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CITY OF GREATER  
**GEELONG**

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

7 July 2015

Dear Keir,

**Re: City of Greater Geelong submission: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas**

The City of Greater Geelong welcomes the opportunity to provide the Committee with a submission to help inform the inquiry into unconventional Gas in Victoria.

In 2014 the City of Greater Geelong received a significant amount of feedback on Council's Draft Environment Management Strategy regarding the potential impacts of coal seam gas, tight gas, and shale gas fracking within the municipality including its environment, agricultural land and land access issues on CSG mining on private land.

At the 22 July 2014 Ordinary Council Meeting it was resolved that Council shall invite public submissions on the issue of Coal Seam Gas Extraction and in particular, the 'fracking' process, for a period of one month commencing 25 August 2014.

A Briefing Note and Information Pack were prepared to assist Council, in-line with the Notice of Motion, and the Manager Stakeholder and Community relations from Clean Coal Victoria section of the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation presented at the Councillor briefing Session on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

A total of 449 submissions were received. Of these 447 were opposed to onshore gas extraction and in particular the use of hydraulic fracking. The primary concerns in the submissions opposed to onshore gas extraction and hydraulic fracking were contamination of land, air and water, health concerns, noise pollution, decrease in property values and the need to utilise renewable energy sources. Only one detailed submission was forthcoming in support of onshore gas extraction.

A summary of the comments regarding these concerns is provided below;

1. Contamination of land, air and water

Submissions raised concerns that contamination of land, air and water would occur via the use of chemicals and waste by-products, including saltwater and methane. Submissions were concerned about accidental chemical and waste spills, inability to store and dispose of waste products. Of particular concern was the use of hydraulic fracking and associated use of chemicals which are injected into the ground and which may migrate into groundwater.

2. Groundwater impacts

Submissions stated that significant amounts of water are required to enable hydraulic fracking and it was not known where this would come from. It was also

submitted that use of water for the onshore gas industry would compete with usage for other activities including farming and domestic supply.

### 3. Health concerns

Concerns were specifically raised regard the use of BTEX chemicals (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes) in the fracking process. These compounds are some of the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) found in petroleum derivatives such as petrol (gasoline) and have potential health impacts. The Victorian government has recently banned the use of BTEX chemicals used in the process of hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' to extract coal seam gas. Submissions highlighted concerns regarding air pollution caused by methane leakage from onshore gas extraction. Concerns were also raised regarding noise from truck movements, drilling, machinery and other processes, particularly in rural environments. Submissions highlighted the risk of accidents occurring and the potential damage that these might cause and the difficulty in cleaning up chemical spills.

### 4. Decrease in property values and other land uses

Submissions raised concerns about the potential negative perceptions of supporting an onshore gas industry (fossil fuel) in the Geelong region. It was felt that this would be to the detriment of the regions tourism and agricultural sectors. It was also submitted that the development of an onshore gas industry would decrease property values and only bring short term profit to large international companies.

### 5. Utilise renewable energy

Many submissions stated that Geelong should be moving away from fossil fuels and supported the development of renewable energy sector. This would provide the platform for future economic and job growth for the region as well as decrease environmental impacts.

Following receipt and consideration of the public submissions the City of Greater Geelong resolved on the 14 October 2014 to reject onshore gas extraction including fracking, which included support for a permanent ban. It was also resolved to seek support from the State and Federal Governments for the development of renewable energy sources to replace fossil fuels in the provision of heating, cooling and power.

If you have any questions in relation to the City of Greater Geelong submission, please contact myself or William Tieppo (General Manager City Services) on ph. 5272 4902.

Yours sincerely



**KELVIN SPILLER**  
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER