



Ms Margaret Liveris,

I wish to make a submission to the Fracking Inquiry.

LAND USE.

Obviously there is less public resistance to fracking in National Parks and land set aside as reserves such as Lake Inoon at Eneabba for example, where I have heard fracking has already taken place. Mt Leseur National Park also seems a prime location for fracking, without the problems which would arise from any fracking on private land. Fracking any area requires land clearing and the construction of access roads and pipelines, the construction of dams to hold contaminated water, and so on, in proportion to the number of wells sunk. Therefore we can expect the beauty and scientific value of such places to be destroyed. Possible revegetation is not an option because revegetation can never replace the original diversity.

Fracking on private land – farms – probably is more devastating because infrastructure destroys the freedom farmers have to move stock, use machinery, etc. Every aspect of farming is affected, not forgetting the noise made by machines and vehicles. Fracking on farm land should not be allowed. If it is, how much good agricultural land will eventually be rendered worthless – perhaps millions of hectares – who would know?

GROUND WATER.

Large amounts of groundwater are required for this activity. In low-rainfall areas this water extraction must mean rivers and creeks will not flow, dams and lakes will not fill, vegetation will die, windmills will no longer pump water, the effects unknown until fracking is underway. Too much water extraction also leads to the seepage of salt water from deeper down. What of the potential to use recycled water? It depends on the degree of contamination. I'll tell you what it can be used for – the drilling of more wells. The farmers will have moved out and I cannot imagine coastal towns such as Dongara and Jurien being happy to have to run recycled water through their taps. Who will be able to test the artesian water which every coastal town along the west coast uses and takes for granted today? After fracking it may be years before the fracking chemicals reach the surface. Ground water will always be prone to contamination for many, many years after fracking has occurred. It may ruin our water supplies for centuries – we just don't know.

THE REGULATION OF CHEMICALS USED.

Fracking companies will tell you that the chemicals they once used may have been dangerous but they have reformed and modern use with small amounts of relatively harmless chemicals is now the order of the day. Well, who is going to know what they use? Who is going to know how much? They also say the fracking wells are x feet deep and so there is no possibility whatsoever of chemicals reaching the surface. I have heard miners' stories before. I can tell you that miners the world over have devastated vast areas of land and sea during my lifetime. It's of no importance to them whether the land is of any use after they have extracted the required product out of it and moved on. Mining has no conscience. The issue is the possibility that fracked land may be useless for the foreseeable future. People may no longer be able to live there, as in a desert.

ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC & SOCIAL VIEWPOINTS.

I think the environmental factors have been covered at length above. Economic factors are many. They include the probable interference of fracking in farming activities so that the farmers leave. They include a probable increase in well-paid jobs for as long as fracking continues in any particular area followed by depopulation when it ceases – normal for any mining project. They include the greater influence of the mining lobby on political affairs, whatever that may be. In the big picture,

gas extracted by fracking may become essential in an energy hungry world so it will be impossible to stop it. Perhaps it may be possible to contain it to a small part of W.A. for twenty years or so while we assess what the long-term effects are??? So, then, the economic consequences run along the lines that hydraulic gas fracking will be very profitable for the companies involved, quite profitable for the workers involved and their families, very profitable for the governments of the time as they will of course tax the profits, leading to the Esplanade development and similar projects in the City but with the frightening possibility of laying waste to large areas of our wonderful state for an unknown period, costing massive amounts of money to rectify the situation – if we are able to do so!

Submitted by PETER MACK