

31 August 2023

Statement from Alice Drury, Acting Legal Director at the Human Rights Law Centre:

The Human Rights Law Centre is concerned about these orders because of the direct impact it is having on those climate defenders who have been served, who are an important voice on the harm threatened by Woodside's proposed gas drilling at Burrup Hub.

As humanity enters the 'era of global boiling', Woodside and the multibillion dollar fossil fuel industry are trying to send a chilling message to anyone who dares to speak out: you will be intimidated and silenced.

We are also deeply concerned about the precedent this could set for similar such orders being sought in future in response to peaceful protests.

The orders are broadly drafted and prevent the climate defenders served from "making any reference" to O'Neill via email, message apps or social media. They go far beyond what can possibly be justified in a democracy.

Restraining orders are primarily used to protect women and children from family violence perpetrators. These orders have been sought in unprecedented circumstances, despite there being no accusations that the protesters have at any stage used or threatened violence against anyone at Woodside.

I have never before seen restraining orders, which are designed to protect people fleeing family violence, used to silence dissent.

Climate activists, environmental organisations and Murujuga Traditional Owners have longstanding, deep concerns about Woodside's proposed gas drilling activities, which would be the largest new fossil fuel project in Australia. Their concerns must be heard, and Woodside should drop these undemocratic orders now.