

Mr Keir Delaney,  
Secretary,  
Environment & Planning Committee,  
Parliament House,  
Spring St,  
MELBOURNE 3002

**Submission to State Inquiry into Unconventional Onshore Gas Mining**

Dear Sir,

I am a resident of the farming district between Bairnsdale and Stratford in East Gippsland, just north of the Gippsland Lakes. This district is currently subject to an exploration licence held by mining company Ignite Energy. I am writing to inform your Committee that I do not support any form of unconventional gas mining (including coal seam gas, tight gas, shale gas and underground coal gasification) and strongly urge your Committee to recommend banning this industry from being established in Gippsland and the rest of Victoria.

Last year a survey was conducted in my local districts of Bengworden, Goon Nure, Meerlieu and Perry Bridge to ascertain the thoughts of local residents regarding the establishment of an unconventional gas mining industry in our areas.

More than 460 residents were surveyed, resulting in a 98% rejection to the proposal of any form of unconventional gas mining being conducted in our districts. Surely this shows that the mining companies and indeed the government have no social licence to establish such an industry here.

The key issues and reasons for my opposition include

- The obvious and well documented risks to our precious underground water aquifers, upon which all food and fibre farming businesses are reliant
- The health risks from soil and drinking water contamination by the dangerous chemicals used in the fracking process
- The threat of environmental damage to our nearby and already fragile Gippsland Lakes system should any contaminated mining waste water held in settling ponds escape
- The construction and operation of drilling pads, all-weather roads and continuous traffic across farming land 24 hours a day and seven days a week would make running a farming business almost impossible. Not to mention the noise and lights all day all night!
- Fugitive gas emissions and constant flaring would be a huge fire risk particularly during summer and drier months.

Who in fact would want to live in such a place?

What government in its right mind would jeopardise the health and prosperity of such a productive area of East Gippsland with its beautiful countryside and its proximity to the Ramsar listed Gippsland Lakes? Beef cattle, sheep, dairying and vegetable growing industries, as well as the tourism business so closely connected to the wellbeing of the Gippsland Lakes, are all under threat should an UCG industry be allowed to operate.