

SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO UNCONVENTIONAL GAS IN VICTORIA

I support a TOTAL BAN on unconventional gas in Victoria. Keep Victoria Clean & Green.

I live in a small rural town in the Latrobe Valley and although in the past was employed by the mining industry, had to leave the area for many years due to the privatisation of the former State Electricity Commission, which caused the loss of around 8000 jobs in the area.

Since returning to the LV and the subsequent years of impact of climate change including drought, bushfires and last year the disaster of the Hazelwood Mine fire (resulting in 45 days of burning) I feel it is time to embrace clean energy and proper clean energy targets.

There are many towns in Gippsland that oppose Unconventional Gas (UG), many declaring themselves 'Coal and Gas free'. There are rich agricultural lands surrounding the open cut mines and throughout the whole of Gippsland and this is where our future should lie as well as in renewable energy. (We have PLENTY of gas from Bass Strait – keep a reserve for Victorian's at realistic prices before exporting it!)

We have fantastic produce coming out of Gippsland and to risk messing with agriculture is to risk our future.

Burning coal and extracting gas from the ground results in POLLUTION and environmental degradation. Once a mine or UG well has been created the chance of toxic leakages are immense and irreversible. To rehabilitate the existing mines in the Latrobe Valley is already an immense task.

In 2008 a test well was drilled close to our property. We knew because the noise of the drill rig was intense. Our town is in a high-risk bushfire zone and to have a UG well flaring off would be at most irresponsible and at worst downright dangerous. We already live with pollution from burning coal and the paper mill, and that is more than enough.

There is also enough evidence to show that UG can poison groundwater, and water is our most precious commodity – don't mess with it. Once again I think the inquiry should recommend a TOTAL BAN on UG in this State.

Thanks for listening.

Irene Proebsting

