

9 July 2015

Dear Committee

I wish to submit to the parliamentary inquiry into onshore gas mining in Victoria and register my profound opposition to any such activities.

I live near Bairnsdale on a property my husband and I have chosen to preserve through the Trust For Nature program that legislates for land to be set-aside in perpetuity. Our land is one of the last remaining tracts of the red gum plains and has been classified as being of great significance by the Trust. It is vital to the preservation of remnant woodland forests that have been cleared for agricultural use.

My concern for further degradation of our remnant forest and the surrounding agricultural land has led me to participate in a door knocking survey where I have spoken with over 100 landholders and their families in my area alone. The survey asks the question: "Do you want your land gasfield free?". Although surveying is not yet complete, the results are clearly following the trend set in other areas of the Bairnsdale district. Ie nearly 100% of those spoken with whole-heartedly reject the concept of mining on their properties.

There are a number of elements to my objections to gas exploration and mining some of which I list below.

**Environmental impact.** Exploration mining around Seaspray, (Wombat 1 and 2 mine sites) has left extraordinarily visible scarring on the landscape despite so called site rehabilitation. This kind of scarring will occur at intervals of 800 to 1000 metres apart all over areas designated for exploration and mining. The devastation to bush and farmland ecology cannot be overestimated. Furthermore, the risks to the water table from contamination puts at risk farming and domestic operations.

**Economic impact:** Estimates from Geosciences Australia indicate there is sufficient off shore gas supplies to last more than 60 years and that gas usage is falling. It seems absurd that we would even consider putting the value of our local industries and tourism at such risk for the benefit of mostly foreign owned entities.

**Public health impact:** So little is known about the long-term impacts of mining. Paediatrician Dr Jo McCubbin, in her submission to the inquiry talked of effects of mining operations that are seen sometimes decades down the track. Governments have a responsibility to protect the health of their citizens and to first identify any potential risks to human health both directly and via environmental damage.

**Renewable energy:** There appears to be no consideration given to the possibility of renewable energy options. It seems that because mining companies have exploration licences in place, that mining is the only option, no matter what. Advances in technology are occurring at a rapid rate sufficient to indicate that gas

mining technology can be bypassed completely and renewable technologies take their place.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my thoughts and feelings about unconventional gas. My opposition to mining of this nature with its potential for such widespread devastation has led me to believe that I must fight it with every fibre of my being.

Yours sincerely

Angela Crunden

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