



Darwin – Lia Gill

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Darwin Convention Centre, Darwin

Speaker: Lia Gill

Lia Gill: My name is Lia Gill. I'm a mother and a grandmother who's lived in the Territory virtually all my life. And I'm horrified at the probability, the living hell that our families will be left to deal with in the aftermath of hydraulic fracturing being allowed in the Northern Territory. I'm also a horticulturalist, and have studied conservation and land management, and I have a long connection to the bushland of the Northern Territory.

There is strong evidence from all countries in the world that have allowed this type of mining, that poor health, water contamination, pollution, and environmental degradation, has occurred as a direct result. We're already seeing the result of this type of mining in Queensland, where large tracks of land have been destroyed, and the Condamine River is bubbling methane gas. We're dependent on our groundwater for our survival. To risk this precious resource, the health and future of the citizens of the Northern Territory, and our pastoral and tourism industries, for the very short term and questionable financial gain that hydraulic fracturing would provide, would not only be extremely foolish, but absolutely criminal.

To take the risks that this type of mining brings with it is like playing Russian roulette with our future health, our industries, and environment. But with five bullets in the barrel, instead of one.

There is a lack of data and understanding of the effects of climate change on our groundwater. The variability of current and future rainfall amounts, and the groundwater systems of the Northern Territory are also not fully understood. And although this panel has identified the risks to surface and groundwater that could occur as a result of hydraulic fracturing, the level of those risks, or how to fully mitigate them, have not been determined.

Lia Gill: Risks, or how to fully mitigate them, have not been determined in draft final report. The mining industry in the Northern Territory has a history of mishaps, environmental degradation and a lack of responsibility for the damage done after the sought after materials have been depleted. According to the example given within the recommendation of this panel, the monitoring of these proposed wells should be undertaken every two years for a period of ten years, and then every five years thereafter. If contamination of ground water occurs between the two years of testing. ...



[Streaming stopped due to power outage because of the storm]

Lia Gill: It will be too late to put in place any measures to protect of those affected, or prevent the environmental damage that will result.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Hold on a second, we're just having a few technical difficulties as a result of the storm, and I do want this to be recorded.

Lia Gill: Like I'm not nervous enough.

Dr. David Jones: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you, yes. Please continue. Thank you very much.

Lia Gill: If contamination of ground water occurs between the two years of testing, it will be too late to put in place any measures to protect the health of those affected or prevent the environmental damage that will result. And indeed there seems to be no clear measures to prevent this damage, should a leak occur. Also in question is how often, if at all, these wells will be inspected in years to come. Once the gas has been extracted, who will be monitoring these wells for damage in 30, 40 or 50 years? Not the mining companies, that's for sure. They'll be long gone.

The amounts of water needed to carry out hydraulic fracturing operations are phenomenal, and it has not as yet been made clear how the contaminated water and chemical waste that are the by-products of this kind of operation will be disposed of. The transportation of this water on our roads poses yet another risk. The panel imply within the report that the majority people in the [inaudible – Northern Territory] are okay with fracking. This assumption was based on a report by the CSIRO, which found about 57 percent of Territorian supporter extracted mining. This is not reflected of the opinion of Territorians towards hydraulic fracturing. As extracted mining describes all mining, and whilst many Territorians may, for example, be supportive of open cut mines and such, there are clearly many Territorians who are absolutely opposed to hydraulic fracturing. As has been demonstrated by the many who have attended and voiced their concerns at forums, and the record numbers that have attended protests against this proposed mining practice.

It would be interesting to see how many would vote to allow hydraulic fracturing if a referendum was held. I'm pretty confident that sanity would prevail, if we were able to put this matter to the vote.

It is obvious that our government cannot be trusted to be transparent in regards to this proposed method of mining, as they are already advertising for overseas investors into on shore gas mining in the Northern Territory, which makes a mockery of the moratorium.

Lia Gill: And shows that they have little concern or consideration for the rights or opinions of the people they're supposed to be representing, and whose interest they are supposed to be safeguarding. We can't drink money, and it



won't fix the problems that can, and in all likelihood will occur, if this form of mining is allowed. When our ground water is contaminated, and large areas of our environment are destroyed forever as a result of this proposed method of mining being allowed, our government will ultimately be responsible for the genocide and displacement of thousands of Territorians.

Our Chief Minister, Mr. Gunner, must listen to the overwhelming majority of Territorians who want to protect their water and environment for future generations and ban hydraulic fracturing from the Northern Territory. Thank you.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you very much. Any questions? Yes, Mr. Jones.

Dr. David Jones: Maybe just one of clarification, when you're talking about two years periods of monitoring, that was specifically referring to pressure testing for well integrity. Not for the ongoing and regular ground water monitoring you were talking about, so.

Lia Gill: Alright, so how often would that. ...

Dr. David Jones: At best, online monitoring. So, that the data streams of monitoring premise and ground water would be going in every minute or two minutes.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Continuous.

Dr. David Jones: Mm-hmm (affirmative) And then full analysis every couple of months, or something like that so I just raise that as a point of clarification.

Lia Gill: Yeah.

Dr. David Jones: Because it is. ... There are two issues, one is how well the pressure's being maintained in the well, which relates to the strength of the casing. And then anything that might actually get out of it and go into the environment, so obviously you want to have very regular monitoring of the external environment to make sure that nothing untoward is happening.

Lia Gill: And how long would that monitoring go on for? For the life of the well. And then we've also proposing monitoring as well, on a regular basis.

Hon. Justice Pepper: These are recommendations we're making. It will be, obviously, a matter for the government as to whether or not it implements those recommendations. And indeed, of course, it's a matter for the government. Not us, as to whether or not hydraulic fracturing is permitted.

Dr. David Jones: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Lia Gill: Yes.

Dr. David Jones: Certainly, monitor regularly and monitor well. If it is to go ahead.



- Hon. Justice Pepper: Yes, Dr. Smith has a question.
- Dr. Ross Smith: I'm just asking for a point of clarification. You referenced advertisement for foreign investors in onshore gas, was that the government that did that advertising? Or, if you can provide reference to that.
- Lia Gill: Yes, government document. From a, where was it. I did write it down.
- Hon. Justice Pepper: I was gonna ask about that, too, so I'm glad that it's been raised.
- Lia Gill: Yes.
- Hon. Justice Pepper: I'm quite keen to get my hands on a copy of that.
- Dr. David Jones: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- Lia Gill: Document minerals and energy involvement opportunities in Australia's Northern Territory, was written by Ian Scrimgeour, Executive Director of the NT Geological Survey. www.minerals.nt.gov.au. And it was group CORE or a department of CORE. I only actually saw it the day before yesterday, so it's relatively new, I would think.
- Hon. Justice Pepper: I was gonna say, do you know what the date on that document is?
- Lia Gill: No, I looked for that and I couldn't see it on the document.
- Hon. Justice Pepper: Okay.
- Lia Gill: Itself, yeah.
- Hon. Justice Pepper: Alright, well we will try and chase that down.
- Dr. David Jones: Yeah.
- Lia Gill: Yeah, let's see.
- Dr. Ross Smith: Do you have a copy of that document?
- Lia Gill: To be honest, it was on Facebook, but was from a reputable source and was a government document.
- Hon. Justice Pepper: Alright, we'll try and, thank you for that additional information.
- Lia Gill: Horror within the group of people that saw this, that it's already being advertised.
- Hon. Justice Pepper: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
- Lia Gill: Yeah.



Dr. David Jones: Okay, thank you.

Hon. Justice Pepper: We will absolutely endeavour to get a copy of that document.

Lia Gill: Yeah.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you.

Lia Gill: I could probably figure out a way to send you a link to that.

Hon. Justice Pepper: That would be wonderful.

Lia Gill: Yeah.

Hon. Justice Pepper: If you just send it to the fracking inquiry website. Email.

Lia Gill: I've got really bad computer skills. I'm hopeless. I've had a big learning curve in the last year or so, but I will endeavour, or perhaps one of my friends could do that. I'm sure they've seen this document as well.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Alright, well we would certainly be very interested in getting our hands on a copy of that.

Lia Gill: Yes.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Absolutely.

Lia Gill: Yeah.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you.

Lia Gill: Alright.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you very much, Ms. Gil, for coming today. Taking the time to present, we very much appreciate what you've said. Thank you.

Lia Gill: Thank you. Do I just hand one of these copies over?

Hon. Justice Pepper: Yeah just hand that to the lady at the back.

Lia Gill: Yes.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Or one of the people here. Then we will make sure that that's given a submission number, and will be put up on the website.

Lia Gill: Alright. And I'll type this off and send it as well, if that's okay.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you, yes. Thank you very much.

Lia Gill: Thank you very much.