

From: Mandy Webb, Alice Springs

RESPONSE TO THE SUMMARY OF THE DRAFT FINAL REPORT ON THE SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY INTO HYDRAULIC FRACTURING.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this Report.

(One preliminary comment - p 14 Map 2, pale yellow dots indicate fractured unconventional shale wells and slightly darker yellow dots indicate non-fractured conventional (sandstone) wells. This is potentially confusing. Also the word "play" in "*Amadeus Basin subsalt play*".

I live in Alice Springs. There is no apparent plan to carry out unconventional fracturing in this region as yet, but I am very aware that the aquifer we depend is falling much faster than it is being replenished. The idea that huge quantities of water could be extracted and then poisoned is totally unacceptable.

This concern is also true of the Beetaloo Sub-basin, the mostly likely site for any future hydraulic fracturing in the NT. The recommended Strategic Regional Environmental and Baseline Assessment (SREBA) appears essential. However, even if recharge rates and linkages between aquifers are better identified and a better estimate obtained for the sustainable groundwater yield for such an industry, the problem remains that if hydraulic fracturing were to go ahead and excessive depletion and/or contamination of groundwater did occur, the damage cannot be repaired. For example, ref. page 17 "*gas companies be required to 'make good' any problems if this drawdown is found to be excessive.*" How can they 'make good'? If the water has gone, it's gone.

This is true also for escape of methane and well fluids. Ref. page 30 "*The Panel has assessed the risk of non-detection of abnormal levels of fugitive methane emissions ... to be 'medium'.*" As noted in the Report (p9) there is very little information on the performance of abandoned shale gas wells, and once a well has been abandoned it is difficult to re-enter it. Once again, although monitoring is prima facie essential, what can actually be done to prevent or reverse any damage that might be detected? (For example the migration of methane along the outside of the casing?)

Recommendation 5.6 to address treatment and disposal issues of toxic wastewater is certainly a priority. Current issues of leaching resulting from poor practices in the NT give no confidence in this regard.

Ref. page 32 "*For any new onshore shale gas field in the NT, the Panel has assessed the risks to climate change associated with GHG emissions, including methane, and assessed that of these risks, without any further mitigation, to be 'medium'.*"

"Mitigation" and "Mitigate" are words frequently used in this report. It might be better to simply use the work "reduce". Either way, I do not see anywhere the possibility that any of the many risks can actually be eliminated. And monitoring can identify a problem - but not fix it.

CONCLUSION: No fracking. Stop looking for, extracting and burning fossil fuels.

P.S. Here's an idea. Get serious about solar. Build a solar thermal power station in Tennant Creek and use the gas pipeline to Mount Isa for a high voltage DC power cable. (Check out how it's working in Africa.)