

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Ms Julie Francis
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing this submission for the Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria. The Committee has 2 terms of reference that I would like to address:

1. the environmental, land productivity and public health risks, risk mitigation and residual risks of onshore unconventional gas activities;
2. the coexistence of onshore unconventional gas activities with existing land and water uses, including —
 - (a) agricultural production and domestic and export market requirements;
 - (b) the legal rights of property owners and the impact on property values; and
 - (c) any implications for local and regional development, investment and jobs

The development of unconventional gas industries pose unacceptable risks to the contamination of ground water. The contamination seems still not understood or managed safely by the industry, and this should preclude exploration given the importance of water for other industries and human and animal health.

Significant amounts of water are used to produce the gas, which is also a concern, given the longer dry spells and extreme weather heat waves associated with a changing climate.

Groundwater may become a necessary resource for farmers to get through droughts, it is something that we are considering for our own property, given the very limited rainfall or surface water flows we have had in the last 11 months. (Lower than during the Millennium Drought). If the mining industry depletes the groundwater it will be uneconomical for farmers to dig bores, maybe even impossible for them to find water. This would have major

implications for people living on the land.

Exploration should not be occurring on agricultural land. The agricultural land resource is being slowly eroded by housing development, and more subdivisions into smaller farms with no agriculture. Unconventional gas activities would further erode the agricultural estate.

Exploration of gas reserves must not infringe on the rights of property owners to safe ground water and to have a choice in who comes onto their land.

On our agricultural property we produce lamb for the specialty market in Melbourne that wants clean and green credentials associated with their product. Allowing unconventional gas exploration in our region would tarnish not just the property value but product value, as consumers would no longer associate the region with sound environmental quality. We have worked for decades on building our property to be sustainable and healthy, we have created biodiversity habitat, a net carbon sink, a successful business and we do not wish unconventional gas exploration or extraction to undo that work. To have no say on extraction because the government owns the gas is unthinkable, to have a mine or exploratory facility forced onto our property, undoing the good environmental work of decades.

As the world moves to cleaner and greener jobs and industry, any implications for regional development from gas mining must be weighed against jobs that are lost due to a tarnished environment and reputation for the region in question.

At Moffitts Farm we do not support the unconventional industry in Victoria.