

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Mr Philip Baker
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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My name is Philip Baker. I am one of many people that are deeply distress at living within a gas field of toxic pollution, contamination and destruction of the pristine environment and farms that I live amongst.

I purchased a small block of land many years ago on the coast at Seaspray in Victoria.

This was when land was very affordable at the time, and we used it to camp on during holidays.

Every time we spent time here, my wife whom has many medical problems found she felt a great deal better and happier living in the area.

It was then that we decided to build our home here for that reason and invested every thing that we had to make it happen.

Some years later I was appalled to find that the government had granted licenses for hundreds of on shore gas exploration wells throughout the district.

Many friends whom live in the area, some of whom have moved from America and Queensland were they had seen first hand what had happen to their towns and farms and country side once the mining companies began operating, became activist and joined lock the gate alliance Australia to stop this from happening here.

I also became an activist to protect my family and home and the place I live, and began demonstrating and writing letters to local ministers and politicians to ban on shore gas mining or at least investigate the issues that had been stated.

My greatest disappointment was the lack of support that I received from those ministers

whom had sworn to stand for rural Victoria and voice our concerns in parliament.

I was told that I was miss-informed of the dangers of frack mining and that the government had also made some safety changes in the extraction method.

My repeated question to ministers was how was I miss-informed when the government has only recently decided to commence a scientific study the effect of on shore gas mining On human and animal health and the environment.

The safety changes the government referred to were totally inadequate and had absolutely no effect on the safety of this type of mining practices.

It is for these reasons that I would like to make a submission to the State government's Inquiry into unconventional gas.

I would like to make it clear that I do not support on shore gas drilling. I will therefore limit my comments to the terms of reference that seem most relevant to me.

I believe there is a compelling case to place an outright and permanent ban on all onshore unconventional gas drilling in Victoria.

This inquiry offers us our best chance to stop this industry before it gets established. Based on the experience in other parts of the world where the industry is more advanced, including here in Australia and in North America, I do not believe that this industry can co-exist safely with other land uses like farming, conservation, and tourism.

It is believed that on shore hydraulic gas mining is the next big industry for Australia. And that Australians can rely on export wealth and low gas prices for many years.

But an enormous number of Australians want this dangerous and destructive industry banned and want the government to invest into renewable energy as they have successfully done in many parts of the world where job creation will improve Australia's economy and without mining farmland, preserve Australian farming industries.

It is also believed that this type of energy is lower polluting fuel than coal and oil.

The mining companies will have you believe without verification that the methane gas leakage, (the most destructive of green house pollutants per ton) is only 1.5%.

A leakage of 3% is considered as dirty a fuel as coal or oil.

An independent study carry out in America found much higher levels at 17%+

The government is failing the people of Australia to live without the fear of health issues and the concerns of permanently damaging Australia's waters supplies, food security and the environment.

The governments strict safety regulations such as to ban the use of Btex chemical, (a small part of the toxic and corrosive cocktail of chemical pumped 2- kilometers into the earth) is

just of one example.

Naturally occurring Btex chemicals found deep in soil can be released in the backflow water at very high levels or leak into ground water supplies permanently making the fresh water supply toxic and unusable.

This now public knowledge though media now reporting these issues, has occurred recently in Gloucester NSW now being investigated by the environmental protection agency.

This is only one of many incidents that have occurred recently in NSW

Another issue is the amount of water used by each mine.
Approximately 70000 liters of water a day is used in the fracking process.

Multiply this by hundreds of thousands of mines and the enormous amount of water demanded by this industry can be seen as a very high strain on Australia's already problematic water supplies especially when more and more communities are now relying on boar water to supply their towns with clean drinking water.

Many mines are installed on farmland. It is believed by the government that mining and farming can co- exist. This is simply not true, even with just 1 well installation will cause loses in productively.

The government knows this as they are prepared to offer compensation for this reason.

Dangers to neighboring farms that do not have wells installed can also impact on their land value and productivity also due to the potential damaged to their ground water use by contamination or depletion and land subsidence.

Vast amount of bush land even parks and reserves as wide as roads have been cleared to run gas pipes.

Australia is loosing its precious water, farmland, and pristine countryside to this destructive industry.

Nobody but government and investor's want CSG mining in Australia and many Australians are pleading the government to ban this industry as many other countries have now done.

Australian people want to live in a clean and healthy environment and to be able to purchase Australian grown produce without fear of contaminates.

Putting people in harms way is irresponsible and is in all terms of the matter a serious offence.