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# Community Briefing:

## 14 July, 2017

### Holding the McGowan Government to their election commitments and supporting a Frack Free WA

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**Summary.** Fracking was a major issue during the 2017 election campaign.

WA Labor made important commitments to ban fracking in some areas, and undertake an inquiry before it could go ahead anywhere in the state. Thousands of people across Perth, SouthWest, Swan Valley, Midwest and the Kimberley trusted the McGowan Labor team with their vote (many for the first time) because of their position on fracking and unconventional gas.

Since the election, indications are that the Government have been backing away from the commitments they made on this issue. Communities and landholders now need to firmly remind the new Government and Members of Parliament to stick to their promises on fracking and unconventional gas.

This briefing explains the current situation and what can be done to make sure Labor's commitments are met.

**“We will conduct a public inquiry to examine environment, health, agriculture, heritage and community impacts (including full lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions) prior to any fracking activity (including future exploration).”**

**WA Labor will place a moratorium on the use of fracking until such an inquiry can demonstrate that the process will not compromise the environment, groundwater, public health, or contribute adversely to climate change.”**

- Mark McGowan, 2017

**What the Labor Party promised on Fracking before the election.** The McGowan Labor team made important commitments on fracking before the election:

- 1 | A statewide moratorium (temporary ban) would be placed on fracking and unconventional gas (including exploration) across the state, pending an inquiry into the practice.
- 2 | Fracking would be permanently banned in the Southwest, Perth, Peel and Swan Valley.
- 3 | Traditional Owners would be given the power to veto fracking.

During the election campaign, Labor's Collie-Preston MP Mick Murray responded to community concern, calling to legislate to make the South West a frack-free zone.<sup>1</sup>

**What has been delivered so far.** There has been no formal announcement on that the government will do, however the Minister for Mines and Petroleum hon Bill Johnston has been reported to have said the fracking ban in the Southwest and Swan Valley will not be in legislation; and exploration for unconventional gas will be allowed to continue, even in the areas where fracking will be banned.

In addition, new petroleum lease areas over unconventional gas areas have been released by the new Government since the election.

We are also concerned that the promised veto rights for Traditional Owners will not be legislated.

**What this means.** The above statements and actions are all very worrying indications that the McGowan Government (or at least the Minister for Mines and Petroleum) are not taking their commitments on fracking and unconventional gas seriously.

A fracking ban that is not backed by legislation can be overturned at any time by this Government or any future government. This does not provide security for landholders, communities and businesses that their environment and health will be permanently protected from fracking.

Exploration for unconventional gas could allow the fracking industry to become established and 'get a foot in the door', ready for a change in policy on the issue. Exploration itself can involve drilling and fracking wells, clearing for roads and seismic testing, and other destructive processes that put our environment and groundwater at risk.

The previous Labor Government banned uranium mining in WA but this was not backed by legislation. As a result, the Barnett Government was able to easily approve four uranium mines which cannot be blocked by the new Labor Government. We do NOT want to be in the same position with gas fracking.



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Find and email your local Labor MP via this link: <https://ccwa.good.do/frackfreefuture/statewideban/>  
Additional Parliamentary contact details: <http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/WebCMS/WebCMS.nsf/content/contact-us>

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**What we can do about it.** It is very important that communities and landholders concerned about this issue make contact with their local members of Parliament and the Premier.

Local MP's need to know that the community has not forgotten the election commitments on fracking and expects them to be fully implemented. Without this understanding community members and groups are encouraged to make contact with their local Member of Parliament via their electorate office.

Asking to meet the MP is important, but a meeting might take some time to arrange. In the meantime, you can discuss your concerns with the staff in the electorate office and write or email the MP directly.

**“The community has been vocal on this issue and WA Labor has listened. They’ve overwhelmed backed Mick Murray’s campaign for a frack free South West and I’m delighted we’ve been able to give them an assurance that fracking will not occur in these regions under a government I lead.”**

- Mark McGowan, Oct 6, 2017<sup>2</sup>

### Key points to use when contacting Labor Members of Parliament.

#### If you are in Southwest, Perth, Peel or Swan Valley areas:

- The fracking ban in the Southwest, Perth, Peel and Swan Valley must be legislated. It must also ban all exploration for any form of unconventional gas.
- Comments from the Minister for Mines and Petroleum and the release of new petroleum exploration license areas before the promised ban or moratorium has been announced suggest the Government is not taking the issue seriously.
- Without legislation there can be no confidence that the ban will remain in place. Without legislation there is no security or certainty. Labor are now allowing uranium mining to go ahead against their policy because the previous ban was not legislated – we don't want the same thing with fracking.
- For other areas of the state we need to see an independent inquiry with proper community consultation. Following that the fracking ban should be extended to protect ALL communities and groundwater across the state.

#### If you are in another area of the state:

- The fracking ban for the Southwest and Swan Valley should be extended to protect ALL communities and groundwater across the state. Our communities and groundwater are just as important as those in the Southwest.
- The evidence is clear that fracking is not safe and we have more than enough gas in WA – it is being exported in large volumes. There is no reason to risk our groundwater and health for the sake of this industry.
- The inquiry process must include effective community consultation including in the regions.
- In the meantime, there should be no more petroleum exploration licenses issued.
- Landholders including Traditional Owners must be given veto rights to prevent fracking on their land and this must be in legislation.
- Fracking bans should be in legislation – without the backing of laws they can be changed at any time.

#### Remember to ask:

What will you do about this as my local representative?

What is your position on the issue?

#### Some things you can ask them to do include:

- Make a statement in Parliament on the issue
- Write to the Minister and Premier on your behalf
- Support motions to strengthen WA Labor party platform
- Support local action groups working on this issue
- Speak out in the media and social media

**Please let us know what responses you get!**  
**Phone: 0468 585 377 to speak with Kat Neaves**  
**Email: [info@frackfreefuture.org.au](mailto:info@frackfreefuture.org.au)**