

To the Parliamentary Committee,

Submission to the State Government Inquiry into Unconventional Gas

My name is Anunaki Holmes and I live in the Otway Ranges. I wish to see a permanent ban on unconventional gas extraction. I am concerned about the long term environmental and health effects of unconventional gas extraction and fracking.

Firstly, there are concerning health effects that seem to regularly coincide with unconventional gas extraction processes. The use of toxic chemicals in fracking liquid is a very risky business. Toxic waste liquids have repeatedly been shown to contaminate surrounding land and water sources, endangering people and creatures who use it. Illnesses such as headaches, frequent nose bleeds in children, chemical burns from water use and gastric complaints have been reported by those living in close proximity to unconventional gas extraction and processing sites. Taking into consideration the sicknesses evident, how can fracking still be allowed?

Are the government and big gas industries truly willing to ignore the consistently reported risks simply so they can gain a quick and easy source of money? Are the short term products of gas drilling worth the loss of good health and agricultural land? I would choose the health and safety of our people and wildlife over short term economic gain, any day.

Leaking gas and toxic waste are not just effecting humans. Plants and creatures living in the environment poisoned by this industry are effected too. The presence of natural ecosystems and uncontaminated habitats is important for human health. These areas provide pleasurable environments to relax in and can be used as tourist attractions. The general ecological benefits natural landscapes provide will be destroyed if they are industrialised and poisoned by the unconventional gas industry.

Another concern is the use of farm land as sites for these drilling wells. In Queensland, New South Wales and overseas, land that could be used for agriculture has been made unsafe for habitation and food production due to contamination of soil, air and water. If a farmer does not want gas wells on his or her property, the farmer's wishes should be respected. And I support this. I do not want gas wells where my food is produced. At the end of the day, we need food, not gas.

There are other, *cleaner* and *less dangerous* methods of harvesting energy. I would rather see wind turbines, solar power, tidal and wave power generators on the horizon than unconventional gas wells on farm lands which provide my food. These *renewable energy sources* will not leak toxic waste liquids into the soils and waterways, nor will they pollute the air. ***I urge the government and big power companies to support and develop renewable energies instead of unconventional gas.***

The fact is, the government will have to rapidly phase out the use of coal and gas as energy sources. These are fossil fuels which take millions of years to develop. Coal and gas are finite resources, so they are going to run out anyway. Furthermore, they are not sustainable or healthy and are major contributing factors to climate change.

I do not support any sort of unconventional gas drilling or fracking. I am glad more than sixty communities across Southern Victoria have already declared they do not want unconventional gas exploration, drilling or fracking. Because of this widespread opposition, industries do not have social license to operate in our state.

The number of communities that speak up against unconventional gas is rising as they become aware of the issues with this industry. The bad effects it has on farmland, health, the atmosphere and its contribution to increasing climate change should rule out this source of energy for good.

As a young Australian, I have my whole life ahead of me and I look forward to a clean and healthy future. I want the State Government to secure a clean and healthy future for me and permanently ban the unconventional gas industry in Victoria.

Sincerely,

Anunaki Holmes

7 July 2015