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From: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas POV eSubmission Form
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Sent: Thursday, 9 July 2015 4:49 PM
To: EPC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Dr Malcolm McKelvie
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President
Baw Baw Sustainability Network
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this very important issue for Gippsland and the wider community.

Baw Baw Sustainability Network is an incorporated not-for-profit community group whose aims include promoting sustainable living, focussing on the local government area of Baw Baw. We have 141 members. We have informed ourselves on the onshore gas industry and been actively involved in seeking community feedback. We are strongly opposed to any further development of this industry.

Our opinion is based on these factors and frankly any one of them seems to be enough of an argument to win the case but here they are:

1. Community opposition. All community surveys done have shown over 95% of people are opposed to having an onshore gas industry setting up in their area. There have been many public forums with evidence given by hydrogeologists, economic experts, landholders with experience of the industry in their area as well as the arguments put in the public sphere by the proponents of the industry, most notably Lakes Oil in this area. The public are well informed on the issue, contrary to the position stated by our state treasurer recently. There is no social licence to operate this industry now and there never will be in the foreseeable future.
2. Risk of ground and surface water contamination with methane gas and other hydrocarbons known to be detrimental to human and animal health. The use of fracking introduces another set of contaminants. Statements by Rob Annells of Lakes Oil that their wells will never fail is ridiculous. Studies of the US fracking industry have shown that about 7% of wells fail as soon as they are made. More fail over time and the concrete and steel will still be in the ground long after Lakes Oil and Rob Annells are around to care for and maintain them. A 50 or 100 year guarantee is still useless as the wells will all eventually crack and fail.
3. Loss of rural amenity. The people of West Gippsland are blessed with views of mostly green rural

landscape and this was found to be of great importance during the period of community consultation done by the shire to produce their report Baw Baw 50. Introducing gas wells, pipelines, more roads, trucks and noise will be extremely detrimental to our current peaceful, rural lifestyle. Property values are likely to be affected adversely as well.

4. The need to reduce our fossil fuel use as quickly as possible to give any chance of averting catastrophic warming of the earth. Introducing even more sources of fossil fuels is plain stupid. The argument that gas is a cleaner source of energy than coal is becoming more and more tenuous as evidence builds of fugitive emissions of gas which is a more potent greenhouse gas than CO₂, thus nullifying any stated benefit.

5. The arguments put by the industry regarding safeguarding our supply of gas for domestic use are disingenuous. The APPEA are against any policy of reservation of any proportion of the mined gas for domestic use and no Australian government has implemented a gas reservation policy. The mining companies are seeking to make profits by selling the gas at as high a price as possible which is in overseas markets. It follows that the people to gain most from the industry are the owners of the mining companies which are mostly foreign owned anyway, while the losses in property values, the risk to our land and water, rural amenity will be incurred by locals. The tax revenue that will flow to the state including Gippslanders is of little significance compared to the losses outlined above.

6. Our community is more excited and supportive of the development of the renewable energy industry which will help to reduce and eventually end our need to burn coal and gas for energy. We know that Australia has the best resources for renewable energy in the world with access to wind, sun, waves and geothermal energy. We are also currently wasting huge amounts of energy and we welcome the current state government's intention to make great progress in energy efficiency.

7. This area produces a lot of food and milk, for both the domestic and export markets. Consumers, wherever they are, prefer their food to come from "clean, green" farmlands and an expanding role for our area to supply the burgeoning Asian middle classes is dependent on maintaining both the perception and the reality of uncontaminated farms. Trying to combine a gas extraction industry with clean, green agriculture is counterproductive.

We look forward to our parliament listening more to the community than to the narrow, vested interests of the mining companies on this issue and implementing a permanent ban on all onshore gas extraction, whether this is in the form of coal seam gas with or without fracking, tight gas, shale gas or underground gasification of coal.

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File1:

File2:

File3: