

fracking inquiry

From: Greg and Diana Chapman and Rickard <campaigns@good.do>
Sent: Tuesday, 23 January 2018 1:34 PM
To: fracking inquiry
Cc: Chief Minister; Minister Fyles; Minister Vowles; Minister Moss
Subject: Written submission on the NT Fracking Inquiry Report

Dear Justice Pepper and Panel,

I appreciate that the Panel's report makes many important recommendations in the face of the risks of fracking and exploration.

Groundwater is critical in the Northern Territory – for our rural blocks and as back-up for our Dam water for urban use.

Because of the significant knowledge gaps in groundwater research and monitoring here, our natural environmental biodiversity suffers and this adversely affects our overall health and well-being.

You only have to look at the PFAT catastrophe in Katherine, Rapid Creek and the Daly River to recognise the potential for long-term pollution of our water.

Because of our lack of NT environmental law safeguards, the precautionary principle must be applied and no fracking allowed – for exploration and production.

Regulatory changes that are designed to ensure that any mining practice will ensure a healthy natural environment with the resilience to regenerate be firmly in place before, during and after any exploration or production takes place.

It is not acceptable that toxic chemicals are used for high pressure hydraulic fracturing through aquifers.

Equally, existing residents of the NT need reliable and potable groundwater so excessive water use for fracking and all associated risks are not acceptable.

New clear and transparent laws that protect the environment and landholder and resident rights – especially to potable groundwater – should be firmly in place before the oil and gas industry is permitted to frack the Northern Territory.

These laws include:

Strictly enforceable codes of practice that ensure all mining in the NT holds a fiduciary duty of care so that (1) onshore gas wells are not abandoned and (2) methane gas is responsibly monitored and reported when emitted.

A fiduciary duty of care test to assess whether miners, mining company directors and managers are 'fit and proper' to recognise the inherent value of the natural environment and what it means to respect and protect it for current and future generations.

Wastewater treated as a reuseable resource and made potable by the gas companies not the public purse.

Developing and applying strategic regional environmental and baseline assessment (SREBA) – to regional groundwater and to establish no go zones.

Social Impact risks taken seriously and the right to say ‘no’ enshrined – especially when evidence shows that frackers (and governments) misrepresent, mislead and disregard legal safeguards.

A public interest appeal right when ‘no’ is ignored.

Legal improvements as suggested – and recommended by you, the panel, are critical. Without them, fracking cannot take place.

Thank you for considering the future of Northern Territory ecological sustainability.

It is vital that strong environmental, mining management and planning laws that follow precautionary principles are in place and enforced in the NT before any large-scale development that significantly degrades the environment, our social well-being and local, small-scale economy can take place.

Respectfully, Greg Chapman and Diana Rickard Tumbling Waters, Northern Territory, 0838, Australia

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