



Media Statement 21 December 2017

Top Australian lawyer joins call for CSG trial for human rights abuses

The Australian National President for Australian Lawyers for Human Rights, Benedict Coyne, has come out in support of the Australian arm of the International People's Tribunal Session on the Human Rights Impacts of Fracking.

In early 2018, the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Session on the Human Rights Impacts of Fracking will ask its judges to apply the standards of international human rights law to cases of individuals and communities around the world who are being impacted by unconventional gas mining, including a number Australian cases.

The Tribunal session comes as Arrow Energy and Shell have signed a deal to roll out thousands more CSG wells across agricultural areas of QLD, and the Federal Government has announced a package to hand out millions in taxpayer funds to support onshore CSG and fracking across Australia.

Mr Coyne describes unconventional gas as "anti-democracy", as "the logical progression of unrestrained corporate power, a systemic invocation of government against its people and it violates numerous universally accepted human rights as contained in the international bill of rights."

Some of the rights violated by the dash for gas that are listed by Mr Coyne include:

- The right to life;
- The right to highest standard of physical and mental health;
- The right to enjoy a safe a healthy environment;
- The right to property;
- Indigenous rights to culture and heritage; and
- Effective legal remedy.

He notes that three times since 2016, the issues and impacts of unconventional gas in Australia has reached the United Nations.

"The eyes of the world are on Australia and this issue making the tribunal a very important vehicle that will bear witness of the injustices being committed against our communities," said Australian National President for Australian Lawyers for Human Rights, Benedict Coyne.

"There has been such wanton ignorance and secrecy in the roll out of this CSG industry that it is more important than ever that the community become educated about the impacts before more damage is done.

"It is up to all of us to stand up against the violations of human rights suffered by our fellow community members," he said.



Chinchilla resident Shay Dougall, who worked to set up the Australian arm of the People's Tribunal, said:

“After experiencing the negative impacts of CSG, I’ve worked for many years to bring our local voices to the attention of Ministers, done air and water testing, hosted symposiums and written letters.

“I’ve met individuals and organisations that have also attempted to raise the consciousness of the government to the perils of the industry. We’ve felt the damage to our communities, to the environment and our human rights.

“People in the middle of this have their home, family and business hosting the dash for gas. We are expected to live with the consequences for generations to come.

“The Government's response to the continued clear articulation of concerns from those impacted has been manifestly inadequate.

“The International Permanent People’s Tribunal provides us the ultimate remedy to the barriers and challenges we face. It’s takes the issues to an authority higher than the government; the people,” she said.

The convenors of the tribunal continue to support individuals in the delivery of their testimony and encourage others to get in touch. February 2018 is the deadline that has been set for finalising testimony for the International Tribunal.

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