

To the Environment and Planning Committee,

The proposals for unconventional gas in Victoria, my home State, represent a disdain not just of the environment, which is bad enough, but also of people's health and livelihoods. And it's not as though there are not other options. Renewable energy sources need investment so that we can transition away from the polluting fossil fuels and avoid catastrophic climate change. Unconventional gas is not renewable, and we do not need it as a 'bridging' fuel.

We also 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.

As a young person who will inherit the repercussions of this Government's decision, I sincerely hope that the Government will respect the wishes of Victorian communities and demonstrate that they they have a vision for the State and the country that goes beyond the next election term.

Andrea White

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