

Submission in Response to the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory

My first question is.....Why do we need this industry? We have enough gas offshore, it is not worth the RISK!

To sustain our fishing and tourism industries, the Northern Territory needs fresh clean water and lots of it. Any chemical injected underground by the process of hydraulic fracturing threaten this water. It must also not be forgotten that the very process of fracking is highly water intensive.

The often massive rains of the Northern Territory inundate the landscape. Should this rainwater in any way accidentally come into contact with frack waste water, then this would be disastrous. It is impossible to completely monitor this industry and it certainly cannot monitor itself.

The disposal of waste water into ponds is completely unreliable as these often leak, overflow and kill birds and animals which come to drink this water. Waste water trucks have been filmed in Queensland dumping their loads in the outback. These trucks cannot return empty and will often dump their loads wherever they can get away with it.

Fracking would also release huge methane loads. The impact of shale gas on Australia's carbon budget needs to feature in discussions. Surely as a country we do not want to open ourselves up to massive carbon pollution liabilities in the future.

Fracking liquids are made up of high levels of salts, chemicals and radioactive gas. Natural occurring radioactive particles, such as radium, barium and radon have the potential to migrate to the surface in the cracking of the rocks underground. Cracking would be a far better term than fracking.

Both in the USA and Queensland residents living near gasfields have experienced numerous health issues, including lung irritations, nosebleeds, nausea, vomiting, dizziness and skin rashes. Surely this is an indication of a highly polluting and dangerous practice.

Fracking is also a major intrusion on aboriginal land where no respect is given to sacred sites, songlines and waterholes. There is also a varying degree of actual correct translation and interpretation, resulting in an often misunderstanding of the actual fracking process and possible outcomes.

Farmers need to have the right to say Yes or NO when negotiating with gas companies, forced agreements are not agreements, they are violations.

Where are the government protections of National Parks including Litchfield, Gregory and Kakadu, rural areas, tourism attractions such as Mataranka Hot Springs, Douglas Daly Hot Springs, Howard River, cattle stations, gorges and major waterways.

The Northern Territory Government (Ministers and their advisors) really need to go and talk physically with all traditional owners and both tourism and fishing operators before putting our land at risk. This inquiry is the first step in a long process of consultation before any major gasfields should be even considered.

Thankyou...Mrs F Saltmarsh....Howard Springs 