

From: Elspeth Ferguson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 9 July 2015 8:26 PM
To: EPC
Subject: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas

Please accept my community input submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Unconventional Gas.

Dear Committee Members,

I am a proud Victorian resident and have been for most of my life, living mainly in Melbourne but also in two major regional cities. I am retired and lead a busy healthy active life including three regular volunteering jobs and many friends, family and interests.

I am concerned about unconventional gas mining as I am aware of climate change and feel that Victoria is the smartest state in Australia and should use this intelligence to transition rapidly to zero net emissions. Victoria has recently shown some initiative in climate change action by proposing a state renewable energy target.

I recommend that the Victorian Government bans fracking and all other forms of unconventional gas mining. The benefits of doing this include not only fresh air and water but also giving certainty to the agriculture and tourism industries. These two industries plus an expanded renewable energy industry employ and will employ a lot of people and if properly managed are sustainable into the future. **There are alternative forms of energy but there is no alternative to fresh food.**

The risks to farming land, natural and water resources cannot be safely managed. These impacts have been in evidence in other countries and in other Australian states. The process is risky and regulatory systems can and do fail and failure can lead to disastrous environmental and public health effects. Indeed there is mounting evidence that gas is not as clean as once thought. **Victoria is a beautiful place and we have unique natural scenery and abundant uncontaminated food resources that are needed both locally and overseas.**

According to the Australian Energy Market Operator, there is no gas shortage in Victoria or elsewhere in Australia. It is ridiculous to even think of risking public health and farmland for something we don't even need and for which there are alternatives.

There is strong evidence that gas exports from Australia link us to international markets where prices are higher. A Victorian gas industry will not save consumers money. The best solution for consumers to reduce gas bills is through energy efficiency initiatives.

Victoria has far more sunlight than many parts of Europe where solar power is being extensively used. We also have no shortage of wind. I have traveled several times recently in Europe and am amazed at the extensive use of solar and wind power there. Countries using these technologies are both green and wealthy. The two are NOT incompatible! There is new technology being developed to make these sources even better. We simply can't afford the risks involved in these desperate measures taken by the dinosaur fossil fuel industry.

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