

30 June 2015

Parliament of Victoria
Spring Street
Melbourne
via Email

To Whom it May Concern

I wish to advise you of my opposition to the gas exploration and lifting of the moratorium on gas exploration both on environmental grounds and as a mental health issue.

I am of the firm belief that the 21st century will and should pursue the many different alternatives to fossil fuels and that our country and the dedicated people who research and fund alternative energy sources and businesses will be the successors this century and beyond.

Mining, fracking, disrupting the ecology of land, are all things we accepted as inevitable in the 20th century. But as scientists reveal the intricate web of balance in the natural world and conversely business demanding cheap energy to sustain ever increasing productivity levels we are now at a stage where we need **sustainable** solutions for our society's need for energy.

I would like to make another point that I don't often hear spoken of, if at all. It is on the subject of the mental health, particularly the mental health of our young people. I live amongst farmers and live in a beautiful natural environment. As young people witness the dismantling and destruction of our hills and valleys do you not think that this has a direct impact on the mental health of the people who live around here. To us kangaroos, wombats, owls, water birds – these are all around us and we thrill that we can live together and that we care that their environment is as safe to them as it can be. My children, now teenagers, are affected when the animals are run over on the side of the road, and conversely thrilled to see a wombat or kangaroo bounding through forests and grassy paddocks. They get particularly angry when they hear about the potential mining of farmers' lands to gas exploration. They want the land to be left alone and they want solar, wind and other forms of energy to be the energy of the future.

Other people will put forward coherent and strong reasons for denying the exploration of gas in the Otways but I would like to offer the idea that such destruction of the natural environment has a very real effect on how our young people feel about the future of themselves and their planet. And they **do** feel this way because I speak often with my kids and their friends about this. Further, I think this lack of care by business and politicians has the effect of depression particularly on the young as they see their society repeatedly capitulate to the needs of big business.

If we can stop it in our State that would show our young that our land and the natural environment is important to our politicians and that government does care about the needs of future generations. The government can encourage and support the young to care for the environment and by the scientific among them to come up with creative solutions or for others to volunteer in Landcare (that has also lost funding – another blight for optimism) for our energy needs within the parameters of sustainability.

I want any exploration for gas to halt because it has a detrimental effect on the natural environment. Stop the destruction. No amount of fixing it up later - promises that the land will return to what it was is illogical and disingenuous. Lead us boldly forward with 21st century thinking supporting investment in alternative energy solutions and supporting our young to find solutions. Australians are capable and I will support a party that has the vision and foresight to support it now. Forget the past ways – we want a cleverer way.

Yours faithfully
Jane Gorman