

# Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria

Mr David Fenton & Ms Caroline Coggins

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

July 9th 2015

We would like to take this opportunity to make this submission into the State Government's Inquiry into Unconventional Gas.

David represents the 6<sup>th</sup> generation of his family who have farmed agricultural land in Victoria since 1839. We have three children who may also choose to make their home on the land and also take pleasure in supplying safe and quality produce to feed consumers both here and overseas.

We are not prepared to stand by and watch the unconventional gas mining industry, with inadequate monitoring & regulation, ruin their future and ours.

For this reason and the following we are opposed to unconventional gas mining in Victoria.

We believe that unconventional gas mining may put our food, water & air at risk. We want security for future investment so we can grow our business to support others, as employers and consumers within our local community and nationally.

Our community group, Gas Field Free South West Victoria, has voiced its opposition to Unconventional Gas Mining with a survey taken and 96% of the community voted NO to Unconventional Gas Mining.

Our Shire, the Shire of Southern Grampians, has declared that it is opposed to unconventional gas mining by declaring itself Gas Field Free.

At the Victorian Farmers Federation conference on June 26th 2015, members voted strongly, recognising that there is increasing evidence of negative impacts on Agriculture and water supplies with Unconventional Gas Mining both within Australia and around the world. They voted to support a 5 year moratorium.

Our community is very concerned and wants to be heard and noticed.

The process of hydraulic fracturing involves the pressurised injection of fluids, sand & chemicals into rock to fracture and release gas. The mining companies use a huge numbers of chemicals in the fracking process.

There is growing evidence around the world that Fracking is bad for Health and the

Environment. In Australia the examples of diseases in the Queensland town ██████████ promoted the making of the movie Frackman, by Josh Fox. This is a startling and upsetting account of what is actually happening in Australia now.

It is a fallacy to believe that coexistence of unconventional gas mining and agriculture would be possible without conflict.

Traditionally farming land has been passed from one generation to the other over hundreds of years. Gas extraction will exist for a period of 5 to 20 years and then the landscape will be left scared and useless. Over this period our idyllic farmland will be dotted with huge pads of concrete, 500-750 metres apart, drill rigs on top working 24 hours a day, and all joined by pipes and roadways. There may be thousands of wells in a district venting and flaring 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This would be a very different environment to where we currently live; people would not want or be able to live here.

In addition to the visible scarring to the landscape above the ground, there is also potential for significant and irreversible and unmeasurable damage to the underground water supply. Agriculture and food production solely rely on this – and the inadvertent pollution of the underground water supply, by the chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process, could see the end of agricultural production in the local area. Our animals might die. If our animals do survive while drinking contaminated water, they may not be fit for human consumption, due to a possible breach of safe livestock chemical levels and regulations.

With the evolution of climate change we need to stop burning fossil fuels. Further exploration and gas mining is nonsensical. The methane released in the mining process is a potent greenhouse gas, many times the global impact of carbon dioxide.

Australia currently has access to sufficient gas supplies to help in the transition to renewable energy sources. The focus should be on the advancement of renewable technologies that will be more sustainable and benefit more people in the long run, with less environmental impact.

There are very few benefits to agriculture, the environment or people living in the State of Victoria from this short term and dangerous industry. It will more than likely leave us in a major state of disrepair, that will potentially be irreversible, after mining companies have industrialised the landscape and polluted our water resources.

Please consider the future of agriculture and our clean, green Australian image, perceived nationally and internationally, when you decide the future of this industry in Victoria and how it may impact on our livelihood and future generations to come.

David Fenton and Caroline Coggins  
██████████