

**Submission to
Legislative Council's Environment and Planning Committee
Inquiry into Unconventional Gas In Victoria**

From

Name - Mr Edward George STUCKEY

**Attention Mr Kier Delaney
Secretary, Environmental & Planning Committee
Parliament House, Spring St, Melbourne, Vic 3002**

Dear Sir,

I congratulate the Victorian Parliament for conducting and investigation into the requirement for onshore Unconventional Gas (UG) exploration and production in Victoria. Such an investigation is essential before the community should allow the gas mining companies to exploit the gas fields in this state.

I am disappointed that the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry do not include a specific requirement for the Committee to investigate the impact of UG exploration and production on Victoria's groundwater fields in terms of the type of chemical being used and the volume of water being removed by the gas wells.

I am particularly concerned that there does not seem to be any regulation or controls on the toxicity of the chemicals being used in the fracking liquids that are being pumped into the wells. In my opinion no chemicals that are toxic to animals or plants should be allowed to be pumped into the wells and that all fracking liquids should be tested and approved by the Environmental Protection Authority before use.

I am also concerned that, in a country which is short of water and which appears to be heading into a drier climate, we would allow vast quantities of water to be pumped from our underground aquifers to produce a relatively short term supply of gas. As the Produced Water from the wells is unsuitable for use as stock water or irrigation and cannot be put into natural streams the water must be disposed of by other means and is wasted.

While the gas fields will no doubt, make a significant contribution to the economy during the 15 or so years of their operation, the groundwater fields have, and will continue to make, a far more important contribution to economy of the community as the impacts of global warming take effect.

Water in all its forms is a far more important to the community than any amount of Unconventional Gas that could be produced if that process pollutes the water supply.

I am not against the extraction of unconventional gases but I cannot support the extraction of such gases at the cost of the pollution of the states groundwater resources. I think that the exploration and extraction of unconventional gases should only be permitted when the industry has developed extraction processes that cannot pollute the aquifers. This will require strict regulations and inspections for compliance of all wells and testing to ensure that aquifers are not contaminated by the process. The costs should be borne by the gas industry and not by the government or taxpayer.

Sincerely,

Edward Stuckey