

November 14, 2018

Re Petition No.086 Ban on Fracking

Dear Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a written submission in support of the petition (No. 086) calling for a permanent, legislated ban on fracking in WA, tabled in the Upper House on October 16, 2018. I have not taken my complaint to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations.

The petition from nearly 14,000 West Australians states that they acknowledge the growing peer-reviewed scientific evidence that fracking cannot be done without risk to human health, climate stability, water quality, air quality and the environment.

I note that the WA fracking Inquiry's scientific panel did not include a climate scientist nor any medical scientists. The omission of these crucial experts is reason alone to call for an examination by this committee of the issues raised in the petition.

The evidence against fracking is growing daily. The science is clearly showing that the risks outweigh any perceived benefits from this technology. The number of scientific reports raising issues of concern has grown since the 2015 investigation into fracking by this committee. I refer the committee to the most recent research, released in March this year, published in the *Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking's* Fifth edition.¹ The Compendium, published by the Concerned Health Professionals of New York and the Nobel Prize winning Physicians for Social Responsibility, is a fully referenced compilation of the evidence outlining the risks and harms of fracking. The fifth edition looked at more than 1200 peer reviewed research articles.

It concluded that: ***There is no evidence that fracking can operate without threatening public health directly or without imperilling climate stability upon which public health depends.***²

I am focusing this written submission on a particular concern of the petitioners, one that has not been visited previously in inquiries nor through any expertise on the current WA Fracking Inquiry panel. That concern is the impact that fracking in WA could have on climate stability.

In September, a few days after the WA Fracking Inquiry handed its final report to government, 50 of the nation's leading scientists including Professor Fiona Stanley, WA Scientist of the Year Professor Peter Newman and former head of Atmospheric research at CSIRO Graeme Pearman called in an open letter to the Premier for fracking to be banned in WA. The scientists said that it would be "grossly irresponsible" to allow fracking in WA given the climate emergency we currently face.³

The statement from these leading scientists followed a report by the internationally renowned

¹ https://www.psr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Fracking_Science_Compendium_5.pdf

² Ibid p 266

³ http://www.tai.org.au/sites/default/files/180918%20-%20WA%20fracking%20open%20letter_0.pdf

European climate research institute, Climate Analytics, which found that fracking the Canning Basin alone would emit carbon pollution double Australia's entire Paris Agreement energy sector budget.⁴

Further, the domestic carbon footprint of all of WA's unconventional gas resources, which have been proposed for development, would be three times more than the entire nation's energy sector budget.⁵

The current Labor Government came into office with a promise to place a moratorium on fracking until an inquiry could demonstrate that fracking would not compromise the environment, groundwater, public health or contribute adversely to climate change.⁶

As the current inquiry did not include a climate scientist and given the overwhelming evidence that fracking will have an adverse impact on climate stability, it is hard to see how any inquiry can claim that fracking in WA would not "contribute adversely to climate change."

The scientific evidence against fracking is becoming irrefutable. This is not an industry we need or want in WA. The petition was collected in a few months by volunteers in communities across the length and breadth of WA. The fact that we could collect 14,000 signatures in this short space of time shows the strength of concern in the community and the threat that many individuals and communities feel from this industry. Modern fracking as a means of extracting tight and shale gas has not yet begun in WA. We have a chance to put the brakes on this industry and develop fairer, cheaper and more sustainable forms of energy that will enhance community development while saving money. Earlier this month Sustainable Energy Now released a comprehensive plan to power the West Kimberley using solar, wind and battery storage.⁷ That plan would see savings of more than \$14.8M a year over fracked gas or diesel power. There is an alternative that will not threaten public health, groundwater, the environment or impact on climate stability. That alternative is renewable energy and the battery storage that our plentiful WA lithium supplies will enable.

We therefore urge you to consider the issues raised in this petition and to support a permanent legislated ban on fracking in Western Australia.

Yours Faithfully,



Jane Hammond,

Community organiser for Lock the Gate & promoter of the petition calling for a ban on fracking

⁴ <https://climateanalytics.org/publications/2018/western-australias-gas-gamble/>

⁵ ibid

⁶ 2017 WA Labor Party Platform p 39 Retrieved from: <https://www.walabor.org.au/platform>

⁷ https://www.kimberleycleanenergy.org/the_report