

Alison Orme
Original Power

**Opening statement - Middle Arm Inquiry - Nurrdalindi Native Title Aboriginal Corporation
11 April 2024**

My name is Samuel Janama Sandy and I am the Chair of Nurrdalindi Native Title Aboriginal Corporation.

Nurrdalindi is a registered Aboriginal Corporation which includes members from across the Beetaloo Basin and 11 native title determination areas. We set up in 2020 because we want a way of being able to voice our views as a group and self-determine what happens on our country.

The NT Pepper Inquiry into Fracking noted almost universally Aboriginal communities expressed deep concern about, and strong opposition to fracking on their country. It is these community voices that make up the membership of Nurrdalindi.

We are here today to say that we want to protect our country from fracking on the grounds that fracking will damage our country, sacred sites and songlines, many of which are connected to water. Our sacred sites aren't adequately protected by laws or companies.

Fracking exploration is already destroying our country and there are big plans to drill up to 6,000 wells across the Beetaloo Basin.

The Federal and Northern Territory governments should not back fracking on our country, for gas which Tamboran will send to Middle Arm Gas Hub be used, processed and exported overseas from Middle Arm to make a profit.

Billions in public money for Middle Arm is another big boost for the fracking industry, which is doing nothing for our communities. This money could be better spent on housing, education, health services and clean energy. We should be concentrating on solar energy for our communities too. The sun is free, doesn't run out and doesn't cause damage.

Gas companies say fracking will bring us jobs, support local businesses, bring more wealth. But we know this is not the truth. The benefits that the government says are there aren't. Our experience is that Aboriginal people get few, if any, jobs despite all the promises. We are getting a peanut, while the white man is packing up his pocket with cash. The NT government, the gas companies and the Northern Land Council get the big share and our communities are left without jobs or support to grow stronger. Our people want jobs, but not jobs that involve drilling into our country.

Agreements for fracking were signed by our old people long ago. They never understood what fracking was or how it might impact our country.

Our lives are being made harder by climate change. It is getting hotter and hotter, making it more difficult for us to live on our own country when we want

to. Already this wet season we've had Cyclone Megan and we worried about how cyclones and big rains will see more flooding and contamination from waste storage ponds.

Nurrdalinji was so concerned about the climate impacts from fracking and Middle Arm that we commissioned climate scientist Dr Bill Hare at Climate Analytics to do a report, "[Emissions Impossible](#)". Mr Hare said fracking and Middle Arm would produce a "climate bomb" that cannot be offset, creating a massive increase in emissions.

One of Nurrdalinji directors, Yanyuwa and Garawa woman Joni Wilson, will have her country impacted by fracking. She can't be here today as planned because she has just returned to Borroloola after being evacuated to Darwin after the climate change fuelled flooding and Cyclone Megan. I want to tell the Committee what she has said:

"Climate change, which will affect everyone, is seeing longer dry seasons and much heavier rains where we live. We don't want fracking, which this report shows will make it hotter and harder for us and future generations to live on country".....We used to live off a seasonal calendar, but we notice changes. Country is our supermarket and already we're seeing less and less birds, turkey, fish and goannas and collecting food is becoming harder.....

Lastly, I want to talk about Tamboran Resources, the company that plans to frack our country and has been named as an 'anchor tenant'. The want to build an LNG facility at Middle Arm to process the gas that has been fracked in the Beetaloo. We do not trust this company and have had bad experience in how they deal with us as Traditional Owners, how they deal with pastoralists, and for the alarming incidents at their worksites before large scale production has even started. Tamboran is not a company that should benefit from public funding. They have already been fined for polluting from one well and are under investigation for other incidents.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to tell our story here today. We want the politicians to listen.

We want to protect country and fracking will damage it. There should be no money spent on gas at Middle Arm and the gas companies should now pack their bags and go home.