

# HON. ROBIN CHAPPLE MLC

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Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Via email: [env@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:env@parliament.wa.gov.au)

Dear Hon Matthew Swinbourn

## **PETITION NO 030 – OPENING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FRACKING INQUIRY TO PUBLIC SUBMISSION**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission regarding the issues raised in the petition.

I welcome the Government's commitment to halt hydraulic fracturing and unconventional gas development (fracking) for onshore gas activity in WA and the setup of a panel of independent experts to conduct scientific inquiry into fracking. However, I have serious concerns with the resources allocated to the inquiry, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the inquiry, and the independence of the inquiry panel members.

This submission will only discuss the reasons why the ToR for the fracking inquiry should be open to public submissions, as stated in the petition. The fracking inquiry presents WA with a unique opportunity to have the potential risks of fracking investigated by a scientific panel and the ToR should not limit what the inquiry can examine.

First and foremost, the ToR should have public input since fracking has a direct impact on the public. I understand that the Northern Territory inquiry into fracking allowed the community to have a say on the ToR for its inquiry. The result was a community that was, and remains, very engaged in the process and the inquiry. It is something that can enhance the value of the fracking inquiry and help build public confidence that it will be comprehensive, transparent and unbiased.

The ToR must allow for a thorough investigation of all of the activities relating to fracking in WA, including the social and economic impacts that arise from the environmental impacts. The inquiry itself must be genuinely independent from agencies which have been promoting and regulating the fracking industry so that all issues relating to the fracking industry can be covered, including its impact on climate, water, health, air quality, and existing industries.

To gain evidence for the full impact of unconventional gas mining and exploration on communities, it is imperative that the inquiry examine the potential social and economic effects of unconventional gas development on existing industries, such as intensive agriculture, and all forms of farming, beekeeping and tourism.

The current ToR do not allow for the potential impact of fracking on the Metropolitan, South West or Peel Regions due to an unlegislated ban in those areas that can be overturned by the Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

**Member for the Mining & Pastoral Region  
in the Western Australia Legislative Council**

E [mining-pastoral@mp.wa.gov.au](mailto:mining-pastoral@mp.wa.gov.au)  
P (08) 9486 8255 | 1800 138 610 (regional freecall)  
W [www.robinchapple.com](http://www.robinchapple.com)

A 41 Havelock Street, West Perth WA 6005  
P PO Box 94, West Perth WA 6872

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Under the current ToR, the inquiry is not required to make a recommendation on whether fracking should be permanently banned in WA; is not required to examine the impact of fracking activities against the precautionary principle and intergenerational equity; and does not include an investigation into the comparative benefits of alternatives to fracking, such as the development of renewable energy.

The robustness of this inquiry is very important to the many communities and landholders who would be impacted by onshore unconventional gasfields across WA.

In the interest of transparency, participation, equity and environmental justice, I stand with the petitioners and call upon the committee to examine the issue and allow the public to have a say on the ToR for the fracking inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Chapple'.

The Hon Robin Chapple MLC  
**Member for the Mining and Pastoral Region**  
**30 November 2017**