

Sunday, 5 July 2015

## CSG Parliamentary Enquiry Submission Tony Peck.

- My family has now lived in East Gippsland for almost 25 years. We initially came for a two-year contract to work in the health field with the local indigenous community and fell in love with the region, largely because of the amazing natural environment. The mix of verdant agricultural land balanced by largely untouched bush was too hard to resist.
- Our two children have grown up in East Gippsland and although they are now in Melbourne they retain strong ties to the region and its future.
- **Health and Unconventional Gas:** My partner and I are both health workers and have supported campaigns against harmful industries such as smoking and asbestos over more than 40 years in the health industry.
- I have been in the health, community services and education industries here and in Melbourne for most of my working life. I am very aware of the impact of specific toxic chemicals on the environment and especially on people's health. A recent example is the harm caused to firefighters by chemicals used for fire training at their training base (now closed) at Fiskville. I have worked with people with cancer caused by many of the known cancer causing chemicals and am convinced that there is risk from those used in unconventional gas mining.
- The unconventional gas extraction industry is notorious for the range of toxic chemicals that are used in the extraction and mining process. This is combined with injection of these chemicals into the drill hole to through the artesian layers and with high risk of escape. The local industry repeatedly claims that it is incredibly safe. This is refuted by what actually happens time and again, throughout the world, with gas leaks and chemical contamination reported many times over. Industry itself states that failure can be as high as 25%.
- It is not good enough to introduce another form of harm into our environment both above and below ground when the fossil fuel industry should be in a declining phase, not expanding.
- We are in the midst of an unprecedented crisis with global warming threatening every aspect of our lives. Development of resources such as unconventional gas makes absolutely no sense in an era where we are fighting to get adequate action on climate change. Any investment in energy production should focus on renewable sources rather than fossil fuels, which must be left in the ground if we are going to have a chance to leave our children with a world that we can be proud of.

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- I believe that government and mining industry, in an unethical bout of greed, are under pressure to get the gas out of the ground before real and effective restrictions take effect to prevent global warming. They seem determined to extract as much coal, gas and oil as they can before finally restrictions that should already be there are put in place.
- Agriculture and tourism are key industries in East Gippsland. The almost pristine pastures and dams feeding from the high country combine to create produce that many other regions in the world are jealous of. To put this sector at risk by crowding the region with unsightly, polluting gas extraction wells is short sighted. On top of this the finite resource of the water used for agriculture from bores into the water table is at risk. Just one mistake in the extraction industry could jeopardise this industry across our region. The aquifer water levels have been dropping for decades and the resource must be managed better, not put at immediate risk by this additional proposed burden.
- Tourism makes much of the beauty of the region and people travel here to experience some of the most pristine and varied countryside in the nation. To put these jobs at risk for short term gain is not rational. Combined with this is tourism that is seeking out the agricultural products of the region, potentially also spoilt by the gas industry.
- There is intractable opposition by people living on the land that is under license for gas extraction. I can see a long and bitter campaign of resistance and protest on a scale that has not been seen in Victoria since the anti Vietnam war protests in the 70's or the Frankiln dam in Tasmania. I believe that this protest will be justifiable as the mining proposed is wrong for the region, it is wrong for the land and it is wrong for the people.

As you can see I am opposed to the proposed resumption of exploration and mining in the region. I have attempted in my submission to focus on some key areas that I am particularly passionate about. I am happy to provide additional information to back up my arguments if required. I know that to commence mining is the wrong move. I believe that there should be a permanent ban on this extraction method.

Tony Peck

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