

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question Without Notice

Wednesday, 6 September 2017

C566. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Regional Development representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum

I refer to your Ministerial statement in this place yesterday regarding the Government's policy on fracking, and ask:

1. Explain in detail what the Government defines as fracture stimulation.
2. Explain in detail how the Government defines unconventional gas and its extraction process, and does this differ from fracture stimulation?
3. Explain in detail how the Government defines the process used to extract tight gas?
4. Has fracture stimulation occurred on Barrow Island, and if so will it now be allowed to continue?

Answer

I thank the Hon. Member for some notice of the question.

1. Hydraulic fracture stimulation means the fracturing of rock with a liquid(s) under high pressure to create artificial openings and cracks in the rock to increase the rock's permeability and allow more fluid (gas or oil) to flow into the well bore. The process of fracture stimulation may be undertaken at any stage of a well's life.
2. The term unconventional means gas and oil resources that cannot be explored, developed and produced by conventional processes, meaning processes that only use the natural pressure of the wells and pumping or compression operations. Within the context of Western Australia, the term refers to shale gas, shale oil and tight gas or oil. Hydraulic fracture stimulation is required to allow this gas or oil to flow freely into the well bore.
3. Tight gas refers to natural gas found in low permeability reservoir rocks most often sandstone, but can also include low permeability carbonate rocks which prevent the gas flowing freely to the well bore. As with shale gas or oil hydraulic fracturing is required to allow this gas to flow freely to the well bore.
4. While hydraulic fracture stimulation has been undertaken on Barrow Island in the past, it has not occurred for approximately 10 years and is not currently taking place.



MINISTER FOR MINES AND PETROLEUM