

Susan and Colin Wales

Chairperson

Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee
State Inquiry into Unconventional Gas

Dear Sir/Ms

As residents of Cockatoo, Shire of Cardinia, for the past six years we have serious concerns about the development of unconventional gas in Victoria. We believe that all forms of unconventional gas have the potential to cause social, environmental and geological disturbances which are longstanding and have unknown consequences.

As members of the local Cockatoo Township Committee, we were instrumental in the Committee writing in October 2013 to then Minister for Energy and Resources, Hon Nick Kotsiras, urging the Coalition Government to retain the moratorium on the right of any organisation to engage in any activity related to Coal Seam Gas, Tight Gas or Shale Gas exploration or development.

As part of that letter we expressed that the supposed advantages of Coal Seam Gas, such as cheaper power, are far outweighed by the many disadvantages such as:

- agricultural production loss
- potential pollution of water supplies
- geological structure damage
- social disturbance and division.

Treatment and processing of the product and supporting the area of origin usually require the introduction of a range of chemical materials along with huge quantities of water which further damage the substrata. This also has the potential to pollute ground and/or surface water and cause detrimental health effects.¹

Exploratory drilling and production of gas frequently causes conflict among neighbours and division in local communities. Multinational fossil fuel companies' profit has the potential to be endorsed over the livelihoods and wellbeing of Victorian communities. The involvement of Lakes Oil in drilling and exploration in Gippsland during 2013 is a classic example of dollar deals over common sense.

¹ See [Physicians for Social Responsibility](#) 2012.

The desecration of areas used for food production or areas of natural beauty used for recreation, as seen in parts of New South Wales and Queensland, will be another adverse and longstanding impact of such exploration and development. Once such areas are polluted, it is almost impossible to restore them for their former function.

There is absolutely no excuse for any government not to expedite production of existing natural sources such as solar and wind energy. This would also enable experts in the gas industry to change direction and upskill their workforce into an ecologically safe industry which our great, great grandchildren will admire and no doubt improve upon.

Yours sincerely

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