



Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Industry
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Mr Keir Delaney
Secretary
Environment and Planning Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
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Dear Mr Delaney

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO UNCONVENTIONAL GAS IN VICTORIA – INTERDEPARTMENTAL SUBMISSION

I am pleased to present to the Environment and Planning Committee the attached interdepartmental submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into unconventional gas in Victoria.

This interdepartmental submission incorporates factual information from Victorian departments with legislative responsibilities relating to onshore unconventional gas. It seeks to provide the Committee with information relating to the issues surrounding exploration, extraction, production and rehabilitation of onshore unconventional gas in Victoria, as outlined in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

The information provided within this submission draws on a number of pieces of work undertaken by the previous Coalition Government, including the Reith Report and the water science studies. It should be noted that much of this work was not open to stakeholder input or consultation, which perpetuated public distrust and has prolonged the uncertainty for both communities and industry.

It is worth highlighting that the Parliamentary Inquiry into unconventional gas in Victoria was a commitment made by the Andrews Labor Government to address ongoing community concerns. Our Government believes that an open and transparent process that enables all stakeholders to voice their concerns, and which relies on scientific evidence, is essential to determining whether onshore unconventional gas activities should be permitted in Victoria.

I commend the Environment and Planning Committee on its efforts to date, particularly around the regional public hearings. It is essential that all stakeholders – farmers, local councils, regional communities, scientific experts, industry, environment groups and others – have an opportunity to be heard so that concerns can be addressed. We believe that the Parliamentary Inquiry will make a major contribution to assessing the adequacy of the current knowledge base and regulatory environment for onshore unconventional gas.

While the Parliamentary Inquiry is underway, and pending the Government's consideration of any recommendations made by the Committee, the moratorium on all onshore gas activities will continue. This includes a hold on the granting of new exploration licences for all types of onshore natural gas, a hold on approvals for fracking, a hold on onshore gas drilling and a ban on the use of BTEX chemicals.

I trust the information provided within this submission is of interest to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lily D'Ambrosio', with a wavy underline.

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Minister for Energy & Resources

30 / 7 / 2015