

fracking inquiry

From: Margaret Clinch <campaigns@good.do>
Sent: Saturday, 24 February 2018 5:06 AM
To: fracking inquiry
Cc: Chief Minister; Minister Fyles; Minister Vowles; Minister Moss
Subject: Written submission on the NT Fracking Inquiry draft Final Report

Dear Justice Pepper and Panel,

Thank you for providing for personal written feedback on the draft Final Report of the NT Fracking Inquiry. Science is not the only consideration.

The Panel's report makes many important recommendations in the face of the 115 risks identified.

The Panel has made 19 recommendations relating to the NT's water resources. The draft report acknowledges that risks remain, even with these recommendations.

Groundwater is critical in the Northern Territory. It is allocated for our residential needs, existing industries and environmental flows. Many high yielding aquifers within the NT are close to their full allocation already. Many are under pressure from resource development (page 105).

The draft Final Report outlines significant knowledge gaps for groundwater, biodiversity, landscape and health impacts. These gaps need to be rectified and baseline studies completed. Appropriate no go areas must be legislated and in place before any exploration fracking should be considered.

The impact of exploration activities can be very invasive, and identical to production activities. Chemical use, high pressure hydraulic fracturing through aquifers, water use and associated risks are involved. Any regulatory changes should apply to all stages of gas development.

The draft Final Report shows Origin energy identified exploration and appraisal could include 8-16 wells and 24-48 wells for delineation (page 167).

There is an initial danger in that Origin alone could drill and frack up to 64 wells across their tenement, before the regulations are made detailed and comprehensive enough for the safety of the environment surrounding them.

With fracking companies combined, there could be over a hundred fracked gas wells scattered across, prior to actual production, lacking key law changes or baseline studies incomplete.

Critical studies identifying no go zones will be difficult to achieve in an area already littered with fracked gas exploration wells.

I support the swath of new regulations and legislation being listed to protect landholders and water. However, that these need to be in place before the oil and gas industry can start fracking again anywhere in the Northern Territory.

The critical recommendations must be improved and work completed BEFORE EXPLORATION fracking takes place.

Recommendation 5.1 (Enforceable code of practice for abandonment of onshore gas wells)

Recommendation 5.6 (Wastewater management framework)

Recommendation 7.1 (Water Act amended for shale extraction licence and payment for water)

Recommendation 7.4 (Strategic regional environmental and baseline assessment (SREBA), including a regional groundwater model. This must to be developed and undertaken)

Recommendation 8.4 (Fire management plan and 10 year baseline assessment)

Recommendation 9.2 (Code of practice be developed and implemented for monitoring, detection and reporting of methane emissions)

Recommendation 10.1 (Human Health Risk Assessment prepared and approved)

Recommendation 12.11 (Social impact management plan) This recommendation should also be extended to allow for the legal right to say 'no' to fracking.

Recommendation 14.1 (Design and implement a full cost recovery system for fracking regulation)

Recommendation 14.16 (Legislation to regulate seismic surveys, drilling, hydraulic fracturing, and well abandonment)

Recommendation 14.18 (Fit and proper person test)

Recommendation 15.1 (Strategic regional environmental and baseline assessment (SREBA) undertaken and no go zones implemented)

In the NT there is a saying, "Once you frack you can't go back." Exploration fracking is no different. The studies, legal improvements and no-go zones suggested by the panel are critical. They must be actioned before any further fracking exploration.

It would be unsafe to start drilling prior to the putting in place of specific critical new regulations and laws. There must be thorough legal accountability for the protection of the Northern Territory's water resources for future populations, including those in remote areas.

Margaret Clinch

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