

141 Cameron Road Batchelor NT 0845

PO Box 20 Batchelor NT 0845

Phone: 08 8976 0058

Fax: 08 8976 0293

Email: ceo@coomalie.nt.gov.au

Web: www.coomalie.nt.gov.au



Our Ref: CC 101

Hydraulic Fracturing Taskforce
GPO Box 4396
Darwin NT 0801

Dear Sir

RE: COMMUNITY CONCERNS REGARDING HYDRAULIC FRACTURING MINING TECHNIQUE.

The council considered a number of reports into the Hydraulic fracturing process in 2015 following Community concern. Presentations were made by representatives of the Northern Territory Environment Centre and the Department of Mines and Energy

Council discussed an item on this subject at its meeting of 15 September 2015. The item was listed for discussion as local community groups have collected a survey in which over 400 local residents participated in with almost all expressing their opposition to "fracking."

Council wrote to the Minister of Mines and energy outlining the Community concerns. A summary of those concerns raised about the Hydraulic Fracturing process with the Minister are as follows:

1. Irreversible contamination of local ground water.

A most precious resource in the local area is the high quality ground water available to the community. People, even with the best intentions and knowledge make mistakes and new circumstances occur occasionally that were not considered previously. Once contaminated, ground water is notoriously difficult to clean up. The remediation of some contaminated aquifers is limited to as little as monitoring the resultant contaminated plume.

We are particularly interested in the proposed mechanisms to minimise contamination and the process involved to clean up contamination, even if this is a very remote possibility.

2. Robust Regulatory Regime.

Mining industry representatives have publically suggested that the existing regulatory regime is satisfactory. It was commented that sections of the industry had also expressed opposition to the introduction of the legacy mine rehabilitation levy, previously introduced. This does not engender community confidence that the industry takes the community expectations to protect local environments and communities seriously.

The Hawke Report on Hydraulic Fracturing recommended that the risks associated with Hydraulic Fracturing can be controlled by a Robust Regulatory Regime. It is strongly suggested that local community concerns are recognised in the regulatory regime and companies are required to address these concerns fully.

3. Transport of Materials and products

Projects will require the transport of mining supplies including hazardous materials to the site and transport of products from the site. The regulations should embrace Transport Chain of Responsibility provisions. This is particularly the case to ensure appropriate regular vehicle maintenance is carried out and a thorough fatigue management program has been put in place.

4. Access to ground water resources.

The community expects all access to water for commercial purposes including the mining industry should be licenced, monitored, controlled and managed.

5. Consultation with Landowners

It is understood that under the current legislation, mining licence holders are required to advise landowners that they will be entering the property to carry out work. This process generates considerable community angst. Some companies do this well. Other companies strictly comply with the absolute minimum requirements of the law. This has been one of the major factors in the development of the Shut the Gate movement. It is suggested that the regulations expand on landowner rights including reasonable notice, consultation, and consideration of landowner issues. Structures and a framework for compensation should be put into place where there is detriment to the land owners operations.

6. Use of sub-contractors and convoluted Company structures.

Many projects are made up of a consortium of companies and suppliers, small and large. The lead company often has limited control over other partners or subcontractors. It is a concern that past practice has seen some project structures, which deliberately leaves all the risk in one area such as a subsidiary companies and sub-contractors which can easily be jettisoned when things go wrong. The community expect that all companies associated with projects must accept fully the consequences of the risks as well as the profits that they might generate.

7. Local Community Benefits

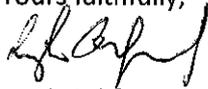
Most decisions in life are based on assessed risk verses perceived benefits. If there are no benefits then there is no reason to accept the risk. It is considered that many local communities feel that the current mining practices generate very little benefits to them and in some cases are actually detrimental to local communities. The extensive use of FIFOs, use of external supply chains, use off overseas fabricators, disinterest in local community well-being and development, and the degradation of local assets, particularly roads have not endeared mining companies to many local communities. There is an expectation that local communities should receive local tangible benefits which outweigh the risks and adverse impacts on their assets, lifestyles and local environment.

The term local community can have many definitions depending on the perspective of the observer. In this case the local community is the community directly affected by the operation on a very local level, those who will be directly affected by accidents on site or impositions on their lifestyle, such as noise, dust, degradation of assets such as roads.

The introduction of new mining techniques such as hydraulic fracturing has generated considerable ongoing concerns within the community. These concerns express that the local community has yet to be convinced that hydraulic fracturing is safe and risks have been adequately addressed.

For any enquiries into this matter please contact The Chief Executive Officer Mr Leigh Ashford at the Council office.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leigh Ashford', written over a faint horizontal line.

Leigh Ashford

Chief Executive Officer

10 March 2017