



8 August 2023

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
via email: pminvitations.albanese@pm.gov.au

Dear Prime Minister,

RE: Health impacts of the gas fracking at the Beetaloo Basin

The Royal Australia College of General Practitioners has been **the voice of general practitioners (GPs) for more than 60 years**. The College has also been an active [advocate for action on climate change](#) and recognises climate change as a key public health issue.

In line with the RACGP's position statement on the impact of climate change on human health, I am writing to you on behalf of our members to support calls for the Federal Government to stop petrochemical processing on Middle Arm, which would be key to bringing fracking in the Beetaloo Basin to a halt.

The proposal to frack shale gas in the Beetaloo Basin and construct a gas processing hub at the Middle Arm Precinct in the centre of Darwin Harbour poses serious threats to the health and wellbeing of our children and our communities, both in the Northern Territory and throughout Australia. These serious health risks arise due to the direct impacts of fracking and the exacerbation of climate change.

Our recent [submission on the National Health and Climate Strategy](#) called for the government to implement a 'Health-in-all-Policies' approach. This is an approach to public policy across sectors that systematically takes into account the health implications of decisions and avoids harmful health impacts in order to improve population health and health equity. We know that social determinants such as access to safe and affordable housing, education, employment, and community connectedness have a significant influence on health. Taking a Health-in-all-Policies approach means considering overall health and health equity when developing policies in areas including transport, housing, urban planning, education etc.

Critically, it also means considering the health implications from energy policy decisions. The World Health Organisation, United Nations Secretary General, and International Energy Agency have all highlighted that in order to ensure a safe, healthy and liveable future, there can be no further expansion of fossil fuel (coal, oil and gas) resources.



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Climate change is a health emergency. We are already seeing the significant health impacts in the form of more frequent and severe extreme weather events, and expansion of vector borne diseases, such as Japanese encephalitis, into new territories. The impacts of climate change and health consequences are accelerating.

Fossil fuel combustion and extraction like what is being proposed in the Beetaloo Basin contribute significantly to climate change and cause other environmental impacts, including air pollution and water contamination. These in turn have harmful health impacts. In order to safeguard the health of current and future generations, it is essential that we move away from fossil fuels and progress the transition to clean energy. The RACGP asks governments of all levels to work together to implement a Health-in-all-Policies approach.

Please contact Catherine Back (catherine.back@racgp.org.au) if you would like to discuss this or require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nicole Higgins
President