



## Fact sheet: Oil and gas operations and health

### KEY POINTS:

- A 33-year baseline health study of petroleum workers shows they have better health than the Australian community: Monash University.
- No link has been established between coal seam gas operations and health concerns: Queensland Health.
- The risks to public health from exposure to emissions from shale gas extraction are low if operations are properly run and regulated: Public Health England.

### THE FACTS:

#### **Australian Institute of Petroleum Health Watch Study (ongoing)**

This ongoing university-based research program has been studying the health of around 19,000 past and present Australian petroleum industry workers since 1980. It clearly shows that petroleum industry employees have better health than the general Australian community and are less likely to die of the diseases commonly causing death - including cancer, heart and respiratory conditions.

Reference: <http://www.aip.com.au/health/ohs.htm>

#### **Queensland Health investigation into Coal Seam Gas impacts in Tara Region (2013)**

A Queensland Government investigation following claims that gas development was harming residents in the Tara region found no clear link could be drawn between the health complaints of some residents and the impacts of the local CSG industry on air, water or soil within the community.

The Queensland Health report also found that the nature of complaints meant there were multiple potential causes and explanations, including the use of wood-fired heaters or open fires and rainwater contaminated with bacteria, viruses or other organisms that are unlikely to be caused by CSG activities.

Reference: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/csg/>

#### **Public Health England review of health impacts of shale gas extraction (2013)**

This review of scientific literature focused on the potential impact of chemicals and radioactive material from all stages of shale gas extraction, including hydraulic fracturing.

It concluded risks to public health are low when operations are properly run and regulated. Other findings included:

- potential risks and resulting problems reported in other countries were typically due to operational failure;
- good on-site management and appropriate regulation was essential to minimise environmental and health risks;
- proper well construction and maintenance was essential to reduce the risks of ground water contamination; and
- hydraulic fracturing was unlikely to contaminate groundwater because of the depth at which it occurs.

Reference:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/Publications/Environment/PHECRCEReportSeries/1310Reviewofthepotentialhealthimpactsshalegas/>