

Do Protestors tell You the truth and are their protests based on Facts??

Many environmental non-government organizations (eNGO's) exist based on half truths, misinformation and erroneous interpretations of selected bits of fact, to basically create a scary story. This scary story is then packaged into short catch cries and pedaled through social media and the public to elicit a media presence and general support, mainly in the pursuit of funds and publicity.

Some of the eNGO's, while masquerading as deeply concerned organizations have either been hijacked away from their core purpose and/or become part of a wider campaign to stop all fossil fuels (petroleum products and coal) in their pursuit of climate change.

These are the very industries that create employment and create products that all of us and these very organizations and their vocal representatives, use every day such as petrol for cars, jet fuel for their plane travel, plastic for a multitude of products such as computers, mobile phones, etc, copper for the water supply and so on.

To get a feel as to how extensive oil & gas products are used in our everyday lives, review the following links. <http://bit.ly/1LHHZ1b> and <http://bit.ly/18JXWoo>

We and our society depends upon these products, they enable us to live through the transport of food to our cities, to provide our energy to keep us warm in winter, keep us cool in summer, transport our ourselves and families and to maintain our standard of living.

However, there are vocal anti development (anti fossil fuels – petroleum products) groups hiding behind the issue of climate change to keep some of these products in the ground. However, they tend to forget that even renewable energy needs vast amounts of resources dug out of the ground (eg. coal and iron ore for steel pylons, rare earths, and other metals for components). They tend to use pseudoscience, misrepresent the risks (they often confuse risk with hazard) and create scary stories. Life and everything we do is not risk free, but we balance the risk with the likelihood of something bad happening, such as driving our cars, taking an air flight etc.

There are some eNGO's (and their vocal representatives) who continue to ignore evidenced based facts about the impact of oil & gas exploration upon the environment and deliberately mislead unsuspecting media, their 'supporters' and the general public. Some eNGO's and their vocal representatives are simply duplicitous. Basically they cannot be trusted to convey the full facts to the media or public.

It is worth noting that the UK Chief Scientist, Professor Sir Mark Walport in a speech in September 2014 when talking about Risk, he included comments on fracking as well as protestors as follows, on fracking he made the following comments, "There are really 3 science and engineering concerns about hydraulic fracturing (fracking). The first of these is: will it cause earth tremors? The second is: will you get contamination of the water table? And the third is: will there be fugitive release of the methane gas? (In other words if you leak all the gas then you lose the advantage of it as a fossil fuel). And what the science and the engineering tells you is that this is

a drilling technology and no drilling technology is completely risk-free. But if it is done well, if it is engineered well, if it is governed well, then it is as safe as any other form of drilling, recognising that there is no 'free lunch', there is nothing that is completely risk-free." And on protestors he made the following comments, "Those are the engineering concerns, and that's what the Royal Academy of Engineers' report said and actually multiple other reports have all essentially said the same thing. But the public or publics who are protesting, at least in some parts of the world, about fracking are coming at it from a different angle. They're coming at it from the values angle and from the 'my pain, your gain' angle. And so there's a group that dislike fracking because they dislike fossil fuels, there's another group that dislike fracking because they actually just don't like big companies, and then there's a third group who just don't want the inconvenience of having something industrial happening in their back yard." The referenced speech can be found here <http://bit.ly/1CVyur7>

Turning to the above question, 'Do Protestors tell You the truth and are their protests based on Facts??' let's look at some examples over the last little while.

Example 1

On or about the 7th/ 8th of January 2015, a gas well (Yulleroo #2) which is located near Broome (WA) was the subject of an on line video by local eNGO's such as the anti fracking group 'Broome Community No Gas Campaign'. The film was also tweeted and shared with anti fracking eNGO sites across Australia, including Lock The Gate which tweeted the film of the well. So there was a lot of exposure.

The Yulleroo #2 well was fracked a couple of years ago, it is not producing any gas and was made safe by the Operator, including installing a mesh fence on its perimeter.

The film shows a hand held gas detector showing very high levels of methane leaking from a valve. Of course, this was news and was also picked up by the media, and news reports.

However, subsequently, upon investigation by the company concerned and the relevant Mines and Petroleum authorities it was revealed that **the valve on the wellhead had been deliberately bent and manipulated to allow gas to leak**

Any apology from the eNGO's? No way! and of course (at the time of writing), the 'leaky valve' incident is still able to be seen on these eNGO's sites. to show the viewing public 'proof' that fracking is not safe, despite the valve stem being deliberately bent and the valve needed to be manipulated to have a leak.

The valve has since been replaced and is in the custody of The WA Department of Mines and Petroleum, and the area has been inspected by police and the break in of the enclosure, the deliberate damage and the filming (which was highly dangerous, as the intruder could have blown themselves (and anyone else in the area) up) is being investigated by the WA Police.

Here, we have a deliberate criminal act (the break in and the willful damage to private property) as well as a risky act, **to manufacture 'evidence'** and then try to gain maximum exposure publicly which is just fraudulent! Along without any contrition by those eNGO's which posted it and continue to enable viewers to see it.

Example 2 – Hydraulic fracture stimulation (fracking)

Recent social media posts by activists, such as Anti CSG, and Anti Fracking groups (such as Lock the Gate and various spin offs from this activist group), which have sprung up primarily in country areas over the last three years or so.

They use “quotes” from eminent people and organizations to package a ‘potentially dangerous risk’ of say fracking into a slogan or sound bite for media use. This includes routinely extracting corroborating articles and misinformation generated by associated or likeminded activist groups, so there is a constant stream of scare stories.

One prime example is the scandalous use of the eminent use of the UK Chief Scientist name by Mr Laird from Lock the Gate organization, as reported in the online media “InDaily’ in early December 2014.

In regard to oil & gas exploration and fracking, InDaily reported Mr Laird as saying the following, “Laird cited concerns raised by the Chief Scientist of the United Kingdom, Mark Walport, that fracking held risks similar to those posed by [thalidomide, tobacco and asbestos](#), a [report](#) by the Chief Scientist of New South Wales and a Southern Cross University [study](#) as evidence that farmers’ concerns are backed by science.”

Really? Concerns expressed by highly respected people and researchers who (among other things) say that fracking held similar risks to those posed by thalidomide, tobacco and asbestos? Really?, well let’s look at the facts and evidence which may substantiate such claims from Lock the Gate.

Basically, all of these references used by Mr. Laird from Lock the Gate to support its position are misleading and false, as will be demonstrated below. However it does show the tactics employed by these and similar organizations to misrepresent the facts to spread fear and anxiety within our communities, particularly as we have seen recently in the South-East of SA.

In response to the concerns raised by Phil Laird (Coordinator for Lock The Gate) in referencing the report by The Government Chief Scientist of the UK, in his publication ‘Innovation: Managing Risk, Not Avoiding It ‘ Evidence and Case Studies’, the section Mr Laird quotes **was not written** by the Chief Scientist, Professor Sir Mark Walport, but was actually written **by one of the very many guest contributors. Professor Andy Stirling** from the University of Sussex. In his CV, Professor Stirling is/was (among other things) an activist and a past **Board Member of International Greenpeace and Greenpeace UK**. Further, **Professor Stirling did not say that “fracking” held similar risks to those posed by thalidomide, tobacco and asbestos at all!** Rather he postulated that “innovations reinforcing fossil fuel strategies – such as hydraulic fracturing- arguably offer a contemporary prospective example” (page 51). See <http://bit.ly/1z7JfRp>

Indeed, in the Foreword of the publication, Professor Sir Mark Walport, says, “The chapters and case studies *represent the author’s personal views rather than those of the Government Office for Science...*”. Basically Lock the Gate spokespersons are attributing quotes to and (it would appear intentionally) misrepresenting the words of The Chief Scientist of the United Kingdom. By strange co-incidence another guest author (Robert Muir, University of Cambridge) **supports fracking** in the UK, he writes on page 82 of the same publication, “**Fracking can be done safely in the United Kingdom, but not without effective regulation, careful management, robust environmental risk assessments and rigorous monitoring.**” - How convenient Lock the Gate forgot to mention this quote!

Further, in the second reference Mr Laird referred to was the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineers (Professor Mary O’Kane) recent report (30 September 2014), which was more focussed on CSG than hydraulic fracturing. On page 7 of the report the Chief Scientist states “There is a perception in some parts of the community that CSG extraction is potentially more damaging and dangerous than other extractive industries. This perception was heightened following the release of the American movie Gasland in 2010. The Review examined this issue in detail and concluded that while the CSG industry has several aspects that need careful attention, as do almost all industries, it is not significantly more likely to be more damaging or dangerous than other extractive industries” This statement alone debunks the outrageous anti CSG claims put forward by Mr Laird in regard to the second reference as a reason not to proceed with CSG or fracking. **Basically Lock the Gate have ‘shot themselves in the foot’** so to speak.

Further, in the article Mr Laird uses a third reference about researchers from the Southern Cross University undertaking mobile methane readings around ‘CSG’ fields. This ‘study’ has been labelled as not being in any way conclusive by the researchers themselves! as stated by one of the researchers (Dr. Santos) was quoted as saying “Any geological area that has gas deposits is going to have natural seeps. At this stage we are unable to separate the contribution of CSG activities from natural seeps because no sampling was done in Tara prior to mining”. As a consequence, **this reference** to support an anti fracking (or CSG) position **is false and not relevant** to Mr Laird’s position of opposing CSG or hydraulic fracture stimulation (fracking).

To summarise, Professor Sir Mark Walport UK Government Chief Science Advisor **DID Not say anything about thalidomide, tobacco and asbestos in relation to fracking in his report.** This is a mis representation and a falsehood to attribute this reference to him. What he did say about fracking in his speech dated 19 September 2014, delivered in Hanover, Germany, which focussed on Risk, Innovation, Regulation (among other things). Under the heading “Policy Lenses” was;

“There are really 3 science and engineering concerns about hydraulic fracturing (fracking). The first of these is: will it cause earth tremors? The second is: will you get contamination of the water table? And the third is: will there be fugitive release of the methane gas? (In other words if you leak all the gas then you lose the advantage of it as a fossil fuel). And what the science and the engineering tells you is that this is a drilling technology and no drilling technology is completely risk-free. **But if it is done well, if it is engineered well, if it is governed well, then it is as safe as any other form of drilling.** Recognising that there is no ‘free lunch’. there is nothing that is, completely risk-free.”.

The referenced speech can be found here <http://bit.ly/1CVyur7>

Example 3

A classic example of duplicity is the 2010 film ‘Gaslands’ which to some extent was a catalyst for the anti fracking activists has been exposed as a deliberate fraud by a concerned rural Mum, which can be seen at the following link: <http://www.truthlandmovie.com/> In this, she shows that naturally occurring gas is contained in the water from household taps despite there being no drilling for oil and gas within anywhere near the locality.

Further, the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineers Report, mentioned above, specifically referenced the film Gaslands, and after review of this and the many claims and assertions from Lock The Gate and similar eNGO’s found ““There is a perception in some parts of the community that CSG extraction is potentially more damaging and dangerous than other extractive industries. This perception was heightened following the release of the American movie Gasland in 2010. The Review examined this issue in detail and concluded that while the CSG industry has several aspects that need careful attention, as do almost all industries, it is not significantly more likely to be more damaging or dangerous than other extractive industries”

Basically, the sensationalist film Gasland has been shown to be what it always was – just a movie without any foundation, just like Hollywood movies!

Example 4

Another prime example has been the much publicized ‘Bentley Blockade’ (at Bentley NSW), where protestors set up camp, built bunkers and spike roads to a farmers property all in the name of ‘No CSG’ (No to Coal Seam Gas). The operator was Metgasco, which had authorization and licences granted by the NSW Government to undertake drilling for deep hydrocarbons (about 4 km deep) in a disused quarry on a farm. There was no drilling for CSG, nor any hydraulic fracture stimulation authorized or planned for this exploration well, and yet, aided and abetted by a Sydney radio personality, Alan Jones, a well organized and prolonged ‘No CSG’ and ‘Frack Off’ campaign continued, despite no CSG or “fracking” was to take place!

Furthermore, the facts and the science about CSG and “fracking” were totally distorted by the activists.

NSW imports 95% of its gas and the price is going up due to an increasing demand (LNG exports) and a shortage of supply options, as well as the tight controls upon

exploration the NSW Government has now put in place following the recommendations in the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineers Report.

Unfortunately for NSW residents and businesses, which depend on natural gas, there are further price increases to come on top of the 18% increase approved by IPART in mid 2014, unless gas supply increases. Normal business is under threat! In addition, not only will the price go up, the risk of spills as a result of transportation of oil and gas, is actually greater than exploration and development!

Example 5

Another recent example is in South Australia. In the SE of the State, Beach Energy has drilled two deep exploration wells (deeper than 4km.). However, as soon as the a drilling rig was positioned on its drill pad on a private farm with the owners agreement, out came the anti protestors trotting out all sorts of myths and catch cries (No CSG, Frack Off and so on).

The claimed issues, as in the case of the 'Bentley Blockade' centre on the perceived risk (which is very low) of contamination of groundwater and competition for land use.

In regard to the competition for land use, mining in Australia covers approximately 0.02% (1400 sq. km) of the land, whereas Agriculture (excluding pastoral leases) covers 4.6% (45,000sq.km) **in South Australia alone**. See <http://bit.ly/1CVzuLY>

On a comparison basis, mining and petroleum are hardly pushing farmers off their land.

There is no doubt water that is uncontaminated is essential to all communities, but what are the facts here?

In rural communities in the South-East where water is also used for agriculture and farming there are existing contaminants within the water systems, from salinity to pesticides.

In the South Eastern portion of South Australia, where Beach Energy undertook the drilling of two deep wells (more than 4 km deep) there are two primary aquifers, an upper uncontained aquifer in some areas close to the surface, and a deeper (50m to 300m deep) which is contained (ie it has an impermeable layer above it). The (uncontained) aquifer closer to surface is the one normally used by communities.

However, there is already contamination of this aquifer predominantly from agriculture and farming . The contaminants are:

- Salinity
- Nitrates (fertilizers etc)
- Pesticides (spraying for pests etc)
- Associated risks from existing and continuing agriculture activities
- Dairying
- Septic waste.

See <http://bit.ly/1HS5WU6>

While the EPA is monitoring and has brought in more stringent regulations than existed in the past, there is a continuing evidence of diffuse occurrences of the contaminants listed above plus others. Further, any oil & gas drilling operations are

subject to these (and more) stringent regulations for water use and disposal.

What is the impact of oil & gas exploration in the SE of South Australia in comparison?

The petroleum exploration wells that were drilled in the Penola area by Beach Energy, and the proposed well by Metgasco, were to drill through the respective aquifers. The respective aquifers are isolated from the well bore (production casing) by two to three sets of impermeable steel (each approx 8 to 12 mm thick) as well as bonded concrete.

The risk that there is any leakage from the well bore to the aquifers is low to negligible. The CSIRO, in its fact sheet has this same view.

See <http://bit.ly/1CVzRWO> and

[file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Bruce%20Holland/My%20Documents/Downloads/csg-predicting-impacts%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Bruce%20Holland/My%20Documents/Downloads/csg-predicting-impacts%20(1).pdf)

Example 6

Wilderness Society campaign to have shareholders vote for Santos Limited to withdraw from the Pilliga State forest in North Western NSW, aimed to stop oil & gas exploration and production, the very products that enabled them to travel to Adelaide to hold their protest. They are anti development, yet they enjoy the benefits of the development.

A very factual and scientifically based response to the claims made by these groups can be found on Santos' website starting at p27 at the following link: <http://bit.ly/1D95LzF>

The key issue claimed by Wilderness, the impacts on water, was addressed as follows:

- Water use: The community use is 410 gegalitres per annum whereas Santos' use would be 1.5 gegalitres pa. That is, less than 1% of total usage.
- Impact on Aquifers: Modeling and surface testing has demonstrated excellent understanding of the aquifers which has provided good baseline data to check that Santos' operations have no unexpected effects
- Protection of aquifers from contamination: Multiple fail-safe protective measures are described in the document.

Any reader who is interested in this issue will realize, as a result of reading through Santos' response to the "shareholder resolution", that the resolution was flawed and not based on the facts and science.

However, The Wilderness Society claimed their campaign to have Santos withdraw from the Pilliga State forest in North Western NSW was for the potential (as they perceived it) threat to groundwater, whereas this eNGO has an overarching objective **to stop all fossil fuel exploration and development.**

This demonstrates how some eNGO's masquerade behind a local concern to gain support for its ideological objectives.

Example 7

This example was highlighted by APPEA in mid 2014 when they exposed the fact that a petition on the Care2 website asked the community to support a "Western Australia: place a moratorium on gas fracking".

Care2 not only misled people by saying the activities would be in the "stunning Kimberley region" (**they would not be** – they would be in the desert to the SW of the Kimberley's) they even further misled the public by including a photo of the Arizona's iconic Horseshoe Bend on the Colorado River (last time we checked, the Colorado River was not in the Kimberley Ranges!!).



Western Australia: place a moratorium on gas fracking

author: Georgina B
target: Environment Minister, Albert Jacobs
signatures: 40,544



we've got 40,544 signatures, help us get to 41,000

The Western Australia government has allowed fracking to go ahead in the stunning Kimberley region without an Environmental Protection Authority assessment (EPA).

However, conservation groups are outraged and have renewed their call for a moratorium on

Again we have eNGO's misrepresenting the facts to foster a scare campaign, and a complete falsehood by NOT using, or referencing the FACTS.

So in answer to the question, **Do Protestors tell You the truth and are their protests based on Facts ???** - Well based upon the above, the answer is a resounding **NO, and NO!** to both questions

In conclusion, it is highly likely that special interest activist groups will always misinform, mislead, and perhaps even lie, to gain the attention of the community. Those people who really care should be on the lookout for this. After all, unlike businesses or business leaders, not-for-profit organisations and charities are not, for some peculiar reason, subject to laws such as **“truth in advertising”**. *Thus, it appears that “anything goes” in pursuit of publicity and the donor dollar!*

The Norwood Resource (TNR) supports the move to force eNGO’s and the like (which includes TNR itself) to comply with the same laws that business in Australia are lawfully compelled to adhere to in relation to “truth in advertising’.

Bruce Holland

Secretary

The Norwood Resource

5 February 2015