

Dear friends and colleagues, Re 'No Fracking Sacrifice Zones' Statement

22 August 2016

Our Social Justice Awareness Group encourages you and those you know to carefully consider the risks and realities of fracking on our land, air and water in Central Australia.

We have included the following and attached statement for your careful consideration (and prayerful consideration if you are a person of faith) as we chose our political leadership here in the NT over coming days.

We do not support any particular political party. We encourage all Catholics, other people of faith and the wider community to carefully consider the impact of what we do to love our neighbours whether they live next door, in remote communities or somewhere around our world.

### **Statement by Social Justice Awareness Group in Central Australia**

Our water, land and air in Aboriginal communities and pastoral stations are not sacrifice zones for the short-term benefit of NT politicians and mining company shareholders.

The risks and realities of fracking are real and need answers.

Will Aboriginal communities and pastoral stations be simply abandoned if the water or soil is polluted?

Who will pay for the increased air conditioning costs, extreme weather events and climate change impacts from burning these fossil fuels? Future taxpayers? Our children? Climate refugees?

The promised fracking regulations are compromised by conflicts of interest. The government who benefits from fracking our gas has the final say in what is considered acceptable. There are no independent voices in key decision making positions. There is no commitment to transparency. Results of pre and post testing of water, air and soil for all chemicals used in fracking will not be publicly available.

These are some of many concerns that remain unanswered in letters to us from our Chief Minister Adam Giles in response to our statements 'Fracking is too risky' (May 2015) & 'Fracking has no social licence yet' (October 2015). These questions also remain unanswered in his recent publicity.

Our fracking concerns have been reinforced by our Pope Francis who is encouraging Catholics all around the world to work with others 'to care for our common home'. We are being challenged to hear both the 'cry of the poor' and the 'cry of the earth'.

Catholics worked with other people of faith and millions of others to pressure our governments to make climate change commitments in Paris last year. We urge all voters (and people of faith) to carefully (and prayerfully) consider these concerns for a safe healthy future for us and our children, including those on Aboriginal communities and pastoral stations.

Our Territory is a beautiful healthy place to live in and visit. Why risk fossil fuel gas when solar energy options & jobs already exist for a safe healthy renewable energy future for Central Australia.

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