

Annette Raymond

SUBMISSION TO FRACKING ENQUIRY

I thank the enquiry for the ability to make this submission and I apologise upfront for being emotional. I have tried to stick to the facts and be unemotional, but this subject is extremely emotional for most people on both sides on the argument.

I stand before you today, not as an expert but as a general Joe from the street, but a general Joe who is an intelligent person who has completed well over 200 hrs of research, on both sides of this argument.

Now a little about me –

I have served my country for over 20 years in a classified area and know most of the standard responses to most of the hard questions. I have been an extremely proud Aussie that is maybe not always politely correct.

However I have NEVER stood up on any subject before now.

Having said that I became aware of the Unconventional Oil & Gas Sector in 2012. At that time I wrote to multiple elected people with my concerns and questions, (of which I have here), and not ONE response even tried to address any ONE of my questions or concerns.

I may not be an expert but I am not a 3rd rate citizen either, and I do not accept that my voice is not worthily of being heard or that what I am saying is not valid.

Now having said this I now turn to the Terms of Reference this enquiry is under and I find TWO recurring themes which I will address.

1. Term "Scientific Evidence"
2. Term "Adverse Impacts"

Then I will address TWO other issues that are stated continuously around this industry.

1. Term "Robust Regulatory Frameworks"
2. Term "Best Practises"

Let's start with 'Scientific Evidence'

Well in a nutshell there is NONE.

Why you might ask. Well in all the places and areas where this industry is operating – NO baseline data is available to compare this to anything, hence NO scientific evidence is available. And of course good old fashioned commonsense does NOT apply.

Therefore let's look at the next term "Adverse Impacts".

Now if NO 'Scientific Evidence' exists then how do you know if there are any "Adverse Impacts" occurring. Quite

simply you DONT. And of course once again commonsense does NOT apply.

If you truly want “Scientific Evidence” to assess “Adverse Impacts”, then a total BAN on this industry needs to be in place IMMEDIATELY until enough time has passed to truly gather evidence on this industry. But I will come back to this shortly.

Let’s now look at the other TWO terms.

Firstly “Robust Regulatory Frameworks”.

These only work if the industry complies with them AND someone enforces them.

My problem here is this NEVER happens successfully in ANY industry. So why do we think it will happen now, especially when you take into account where this industry will be operating in the NT – out bush.

Secondly “Best Practise”

Well the only comment I have on this term is this statement –

“Today’s best practise is tomorrow’s worst nightmares”.

And I give you TWO examples of areas that met all of the FOUR above terms and both went horribly wrong.

1. Asbestos – This was the best thing since sliced bread. This was done under "Best Practise" for the time period, and had "robust regulatory regimes" with NO "adverse impacts" and NO 'scientific evidence" to the contrary.

Well we all know how this turned out. People are still fighting today for compensation.

2. PFAS & PFOS – This was used mainly in fire fighting foam but this stuff was so good we used it

- Wrap our food in it
- We covered our furniture in it
- We even covered our clothes in it

Well now we have here in Katherine and across Australia and other parts of the world, contaminated water and soil.

AND no-one can answer the questions

- How long this will last?
- Can we get rid of this?
- What damage is it continuing to do?
- Or any other question you may pose.

WHY. Because no-one knows. We just know we can't drink the water, we are not suppose to eat food that has had contaminated water on it or has been grown in contaminated soil.

AND this again was done under “best practise” for the time period, and had “robust regulatory regime”, that had NO “adverse impacts” and NO “scientific evidence” to the contrary.

Now this is only TWO examples of which there are many more, but I hope my point has become clear.

We don't know what issues and or problems the Unconventional Oil & Gas Industry will bring. So why are we, with NO baseline data and NO scientific evidence jumping into the frypan yet again? After all the gas is not going anywhere.

Just because we can do something does NOT mean we should do it.

Let's wait for the 'science' to come in. It only took 10 years for PFAS & PFOS to raise concerns. It took quite a bit longer for asbestos. But why do we continue to keep making the same mistakes over and over again. The Northern Territory is already dealing with multiple legacy mines with major issues. Let's truly look at this, let's look at the complete, bigger picture – let's look at this with the planet in mind and not as a quick perceived fix to perceived problem, which we will have to sort out later, if we can sort it out at all.

I keep hearing and being told about the “Gas Shortage” and how many “Jobs” this industry will create and how much “Money” we will make. Well I am sorry but these statements are extremely misleading at best and plain LIES at worst.

1. Most of the gas will be exported overseas. So how does this help our perceived gas shortage?
2. A large percentage of the jobs will be FIFO. So once again how does this help locals?
3. Australia as a whole, let alone the Northern Territory will only see a very small monetary value from this industry. And according to the Australia Institute Research and the Northern Territory Governments own figures – and staying with the Northern Territory's Governments figures only –
 - The Northern Territory Government has paid to Mining Companies \$407 million dollars, let me say that again, \$407 million dollars, over 6 years as assistance and funding.
 - This is equivalent to 80% of ALL the royalties they received.

So I ask, How does this help us? How can this be a huge income boost? I am not the smartest tool in the toolbox, but this does NOT seem to be a great outcome to me.

Now I admit – I am 100% against this industry, and not just for the Katherine Area, NOT even just for the WHOLE of the ENTIRE Northern Territory, but for ALL of Australia.

However, I digress. I have not even touched or scratched the surface of the issues that worry me, about this industry. And

due to the time frame here, I will quickly list the overall topic headings only that concern me, and please note these are not in any particular order –

Ground water contamination

Aquifer contamination

Aquifers overlap in the NT – does that mean ALL aquifers will in time, be contaminated?

Surface water contamination

Soil contamination

Fugitive emissions

Fault lines and seismic activity

Ecosystems

Infrastructure or the lack of it

Community impacts – house and land prices, sacred sites

Tourism impacts

Waste disposal

Health impacts – human, livestock, wildlife, domestic animals

Well integrity – in 20/50/100 years and beyond

Land owner/lessees rights

This list goes on and on but I will stop here and simply state –

This industry has NO social license to operate.

And this is one thing all the companies' state, on their own websites, that they MUST have to secede in this industry.

So I pose to you, if there is NO social licence and NO scientific proof, (one way or the other), then how can this industry be given the green light to go ahead.

What kind of legacy are we leaving the next generation?

I know none of these issues will show up until long after I have left this planet, but that does NOT make it right.

I could pose numerous other issues and questions but, due to the time restraints here I will end with this statement –

When we have NO clean air to breathe, NO clean water to drink and NO clean soil for agriculture and horticulture to survive, NO wildlife left and a landscape that NO-ONE wants – WHAT HAPPENS THEN??????

I thank you.