

Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria Submission

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I am an ex-Queenslander, now living in Melbourne. I grew up in Central Queensland, which has become a hotspot for CSG mining, but nothing like southern Queensland.

After hearing a lot about CSG in the media, I saw the documentary [Gasland](#). This really shocked me as to what was happening in parts of the United States due to the unchecked CSG industry. Most distressing in the documentary was the health effects on people living adjacent to mines, but also the many effects of CSG on the environment.

I think the first time I realised the scale of CSG mining in Queensland was when I saw the map in this [ABC article](#). It is quite scary to think of the amount of farmland, bushland and small communities that have been affected by CSG, especially fracking.

I have witnessed the Lock the Gate movement, and the reasons why they are fighting against CSG mining. As Drew Hutton says, we love this country, and we don't want to see it ripped up for the short term gain of a few. What I ask is that Victoria doesn't become another potential disaster area like Queensland has become.

My information is taken from the [Lock the Gate](#) website, which I have been following for several years. [Drew Hutton](#) was a lecturer of mine at QUT in Brisbane.

I don't wish to appear at a public hearing.

OUR FUTURE

The well-being of communities is put at risk by invasive coal and gas mining, with pollution of air and water leading to illnesses and poor health outcomes. Mines encroach on towns and villages, harming quality of life, devaluing properties and destroying and dividing communities. Other industries such as agriculture and tourism face labour shortages and rising costs whilst losing land and assets to mining.

Tara - The Tara residential estate in south-west Queensland has been surrounded by a coal seam gas production field, with more than 20 families, including children, experiencing chronic health problems, including nosebleeds, skin rashes and nausea.

Hunter Valley - Data from around the world shows that coal mining communities have higher rates of mortality from lung cancer and chronic respiratory diseases. In the Hunter, airborne dust levels frequently exceed national health standards and there has been a 50% jump in dust emissions from coal over five years.

Acland, a small town 35km west of Toowoomba, became a ghost town virtually overnight when a coal company moved in and purchased 300 properties to make way for mining - dismantling houses or leaving them to decay. Other towns and villages across the country now face a similar fate - Camberwell, Ravensworth, Wybong, Wandoan and Taroom.

OUR LAND

Our best food-producing lands and our finest natural areas are at risk from inappropriate coal mining, coal seam gas and other forms of unconventional gas extraction. The mining expansion that is planned is unlike anything this country has ever seen before. Coal and gas exploration licences have been granted for almost the entire continent and there are plans to double our coal exports and become the biggest gas exporter in the world.

Central Queensland - This classic Australian landscape, stretching from the outback to the ocean, from wide open cattle country to the Great Barrier Reef, is at risk from plans for up to 31 new or expanded coal mines, and a new coal seam gas field.

Darling Downs - This rich and nationally iconic farming region, described as 'four million acres of the richest soil in the world', is under threat from plans for up to 15 new or expanded coal mines and over 26,000 thousand coal seam gas wells.

Gunnedah Basin and Liverpool Plains - This area matches fertile farming country, the foodbowl of the nation, with beautiful landscapes and outstanding remnants of native bushland. It is under threat from coal and coal seam gas mining, with current exploration licences covering more than 6 million hectares of land.

OUR WATER

On the driest continent on earth, water is our most precious resource. Despite this, the current mining boom is putting at risk our drinking water catchments, our underground water resources, and our rivers and wetlands.

Hunter River and alluvial aquifers - the Hunter Valley is a highly productive agricultural area in part because of the security and cleanliness of its water. Research by Lock the Gate has shown this is being put at risk by extensive open cut coal mining.

Sydney Drinking Water Catchment - The catchment provides clean drinking water to over 4 million people but it is at risk from 8 underground coal mines which have already caused cracking and pollution of creeks, and new plans for coal seam gas mining.

Fitzroy River Catchment, Queensland - This catchment supplies water to Rockhampton and is a major estuary flowing into the Great Barrier Reef, but it is threatened by over 30 coal mines and escalating coal seam gas mining which have approvals to dump wastewater into the system.

Condamine River - Over 20 million litres of wastewater is being discharged by coal seam gas miners into the Condamine River each day and the river has recently been seen 'bubbling like a spa bath' after nearby coal seam gas mining.

Dawson River, Floodplains and Wetlands - The Dawson faces multiple heavy threats, including plans for an enormous dam to supply water for coal mines, the discharge of coal seam gas wastewater, and proposals for massive open-cut coal and coal seam gas mining in catchment areas.

Great Artesian Basin - The Basin, which covers 22% of Australia and is the only reliable source of water across vast areas, is threatened by coal seam gas mining which allows drilling into Basin aquifers or right through the Basin, risking dewatering or contamination.