



Bores NT Pty Ltd

A Quality Assured Company

ISO 9001:2008 | ISO 14001:2004 | OHSAS 18001:2007 | AS/NZS 4801:2001



Date: 16th Feb 2018

For the attention of Justice Pepper

Re: Inquiry into Fracking in the Northern Territory

Bores NT is a small but long standing respectable local business, established in the Northern Territory for over 30 years we specialize in drilling and casing water bores for rural residential through to large industry requirements, from townships out to remote locations all throughout the Territory.

Our business has mature Quality Assurance procedures and accreditation and utilises world's best practices for water bores to meet regulatory requirements.

As a local business, we earn local, so we buy locally wherever possible, we also have a proven track record of employing local people including a contingent of Indigenous trainees, many of which go on to become permanent employees of our small business.

We stand behind our work, by warranting all of our work, namely the water bores and production wells for mining, for up to a minimum of 5 years.

During our 30 years of operation here in the Territory we are proud to say we have never had to redrill or repair any bore that we have constructed using our standard methods of practice.

We rely entirely on the support and patronage of local residents, NT government, mining industry, oil and gas companies for our income and survival.

Whilst we do not claim to understand all that is involved in the oil and gas industry and in particular the fracking process, we trust the work of the Inquiry will help to answer any community concerns.

As a local water bore company, we can envisage an important opportunity for our business to provide the essential services of drilling water bores for the environmental baseline studies and ongoing water requirements for both the oil and gas companies and pastoralists.

The permitting of a safe shale gas industry in the NT will create a requirement for new water bores, pump installations, reticulation and associated maintenance, this will generate much needed business opportunities for the local drilling contractors to provide their services and also create new employment opportunities for young unemployed locals.

It will provide vital income and jobs for us locals to build and stay here in the NT and a reason for Bores NT to continue to fight on in this tough economic environment.

As a water bore specialist working in the Territory for over 30 years, I have a reasonable understanding of the local geology and aquifers in NT, and are surprised by much of the misinformation and hysteria I hear in relation to the geology and fracking process. Some people make many wrong claims that have nothing to do with the geology of this region, the current production processes and capabilities of operators to successfully complete the wells they drill.

As a local business we feel concerned to speak out vocally on this subject for fear of reprisal in the form of loss of vital business from potential customers who may not be well informed and may decide to take their business elsewhere, so we learn to be mute and tread lightly on this subject.

As an example of one encounter I had where I was stopped in the street just the other day and asked to sign a petition to ban fracking in Parap. When I explained to the person that the likelihood of a gas well being drilled here in a Darwin city suburb was zero and that as far as I knew the only gas in Parap came in bottles, I was amazed at the level of abuse I received.

This person claimed they had been to a public meeting at the Charles Darwin University and was told that "Big oil" would drill holes sideways under Parap and the gas would leak up into their water supply and everyone would be poisoned. Then two other passer-by's joined in to the discussion to agree with the petitioner that this will happen and tell me how wrong and misconceived I was.

I felt very intimidated by the circumstance of suddenly being bailed up in a public place and to be almost bullied into signing a petition which I felt was based on a lot of misinformation, and then being abused for not agreeing to them. I could imagine

how much more scary this would be for a young or elderly person who didn't understand anything about water bores, drilling, casing and geology.

Such is the power of social media and expressing views at any cost, even the truth, where the ill-informed educate the unwary.

As far as I can see the gas industry has not done enough to refute such claims or to earn itself a social licence to operate let alone a Government approved one. There may well be a good reason why they have not done more, but I still feel it would be better if they were more informative.

A television commercial with "Farmer Daff" saying "I like bores" doesn't quite cut it for me. Maybe a little more scientific explanation that could possibly be understood by the ordinary folk out there in TV land even if it does interrupt 'married at first sight'.

I am sure that the enquiry panel has a far more scientifically proven base to work from to inform the public.

My understanding of the formations tagged for gas extraction in NT are nothing like those in Queensland, Louisiana or any other shallow, soft sedimentary, coal based gas resources. The formations we are talking about in the NT are deep, shale deposits and overborn by hundreds of metres of solid rock that can be easily and are effectively sealed from leakage forever and are literally kilometres from the nearest water table.

The Northern Territory has been enjoying the use of trouble free gas from tight sand fracked wells which powered the Territory for decades without any social issue, that is until it became a sexy subject for Permanent Protester Brigade to take up as its latest fad.

The likelihood of an environmental issue as a result of a shale gas industry is absolutely negligible. The shale gas companies are willing to underwrite any issue that may arise, however if the shale gas industry is not permitted to go ahead, there will be dozens if not hundreds of local small businesses that will be driven further towards insolvency.

Business owners are already packing up and closing down in droves because there is very little economic activity on the horizon and they have little faith in the local government to allow a proven safe industrial business to grow and prosper in the Northern Territory.

If this fracking is disallowed or pushed back further and further I will be re-evaluating my own position and seriously considering closing down my business in the NT and moving elsewhere to invest my time and money.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would consider my opinion seriously and reach a decision that will benefit all Territorians not just those that have the time to constantly bicker and protest whilst milking the public purse of funds provided by those in business.

Regards,

Henry Van Tilburg

Henry Van Tilburg - Director

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