

## **SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO UNCONVENTIONAL GAS MINING.**

To the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into Unconventional Gas Mining, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this very timely and extremely relevant inquiry into the contentious issue of unconventional gas mining in Australia.

I and my family live in a small rural community in the south west region of Western Australia, a region internationally recognised for its diverse range of food and wine production, tourism industries, pristine forests and associated ecosystems and diverse and welcoming communities.

We are now facing the threat of unconventional gas mining in this region, potentially putting at extreme risk our diverse industries, our ground and surface water resources, our communities and families health and the rural amenity and ambience of this unique region.

The Western Australian government is actively and aggressively promoting onshore gas and petroleum mining in the south west region, including fracking. A senior Department of Mines and Petroleum officer has stated that WA is on the verge of a 'fracking frenzy'. The Western Australian government recently held an inquiry into the implications for Western Australia of hydraulic fracturing in this state. The vast majority of submissions to this inquiry were vehemently opposed to fracking anywhere in WA, yet the recommendations of the inquiry basically gave the go-ahead to fracking in WA, completely ignoring the wishes of the people of this state.

There is a strong and growing public opposition to fracking in WA. The people have not and will not give the state government or the gas corporations any social licence to commence this destructive and completely unnecessary practice in WA. The south west region of WA is an internationally recognised bio-diversity 'hot spot', a recognised 'clean and green' food bowl and an extremely popular lifestyle and tourism destination. We are not prepared to compromise this region for the short term profits of gas corporations, no matter how many platitudes the state government pronounces regarding 'worlds best practice', and stringent industry and environmental monitoring and management. The past history of government and industry regulation both here and in many other national and international jurisdictions gives us no confidence at all in any mining or gas developments.

Put simply, we do not need and we cannot afford to allow unconventional gas mining in Australia. We must learn from the myriad examples around the planet that clearly show that fracking is a dangerous, polluting and clearly unwanted destructive practice. Australians are not prepared to allow gas mining in this country, period.

The majority of Australians want a rapid transition to a renewable energy based economy, and the dismantling of the dirty and polluting fossil fuel based economy. It is well beyond time that the governments of Australia listen to the wishes of the people and act in the manner required to

mitigate the catastrophic impacts that climate disruption is having on our only planet. When will we see that life and our economy are utterly dependant on a healthy and functioning environment.

I and my family sincerely thank Senator Lazarus for his courage and conviction in instigating this inquiry, and we trust that the Australian government will listen to the people and shut down all gas fracking in this country.

Can't eat coal, can't drink gas!

Thank you.

Julian Sharp.

25<sup>th</sup> January 2016.