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From: [REDACTED]
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INQUIRY INTO UNCONVENTIONAL GAS MINING IN VICTORIA – SUBMISSION

NAME: Gillian Vanyai

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I wish to thank the Environment and Planning Committee for this opportunity to express my concerns about the exploration and production of unconventional gas in Victoria.

I have been living in Gippsland most of my life, having trained in Melbourne as a general nurse and midwife. I currently work at a local primary school as a teacher's aide. I appreciate the lush, green rolling landscape where my husband and I raised our three children. My husband and I enjoy driving through the picturesque hills of Gippsland, spotting the familiar yellow triangles of the 'Lock the Gate' movement, reflecting the communities' opposition to the threat of UCG. We hope the Government will listen its people.

I am writing to implore you, as members of the Environment and Planning Committee for the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into **Unconventional Gas Mining**, to represent those Victorians who wish to make a **stand against the Unconventional Gas Industry** in Australia and to recommend a **permanent, total ban** on all onshore **unconventional gas (UCG) extraction**.

I do not wish to be a part of the generation about whom our grandchildren will ask, **'Why didn't they do something to stop this devastation of our environment?'**

Consider the consequences of foolhardy decisions, such as **unconventional gas extraction**, for our children, our grandchildren and future generations. Many members of our community are extremely concerned about the hazards of UCG, and rightly so: UCG extraction releases substantial amounts of methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas, adding to global warming. Health risks, such as cancer, respiratory problems and damage to the nervous system, among others, have been linked to chemicals used in unconventional gas extraction. The World Health Organisation states that 'Children have special vulnerabilities to the toxic effects of chemicals...exposure at critical stages of development may have severe long-term consequences for health'. Dr Jo McCubbin is a paediatrician who has given presentations where she has expressed her concerns about the effects of chemicals used in UCG mining on children's health.

Water depletion is another serious issue: **300 gigalitres** of water could be drawn from the ground each year. **Dangerous chemicals and salts** would be brought up from the depths. In 2013, Santos was fined for **contamination of an aquifer** by wastewater containing uranium (at levels **20 times higher** than safe drinking water guidelines), lead and arsenic, from coal seam gas mining. **Contamination of water supply** would be **disastrous** for the agricultural industry and for the **health** of the communities.

Our **beautiful Gippsland** is **well-worth preserving**. We are justifiably proud of our reputation as the **food bowl** of Victoria, producing more than **23%** of Australia's **milk**. Due to its extensive farmland and reliable rainfall, it boasts other **significant agricultural industries**: prime beef, olive, wine and potatoes, to name a few. In this time of increasing periods of drought which have devastated food-producing areas elsewhere, we **cannot afford to lose** our prime agricultural lands to mining. We need to avoid a **reliance on imported foods**.

Tourism is a **vital** part of this area's economy. **UCG** mining would **industrialise** our beautiful landscape, which would have a **dramatic impact** on tourism. We do not want our **landscape marred by drill pads, 24-hour access roads** with trucks roaring through. We do not want our **farmlands** and our **bush destroyed** for this **short-term gas grab**. If the mining companies' proposals were allowed to go ahead, the **decimation** of our farmlands and bush would be **irreversible**. Consider the **loss of wildlife**. Who would **compensate** the residents suffering from **solastalgia** (environmentally-induced stress)?

Unconventional gas mining has the potential to significantly **reduce property values**.

Over 60 Victorian communities have declared themselves **coal and gasfield free**. The **UCG** industry has **no social licence** in these regions.

To **promote** the unconventional gas industry is extremely **short-sighted**. It benefits the mining companies at the **expense** of the **communities** of Australia. To suggest that **UCG** extraction will benefit the domestic market is **ludicrous**: the majority of the gas will be exported and our gas prices linked to the global markets, causing our **prices** to **skyrocket**. There is already **enough gas available** from offshore sources to fill our interim domestic needs. Provisions for **storing gas** should be considered. **Funding for renewable energy research** would be a much more **logical** solution.

The Gas Market Taskforce was **heavily biased** toward people who would **gain** from the advancement of the unconventional gas industry. There was very little community consultation. **Peter Reith** made a very brief appearance at a **Lock the Gate** information session I attended at Mirboo North in 2013. He did **not have the courtesy** to stay to **listen** to more than one speaker, and certainly did **not** stay long enough to **consult** with members of the **community**.

I have attended many information sessions, including a community consultation session in Warragul in 2014, and I feel **very distressed** by the prospect of the **advancement** of the **UCG** industries in Victoria. I was not reassured when a representative told me that the gas drills (in Queensland) blend in with the landscape: 'they are painted green'! There are numerous **heartbreaking** examples of first-hand experiences of the **devastation** of communities in Queensland and New South Wales. We must not allow those industries here. Overseas, places such as **New York State**, have **banned fracking**.

Unconventional gas industries have **no place** in Gippsland; indeed they are **not welcome** in Australia.

Please consider the **future** of the environment, the wildlife and the health of our communities and of future generations. I **urge you** to recommend a **permanent ban on all onshore unconventional gas drilling**.

Yours faithfully,

Gillian Vanyai

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