

To the Environment and Planning Committee,

In addition to these pro-forma points that I agree with I like to table a film I worked on outline the health impacts the coal and unconventional gas industry have, it was commissioned by the Public Health Association and CAHA.

The Human Cost of Power Short Version (5:10):

www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eDTv5Q-zFQ

The Human Cost of Power Long Version (16:04):

www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5DIDUB_RyA

I'd also like to draw the enquiries attention to the fact that burning gas is as bad if not worse than burning coal from a climate change perspective. The first concrete work documenting this fact was done by Howarth et al at Cornell (search for "Howarth et al The Cornell Paper" and "Howarth Response to Critics" both letters are open access).

Since then this theoretical work was backed up by a consortia of public institutes in the USA who work on climate including but not limited to NOAA, NASA and several Ivy League Universities like Harvard Medical School and Berkley. They performed direct atmospheric detection of methane (104x more potent than CO2 in forcing Greenhouse Effects and 84x so over twenty years during which time irreversible climate tipping points may well have been crossed) and showed it was many times higher in gas fields that industry makes it's assumptions around. For a level of 3% fugitive emissions gas is worse than burning coal in terms of GHG emissions. Industry claims (though has never demonstrated) and uses 1% FE levels. Direct atmospheric detection show levels far higher than 3% even putting the lie to industry spin about "clean natural gas".

- We don't need an unconventional gas industry in Victoria to supply energy. Unconventional gas is not a renewable source of energy - it is polluting, contributes to climate change, and is not required as a fuel to transition between fossil fuels and renewables. We can make a planned transition to 100% renewables in Victoria without the need for gas as a 'bridging' fuel, but we need to start investing in real renewables like solar and wind power now.
- We don't need an unconventional gas industry in Victoria to provide employment. Supporting and growing our renewables industry will provide more jobs that are future-proofed and lead to greater long-term employment growth in Victoria. Growth in our renewables industry provides a valuable opportunity for re-skilling and redeploying workers who need help to transition from traditional energy production roles – there are now more people employed installing solar panels in Victoria than in coal generation.
- Other jurisdictions like New York City and Ohio have already instituted permanent bans on coal seam gas, and Victoria should follow suit, as this is what the community wants.
- Coal seam gas carries massive and proven risks for the environment and health. It threatens our environment, land productivity, agricultural industries, our water supply, our communities and public health, and the risks are far too great to be mitigated or outweighed by any benefits.

- Victorian communities don't want unconventional gas. At least 30 communities have already declared themselves gasfield-free, and the number continues to grow. The Government needs to respect the wishes of Victorian communities.

Alastair Leith

