

Debate heats up over Karoo fracking

KAREN WATKINS AND KAREN KOTZE

Few topics have raised as much heat as Shell's plans to frack for shale gas in the Karoo. More than anything, it has spurred the people to become involved. Tokai resident Marilyn Lilley, wearing an anti-fracking T-shirt, holding a bottle of "poisoned" water and brandishing a placard, said she had been up until 4am drafting a 20-page objection about fracking. She was one of many supporters who came to the media briefing and official handover of the Treasure the Karoo Action Group's (TKAG) formal objections to a representative from the State President's office on Tuesday April 5. At the same time, another copy of TKAG's objections were delivered to the Petroleum Association of SA (PASA) and to Golder Associates, who are collating the document.

These objections were compiled by a team of leading international and local specialists in a range of scientific disciplines. It was handed over by Lewis Pugh who reminded the representative that these objections will be taken from a tiny town in the Karoo to London, to the world, to stop any fracking. At a media briefing national co-ordinator of TKAG Jonathan Deal and Dr Luke Havemann, a director of the legal firm Havemann Inc, spoke passionately about the concerns expressed across a field ranging from astronomy through archaeology, heritage, biodiversity to energy policies,

socio-economic concerns, water resources and ornithology. He quoted that Britain, France and Canada have put moratoriums on fracking until the results of the United State's Environmental Protection Agency are released, possibly only in two or three years time. There have been more than 1 000 cases of contaminated wells from fracking in the States alone.

After the hand-over, Mrs Lilley listened to Barry Wugale and Chris Kargbo of the Ogoni Solidarity Forum, who were there representing the people of the Nigerian Delta. Mr Wugale said he has seen what Shell has done to his country and he would not wish that on his worst enemy. He claims the people of Nigeria are still licking their wounds. Mr Kargbo warned how people no longer have clean water in his homeland because of what Shell has done, as a result of oil exploration. He says water-borne diseases such as cholera have increased.

"Nigerian people depend on water from streams. These were once pristine, but no longer. The air is also densely polluted because of flared gasses. People collect rain-water only to find it covered in a layer of black carbon dioxide. But they're desperate – so they drink it," Mr Kargbo said. Speaking to the Bulletin the day before the hand-over, Constantia Hills resident Ann Coltham said she had also submitted comments to Golder Associates. Her main concern is about the invaluable work being done at

SALT (South African Large Telescope) and the dependence of the world on this work, which could be jeopardised by the pollution caused by hydraulic fracturing in the Karoo near Sutherland. "There is no other large telescope in the southern hemisphere, so how can we compromise this one?" she asked. Gordon Oliver of the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative said Shell should divert their attention to sustainable resources. "Instead they're raping the earth. It's a desecration against nature, a matter of greed and power and I'll boycott Shell and all their products," said Mr Oliver.

He says he hopes government officials will not fall for Shell's charm and so-called expertise. "We have to care for the environment for our children's children," said Quaker Bridget Nomonde. "I object to big company's exploiting our resources and taking vast amounts of capital out of the country only to leave behind pollution that could be carcinogenic, and have other unknown effects on developing children." Gill Gimberg wants to know what will happen to the gas. At the meeting at Kelvin Grove, the only answer she received was that Shell doesn't expect the gas reserves to be very large, therefore they (Shell) will be generating electricity and distributing it directly. Marisa du Toit, on behalf of Toni Pietersen, referred the Bulletin to section 5.8 of the Draft EMP summary. This states that if gas is found during the three year explo-



■ Tokai resident Marilyn Lilley said she had been up until 4am drafting a 20-page objection about fracking.

ration period, Shell will then make a formal application to Pasa to renew its exploration rights and to undertake additional activities which include, typically, the drilling of more wells. This would require the infrastructure necessary to connect the various sites, to feed the gas into the existing infrastructure. "What this really means then is large, noisy generators and pylons could be added to the rigs, storage tanks, temporary accommodation, parking lots, flare stacks, and so on," said Mrs Gimberg.

Golder Associates will collate all the objections before sending a report to Pasa by Monday April 14. Pasa will then assess the document and make recommendations to the Minister who has the final decision on the license application. This decision will be made by Friday August 5.

Send your letters to: email: brian.joss@inl.co.za Fax: 021 488 4615 PO Box 1983, Cape Town 8000

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■ **Left:** People from all over the Peninsula came out in support of TKAG's handover of objections to fracking in the Karoo.

■ **Right:** Lewis Pugh reminds people of their rights.
PICTURES: KAREN WATKINS



Anti-fracking protest gains momentum

KAREN KOTZE AND KAREN WATKINS

Temperatures are rising about Shell's plans to frack for shale gas in the Karoo and southern suburbs residents came out in full force to witness the handover of the Treasure the Karoo Action Group (TKAG) objections to Parliament on Tuesday April 5.

Barry Wugale and Chris Kargbo of the Ogoni Solidarity Forum, based in Salt River, who represented the people of the Nigerian Delta, spoke of the damage fracking has caused to their country, at a media briefing after the handover.

Mr Wugale said he has seen what Shell has done and he would not wish that on his worst enemy. He claims the people of Nigeria are still licking their wounds. Mr Kargbo warned how people no longer have clean water in his homeland because of what Shell has done, as a result of oil exploration. He says water-borne diseases, such as cholera, have increased.

"Nigerian people depend on water from streams. These were once pristine, but no longer. The air is also densely polluted because of flared gases. People collect rain-water only to find it covered in a layer of black carbon dioxide. But they're desperate – so they drink it," Mr Kargbo said.

Pinelands resident Gordon Oliver of the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative said Shell should divert their attention to sustainable resources. "Instead they're raping the earth. It's a desecration against nature, a matter of greed and power and I'll boycott Shell and all their products," said Mr Oliver. He says he hopes that government officials will not fall for Shell's charm and so-called expertise.

"We have to care for the environment for our children's children," said Quaker Bridget Nomonde of Rondebosch. "I object to big company's exploiting our resources and taking vast amounts of capital out of the country only to leave behind pollution that could be carcinogenic, and have other unknown effects on developing children."

Observatory resident Gill Gimberg wants to know what will happen to the gas. At the meeting at the public meeting at Kelvin Grove, the only

answer she received was that Shell doesn't expect the gas reserves to be very large, therefore Shell will be generating electricity and distributing it directly. "What this really means then is large, noisy generators and pylons could be added to the rigs, storage tanks, temporary accommodation, parking lots, flare stacks, and so on," she said.

The official objections of TKAG were handed to a representative from the President's office, to the Petroleum Association of SA (PASA) and to Golder Associates who are collating the document.

The objections for TKAG were compiled by a team of leading international and local specialists in a range of scientific disciplines and were handed over by Lewis Pugh who reminded the representative that these objections will be taken from a tiny town in the Karoo to London, to the world, to stop any fracking.

At the media briefing national co-ordinator of TKAG Jonathan Deal and Dr Luke Havemann of Havemann Inc, specialist energy attorneys, spoke passionately about the concerns expressed across fields ranging from astronomy through archeology, heritage, biodiversity to energy policies, socio-economic concerns, water resources and ornithology.

Dr Luke Havemann drafted the document with the team of specialists. He holds a Masters degree in Marine and Environmental Law from UCT and a PhD in the Enviro-Legal Regulation of Oil and Gas from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

He quoted the United Kingdom, France and

Canada putting moratoriums on fracking until the results of the American Environmental Protection Agency are released, possibly only in two or three years time.

There have been more than 1 000 cases of contaminated wells from fracking in America alone.

Tokai resident Marilyn Lilley was wearing an anti-fracking T-shirt and holding a bottle of "poisoned" water and a placard. She said she had been up until 4am drafting a 20-page objection about fracking. Constantia Hills resident Ann Coltham also submitted comments to Golder Associates. Her main concern is about the invaluable work being done at the South African Large Telescope (SALT) and the dependence of the world on this work, which could be jeopardised by the pollution caused by hydraulic fracturing in the Karoo near Sutherland.

"There is no other large telescope in the southern hemisphere, so how can

we compromise this one?" she asked.

Marisa du Toit, on behalf of Toni Pietersen who is Golder Associate's spokesperson, referred The Tatler to Section 5.8 of the Draft EMP summary.

This states that if gas is found during the three-year exploration period, Shell will then make a formal application to Petroleum Agency of South Africa (PASA) to renew its exploration rights and to undertake additional activities which include, typically, the drilling of more wells. This would require the infrastructure necessary to connect the various sites, to feed the gas into the existing infrastructure.

Golder Associates will now collate the objections before sending a report to PASA by Monday April 14. PASA will assess the document and make recommendations to the Minister of Mineral Resources, who has the final decision on granting or refusing the license application. This decision will be made by Friday August 5.

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