

**From:** Shirley Crane  
**To:** [fracking inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Concerns about fracking in the NT  
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As a resident of the town of Katherine, I have serious concerns about the impact of fracking on this area. My concerns are as follows:

1. All wells will eventually fail. They are constructed of steel and concrete and those materials perish with time. Most failures will occur between 50 to 100 years from the sinking of the wells and rehabilitation, as outlined by the gas companies, will only delay the inevitable. How many gas companies are still going to be around in 100 years to take responsibility for the rehabilitation of these wells? Trying to deal with them is probably going to be an impost on our children and grandchildren, who will be the taxpayers when the eventual failures occur. It has been suggested that the NT could become host to more than 100,000 wells, so the cost of rehabilitation will be in the billions of dollars., but the gas companies have been rather tight lipped about how many wells we will eventually have to accept - it could be many more than the suggested figure.
2. The current cost of rehabilitating a well is around half a million dollars. Factor in inflation and the future cost to the community is horrendous. The economic benefits of fracking now will be well and truly cancelled out by the long-term damage done to the environment.
3. The NT is a network of aquifers and natural fault lines. The risks of gas escaping along fault lines that gas companies 'inadvertently' breach, to enter the underground water supply is an unknown quantity. Underground water cannot currently be successfully rehabilitated after chemical contamination. As a resident of Katherine, I'm already seeing the devastating impact on real estate values, business failures and population loss, of water contamination through PFAS. It really frightens me to think what will happen to our town if gas contamination is added to the mix.
4. Much is said about the possibility of mitigating the impacts of fracking on the environment, and how the risk factors can be minimised to a very low percentage. If you are the person who happens to be one of that suggested very low percentage of affected people, statistics become meaningless - it might as well be a 100% risk. People here are not impressed by the talk of mitigating factors - if there is anything more than zero risk, we shouldn't even be thinking about fracking.
5. Mining and gas companies do not have a very impressive history of creating local jobs. They find it more cost effective to use fly-in-fly-out workers. After they have their licences to frack, there is nothing to say that they have to employ Territorians, so the job creation likelihood is a myth. The numbers of jobs for locals will probably be minuscule.
6. Mining companies have a very poor history of cleaning up after themselves when they leave, as they will when the gas runs out.
7. The most important industry in the NT is tourism. Mining companies move into towns, buy up the available accommodation for their fly-in-fly outs, so that rental costs soar in the short term and cut tourists and locals out of the accommodation market. The gas might last ten years at a stretch, but by that time, the tourist industry is seriously damaged or dead, and suddenly, there is a glut of available rental accommodation, which means that the local real estate values plummet. Fly-in-fly-outs contribute very little to the local economy, since they have no commitment to its survival, so businesses fold and population

moves away. The long-term economic future of a community affected by fracking is very grim.

8. Tourists do not want to visit environments polluted by mining. Animal and bird breeding areas are damaged, sometimes beyond repair and waterways that were once pristine, once they have been exposed to contamination, become smelly, unhealthy places that no one would want to visit. This has happened in other places and there is nothing to say that it won't happen here. Our environment is unique and beautiful. If there is any risk to it at all, and there is no assurance from the gas companies that the risk is absolutely zero, we violate our custodianship of the land by allowing fracking to go ahead.

9. This land is Aboriginal homeland, and is dotted with Aboriginal sacred sites. There doesn't appear to have been very much consultation with the Aboriginal people about risks to their traditional lands. Most of the Aboriginal people I've spoken to are afraid of what fracking will mean to their country, but feel that they lack the voice to say anything that the government will listen to. They find it very hard to get anyone to listen to them about anything, so when there is so much power behind the very one-sided conversation, they feel that it is a hopeless outcome for them.

10. Most people who are long-term residents of the NT, both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous, do not want fracking to occur here. We feel that we are being steam-rolled into accepting fracking by a government that won't listen and gas companies that hold a whip hand and control what the government will do. It would surely make far more sense for the Government to support solar energy, by offering panels to home owners all over the country, as a long-term solution to the energy supply problems, since Australia has an endless supply of sunshine. The termination of support for the solar energy roll-out seems to have been largely engineered by the gas companies which saw their profit margins being affected by the solar industry. This does need some explanation.

11. How much tax will the gas companies pay if fracking goes ahead, and how will any of it reach the NT? We don't feel that we should be suffering the killing of our environment and our communities to support the gas companies that are unlikely to contribute anything to our economy. The Federal Government has a history of allowing any form of mining to write off exploration costs, infrastructure, etc, as losses that minimise or wipe out tax altogether, and mining companies often pay little or nothing. Added to that, the Government also has a history of giving those same companies taxpayer-funded grants for one reason or another, so the future benefits to our community seem to be tenuous at best.

12. The Federal Government's threats against the NT Government of cuts to GST funding if the moratorium on fracking isn't lifted is disgusting. It is bullying in the worst possible way, and takes no account of the NT Government's need to represent the wishes of its constituents. This will be a serious election issue for both the NT and the Federal Governments at the next election.

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