

James and Fiona Whale

Attention:

Keir Delaney, Secretary, Environment & Planning Committee Parliament House, Spring Street,  
Melbourne VIC 3002

[epc@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:epc@parliament.vic.gov.au)

CC: Emma Kealy (Member for Lowan), Dan Tehan (Member for Wannon)

**Re: UCG Inquiry Submission**

We write to express our concern with the unconventional gas industry that is being proposed in Victoria, and particularly in our area. We have recently purchased land from family at [REDACTED] on which we are running a Dairy Heifer agistment business. The farm has been in Fiona's family for many years, our daughter will be the sixth generation to live there.

We both work in the local town Hamilton and the broader south west. In our careers as an Agricultural Consultant and an Agribusiness Relationship Manager all our clients and business relates to farmers and communities in the south west.

We have committed to this area and to raising a family and working here. This is despite higher paid jobs and better career prospects in other areas of Australia. We committed to this area because we see a bright future for agriculture and our family here. Our family has been here for the long term and we intend that if our children and their children want to farm here that they should have the same clean water and land that we have had access to.

Every fracked gas well will eventually fail, and that is the issue here, because our family and farming enterprise will outlive any mining enterprise, and will be left with the clean-up and consequences. This is not an acceptable outcome. We don't think in 15-year time frames. We are renovating a house that is over 100 years old, we are using all local trades and materials. We intend to renovate so that the house will last another 100 years.

The community has overwhelmingly voted no, in Branxholme 95.2% surveyed said no to gasfields and a hugely successful community day was held in which farmers took a break from sowing to get together and spell out 'Food no Gas' with tractors, it was a powerful message, stance and demonstrates how serious and committed we are to keeping our community gasfield free. Mining interests and money should not trump communities, clean water and long term productive farmland.

The unconventional gas industry is not compatible with sustainable and environmentally friendly primary production. Furthermore a sole policy of individual right of veto is unacceptable as aquifers and contamination have no respect for property boundaries. We will not support any form of this industry, no matter the regulations as the risk to our community and our livelihood is unacceptable.

Regards,

James and Fiona Whale