



Questionnaire on shale gas fracking, to all political parties and candidates contesting the August 2016 Territory election

Please answer **Yes** or **No** for each of the following questions. Feel free to also add additional comments to your answers.

Your answers will be made available to the public via Lock the Gate, the Northern Territory Frack Free Alliance and community networks across the Territory.

1) Will you set up an independent scientific panel of experts to provide binding advice on the issues surrounding shale gas fracking and its social, environmental and public health impacts?

YES

Optional comment: On a federal level, the Greens would create a new independent statutory National Environment Protection Authority (or NEPA). Their responsibilities would include ensuring the quality and independence of information provided by environmental consultants.

2) Will you ensure full baseline studies of ground and surface water quality and quantity are undertaken and publicly available before drilling for shale gas commences?

YES

Optional comment: As above ☺

3) Will you prevent the risks of shale gas fracking in the Territory by halting the industry until it can be proven safe, by:

YES - A ban on any development of the shale gas industry for at least 5 years

4) Will you support the right of landholders and Traditional Owners to say no to shale gas extraction on their properties and lands?

YES

Optional comment: Yes. Absolutely. The Greens believe that Aboriginal people never willingly gave up their lands, so Aboriginal people have the right to say how things should be on their lands. The Greens believe that the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People should guide all policy affecting Indigenous communities, families, language, land and culture. This includes the right to self-determination, participation in decisions that affect them, having control over their own lives and developments.

On a federal level, the Greens will create a new independent National Environment Protection Authority, and a New Environment Act. These will help:

- provide greater opportunities for genuine community consultation
- allow increased community access to justice by allowing the merits of decisions to be challenged in court, and allowing 'open standing' to challenge decisions
- help give Australians the environmental democracy they deserve by establishing a community information unit to actively support community understanding and engagement under our national environment laws

5) Would you support a chain of responsibility for resource extraction framework that:

Ensures parent companies of mines and executives are responsible for financial clean up of pollution even if companies go bankrupt during mining or rehabilitation, to ensure the burden does not fall on the local landholder or the NT Government?

YES

Optional comment:

6) Will you support a truly independent EPA with the lead assessment, enforcement and compliance power over fracking and mining companies? Will the EPA set strict regulations on waste management and pollution by shale gas companies and hold operators legally and financially accountable?

YES

Optional comment: On a federal level, the Greens will deliver a new Environment Act and new independent National Environment Protection Authority. The Greens want to fix the rigged system that has been giving big miners and developers too much power. It's time for a tough new cop on the beat. For more info: <http://greens.org.au/places> And policy outline: http://greens.org.au/sites/greens.org.au/files/20160605%20Protecting%20our%20Precious%20Places_final.pdf

7) Will you review currently approved onshore gas areas and implement ‘no go zones’ over drinking water catchments and groundwater recharge areas, regional and remote community living areas and important tourism regions, so they are protected from onshore shale gas fracking?

YES

Optional comment: On a federal level, the Greens will create a new Environment Act designed by an Expert Taskforce with \$2 million in funding which will:

- Limit the Minister’s discretion to approve environmentally destructive developments by:
 - o requiring that decisions under our national environment laws are consistent with the precautionary principle and adequately consider cumulative impacts; and
 - o legislating for “no go zones” which would be guided by critical habitat mapping under the Greens Threatened Species Plan discussed below, and which would include Endangered or Critically Endangered ecological communities, or critical habitats of threatened species.
- Give the national environment minister responsibility for all aspects of the environment when the impact is significant, including global warming, water resources, national parks and the National Reserve System, wetlands and forests (supported by \$95 million per year over the forward estimates for the independent NEPA to carry out compliance and enforcement);
- Allow increased community access to justice by allowing the merits of decisions to be challenged in court. The Environment Act will also implement “open standing” to challenge environmentally damaging decisions in court, and changing court costs rules to prohibit costs orders and undertakings as to damages in public interest cases (\$2 million over the forward estimates).
- Make sure final approval for Australia’s most environmentally damaging projects remain with the federal Minister and cannot be given away to the states;
- Provide greater opportunities for genuine community consultation on major projects and reasons published for all major regulatory decisions; and
- Reflect our international obligations, including Paris Climate Agreement, the World Heritage Convention, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

8) In the event of water contamination in areas of the NT targeted by shale gas fracking, do you support a policy where it is up to the companies involved to prove they didn't contaminate the water? (This would replace the current system where the onus of proof falls on the landholder to prove their water was clean before shale gas extraction operated in the area.)

YES

Optional comment:

9) Will you mandate under law that shale gas companies must hold comprehensive environmental pollution insurance before they can operate in the NT and that they hold a substantial bond for at least 25 years after fracking concludes to cover any future damages?

YES

Optional comment:

Thank you for completing this survey that is of great interest to Territory residents. Please email your completed questionnaire to FrackFreeNT@gmail.com.