

Submission to the Victorian Parliament Unconventional Gas Inquiry. (28.6.15)

My firm opposition to any mining of coal, shale or tight gas is based on two uncomfortable facts - that with Climate Change we should be preparing for worst case scenarios and working on a tight 'Carbon Budget' (the amount of carbon dioxide – and thus the amount of fossil fuel that can be burned - that can be added to the atmosphere without the average temperature rising above the debatable 'safe' upper limit of 2 degrees). This means that we should be limiting the burning of fossil fuels rather than expanding them and changing over to renewable energy as quickly as possible.

As well the suggestion that unconventional gas is environmentally friendly is a myth. At best it is another fossil fuel. At worst it may have more greenhouse gas emissions than coal. This is because a considerable amount of methane – a greenhouse gas many times more powerful the CO₂ - escapes to the atmosphere during the mining and transportation process. These escapes are known as 'fugitive emissions'. This has been elaborated on previously by Prof. Tony Ingrafea of Cornell University - one of the discoverers of the 'fracking' process. (Note that his sea level rise predictions in this video are 'worst case')

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o78j77I7XUw&noredirect=1>

A recent article in the Guardian looks at more recent studies and confirms Ingrafea's conclusions. See here at

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jun/24/natural-gas-leaks-methane-environment>

Consequently because of the dire threat of global warming the mining of this gas should not be allowed. Government should not be wasting time on this (we had a major survey last year – albeit quite biased in favour of the industry) and dealing with the overriding problem.

Peter Gardner

