

From: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas POV eSubmission Form
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Sent: Wednesday, 8 July 2015 3:20 PM
To: EPC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Mr John Knox
[REDACTED]

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Dear Committee members,

My name is John Knox and I am a resident of Airport West in suburban Melbourne. I am deeply concerned about Climate Change and volunteer with community organisation 350.org. I thank you for this opportunity to make a submission to your enquiry. Firstly, may I make it abundantly clear that I do not support ANY form of unconventional gas mining be it coal seam gas, tight gas, shale gas or underground coal gasification. I do not believe this industry has nor ever will have a social licence to operate in Victoria.

It seems passing strange that we would even consider this industry in Victoria in the first place given the number of problems it has encountered elsewhere in Australia and overseas. Just why would we would want to put at risk water, farmland, community health, food security, environment and jobs in sectors such as agriculture & tourism for little or no financial gain other than to those who would want to drill for this gas in the first place?

Unconventional or, as I consider it, unnatural gas puts at risk all of these. Once an aquifer is polluted by the chemicals used, it becomes tainted forever. There are no known ways for an aquifer, once polluted in this manner, to be remediated. The value of our agricultural industry, both for local and export use, far outweighs any short term benefit from an industry which has shown time and again that it can't be trusted to look after the welfare of the people on whose land they drill, not to mention the wider societal impacts. Apparently the infrastructure required for gas wells (all weather access roads, cleared well pads, compression stations, evaporation dams) would make the day to day running of a farm, if not unviable, at least a whole lot more difficult.

An outright total ban on any of these activities I believe is the only way to give certainty to existing agricultural and tourism industries that the environment upon which their survival depends will be protected. Farmers especially would get greater ongoing financial benefits from considering hosting wind or solar farms than the small, short term financial incentives being proposed by this industry. Renewable

energy also creates more long term jobs than this industry does. There may also be tourism benefits in deployment of wind and solar energy projects.

Unnatural gas is also a fossil fuel which, when burnt, will add to the problem of global warming. Perhaps more importantly, the fugitive emissions from the unconventional extraction of this unnatural gas has an impact, on a 100 year time horizon that is 28-36 times more potent than CO₂, which means that a fugitive emission rate of only 2% would make unnatural gas as bad for Climate Change as coal! On a 20 year time horizon, its effects are over 80 times more potent than CO₂ with all of the problems associated with that. Bearing in mind that a South Australian university study suggests that methane leakage from CSG fields are more likely around 6%, there is no way unnatural gas can be considered better for the environment. We need to be reducing to zero our use of fossil fuels within the next 35 years not adding extra to the burden on our atmosphere and our children's future.

The industry might claim we need to drill for unnatural gas in order to protect supplies for Victorians yet most of this 'extra' unnatural gas is bound for export markets. With the increasing availability of high efficiency electric counterparts for gas's normal uses we should be looking to replace our gas appliances as soon as possible to reduce our reliance on this harmful fossil fuel – unnatural gas can no longer be considered the 'good fuel'. When renewable energy powers our electricity grid and we have retired as much of our gas appliances as possible, we will be well on our way towards where we need to be by 2050. In this context, it would be silly in the extreme to add another source of fossil fuels to the current inventory of unburnable carbon.

They may also claim that they can safely extract this unnatural gas yet countless examples both in Australia and from overseas shows that this industry cannot be trusted to self-regulate. They have had many years to prove their practices are safe and yet have failed to do so. No matter what regulation is in place there will always be a risk and any risk, when it comes to our environment, be it water or air pollution, waste disposal, land contamination and geotechnical stability is unacceptable.

In a country like Australia where water is a precious resource, it beggars belief that not only would we risk our irreplaceable aquifers but would commit massive quantities of water to this industry when that water will become contaminated to the point of being toxic.

Unnatural gas has known health, environment, agricultural and community impacts – why would you want to be associated with promoting such an industry in Victoria? Would you like to go down in history as having assisted this industry in gaining a foothold in Victoria to the detriment of Victorians? Help stop this toxic industry before it gets started.

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File1:

File2:

File3: