

From: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas POV eSubmission Form
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Sent: Tuesday, 7 July 2015 5:17 PM
To: EPC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Dr. A. Barrie Pittock
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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My background is as a retired atmospheric scientist with CSIRO and a member of a shared household near Lakes Entrance in Gippsland. My interest arises from my knowledge of the possibility of sea-level rise due to global warming affecting the low-lying areas of southern Gippsland.

This led me in the early 2000s to investigate possible impacts on the area, and drew my attention to the possibility of surface land subsidence due to the extraction of minerals including, natural gas from under the area, as with the Bass Strait gas fields. At the time my concern was the possible addition of local subsidence to the effect of global sea-level rise on coastal erosion and flooding of low-lying coastal areas.

The new possibility of gas extraction from under the ground in the southern Gippsland region raises the possibility that local subsidence there will increase the exposure of land in the area to riverine or coastal flooding, especially in the vicinity of the Gippsland Lakes.

I have not done any new estimates but would point the committee to some past reports and discussions and urge the committee to look further into the possibility of added risk from subsidence. I believe the committee should commission relevant experts to report on this issue.

Subsidence has been reported in relation to other gas fields, especially shallow ones.

Relevant past reports, related to the Gippsland area, which I have copies of, are as follows:

1. Draft Gippsland Lakes Strategy, December 1988, Minister for Planning and Environment, Victoria, 77 pp.
2. Victorian Coastal Vulnerability Study, Port of Melbourne Authority, June 1992, ~140 pp.

3. Subsidence: Gippsland Coastal Board Seminars: Land Subsidence in Gippsland, April 11 and 12, 2000, speakers notes.

In the introduction to the third report above, the then chair of the Gippsland Coastal Board stated:

"The Gippsland Coastal Board has for some time been aware that land subsidence has the potential to be an issue of extreme importance for the Gippsland region. The possible impacts are considerable for the environment, agriculture and the regions' infrastructure."

I trust the committee will investigate this possibility seriously as it could be a major effect of gas extraction.

Dr. Barrie Pittock, PSM

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File1:

File2:

File3: