifer is an effective storage system that ensures there is plentiful water available all year round. The Canning Superbasin aquifer provides water for pastoral use, drinking water and industry throughout the Kimberley. Less than 4% of groundwater available in the Canning Basin is used each year.

Regulation needed for Militant Activist Groups

One of the terms of reference of the Inquiry is to identify community impacts associated with hydraulic fracturing. The community is concerned about hydraulic fracturing because of the actions of militant green activist groups, rather than being concerned due to an incident where hydraulic fracturing has occurred in Western Australia.

Within the previous western Australian Inquiry held in 2015, in addition to concluding that fracking could be safe, the committee noted that:

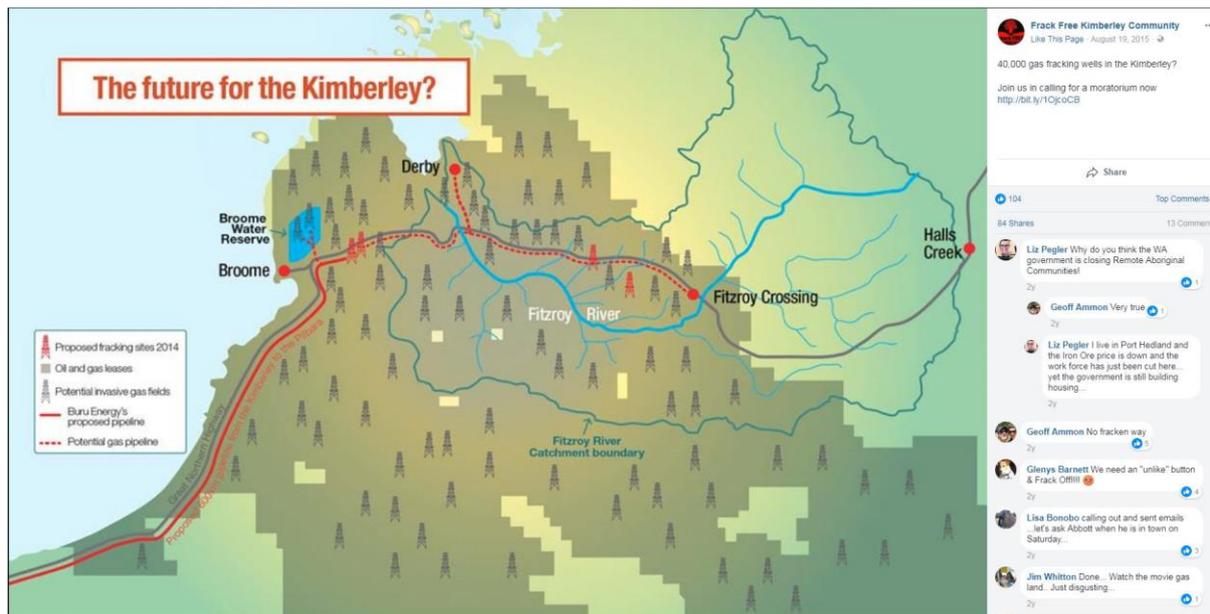
...that there was considerable misinformation within the public domain about hydraulic fracturing which understandably led to community anxiety.

The community anxiety has come from green activist groups spreading fear about fracking, not from fracking itself. Anti-fracking antagonist groups targeting and prey upon vulnerable groups, such as remote indigenous communities and remote pastoralists, who may have limited knowledge of the industry and the science involved and be easily misled or influenced by misinformation intended to instil heightened fear and anxiety.

I do blame these activists for instilling a false sense of fear and anxiety and exploiting these trust issues in regional communities. These green activist groups usually have charitable status so they do not pay tax, their supporters receive tax deductions for their donations, and state and federal governments provide grants which sustain these groups who then hinder and prevent legitimate resource projects from occurring. Often these groups are funded by foreign interest groups (Lock the Gate has received large donations from US based Tides Foundation and donations from east coast pokies millionaires), yet they are not required to be transparent about who or where their donations come from despite effecting the lives of local people.

These groups do not suffer have consequences for making misleading claims that cause community angst. They come into small towns, create unnecessary angst about proposed resource activities, and then leave once projects have failed. Meanwhile their donors continue to enjoy tax deductions while rural residents live with poor job prospects and infrastructure.

Frack Free Kimberley, a subsidiary of Lock the Gate Alliance, is the main offender. Examples of the misleading behaviour include stating that there will be 40,000 wells dotted along the Kimberley, including showing a map with fracked wells on Broome's water supply,



Another common image that is used to mislead the public by Frack Free Kimberley/Lock the Gate is a photo of a densely populated gasfield, supposedly from the United States.



This does not represent what would occur in the Kimberley and is deliberately misleading. Buru Energy have indicated that around 10 well pads will be required for their Yulleroo project, spread over a large area. In any event, the Kimberley is so large and the areas in the Canning Basin where there has been oil and gas exploration are remote and featureless with no residential areas nearby.

Frack Free Kimberley/Lock the Gate have misled the community into thinking that the chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing are a secret.

Regulation 15(9) of the *Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources (Environment) Regulations 2012* requires resource companies to declare chemicals used down wells. These chemicals are required to be submitted as part of an Environment Plan, which must be approved by regulators. The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety has to assess whether the use of specific products and chemicals down-hole in petroleum activities pose an unacceptable risk of impact to the environment. These lists are publicly available and Buru Energy posted the list of chemicals used on its website.

These groups will say and do anything to manipulate the public. A recent example of this is Lock the Gate's allegation to the Northern Territory's Scientific Inquiry into Fracking where Lock the Gate claimed that there a cover up of information by Origin Energy as part of the NT Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing. This was found to be completely false and the Inquiry demanded an apology as a result.

SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY INTO
HYDRAULIC FRACTURING
IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



RE: ALLEGATIONS MADE BY LOCK THE GATE

I refer to your correspondence, on behalf of Lock the Gate Alliance (**Lock the Gate**), to the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing of Unconventional Reservoirs in the Northern Territory (the Inquiry)*, dated "9 February 2017" (sic).

Regrettably the Inquiry is unable to accommodate your request to phone-in and address the Panel during the public hearings in Tennant Creek.

As indicated by the Panel on 6 February 2018 during the public hearings in Darwin, the Panel does not accept that there was "a cover up of information by Origin Energy (**Origin**) as part of the NT Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing". Having regard to the chronology of events outlined by me on that day – especially the fact that both diagrams the subject of your letter have been in the public domain since 25 May 2017, the explanation given by Dr David Close on behalf of Origin, the purpose of the provision of the diagrams and what each sought to depict, the Inquiry does not intend to pursue the matter further.

In your letter you again impute a mischievous intention to the presentation and provision of the two diagrams. At no point has "incorrect information" been provided to the Inquiry. Moreover, and contrary to your assertion, the Panel and the public, including Lock the Gate, have had access "to accurate unedited versions of evidence" since at least 25 May 2017.

Given the scandalous nature of your allegations against Origin and the Inquiry which have now been proven to be wholly incorrect, it remains a matter of considerable concern that no apology has been proffered by you, on behalf of Lock the Gate, to Origin or the Inquiry. Failure to do so has the very real effect of impugning the credibility of yourself and Lock the Gate.

Please note that your letter and this response will be treated as a submission and published on the Inquiry's website.

Yours sincerely

THE HON JUSTICE RACHEL PEPPER
Chair

11 February 2018

It would be appropriate for the Inquiry to recommend to the State Government that green activist groups are held more accountable. This is an appropriate recommendation that the Inquiry makes because the terms of reference of the inquiry includes community impacts. The major community impact concerns come from the misleading and devious behaviour of the activist groups manipulating fear about hydraulic fracturing, not hydraulic fracturing itself.

These groups have a negative effect on small regional communities and a negative effect on the State of Western Australia because they prevent the creation of employment, prevent royalties from flowing to the state, and are a drain on the tax payer because governments provide funding to these groups. They need to have consequences imposed on them for misleading and manipulating the public and causing disruption to vulnerable local communities.

I hope that the Panel members ignore the misleading claims from the activist groups and focusses on the real science about hydraulic fracturing and the benefits that come from it. An onshore gas industry has the potential to benefit the Kimberley region for decades without harming its appeal or affecting existing industries. Like many activities, hydraulic fracturing should be governed by a robust and appropriate legislative framework.

The inquiry should also recommend that activist groups need to be subjected to a similar robust legislative framework to ensure that they are not abusing their charitable status by misleading the public.

Sincerely

Mike Windle