

To the Environment and Planning Committee,

- 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.

In the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland we already have significant issues with land subsidence and ground movement caused by removing water from the aquifers. Adding another water intensive industry to an already stressed system will only create more problems for public and private infrastructure.

There is a lack of historical knowledge with regards to the impacts of the above. Without taking account of the existing industries impact on the area it could have serious ramifications and increase the salt intrusion into the Gippsland Lakes and add to the health effects of the local population. This is already affected by air pollution from the Latrobe Valley mines.

Subsidence will have added impacts with regard to disused or abandoned wells with the formation of sinkholes and other deformations, increasing earthquake activity as seen in the United States and cracking concrete seals around capped wells.

The gas extracted from Victoria will also not alleviate supply or cost issues as it is sold at the international price and has zero effect on domestic prices. I believe the public will bear the health impacts of this industry long after the companies have moved on. There is an almost 100% failure rate over time of these wells which leak methane and contribute to climate change.

Leaking wells, flaring off and injection of fracking fluids have been shown to have adverse affects on

human and animal health and will destroy "brand gippsland" We are in the food bowl of Victoria and it would be unwise to adversely impact the industry.

I am not confident that water from onshore gas drilling will be managed in a way that complies with regulations. The regulatory environment will need to be drastically improved before any drilling and use of byproduct water will be trustworthy.

I have included some historical issues in the Latrobe Valley which give me reason for concern.

<http://www.smh.com.au/national/experts-missed-obvious-signs-before-mine-collapse-20090103-79he.html>

"A HUGE mine collapse that crippled a vital Latrobe Valley power station was caused by slack and lapsed safety precautions, a report has revealed.

Mine consultants had lacked the skill to give competent advice for more than a decade, according to the official investigation into the spectacular Yallourn mine failure in late 2007.

And the State Government-appointed investigator, Tim Sullivan, found evidence that the Latrobe Valley's brown coal mines and the massive pumping of groundwater associated with them could be causing earth shifts outside the mines' boundaries that posed a risk to nearby dams and roads."

<http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/1592271/diversion-fault-report-damning/>

"A long awaited review into the catastrophic collapse of the Morwell River Diversion into the Yallourn coal mine last year has exposed an extensive list of likely faults in its 'world class' design process.

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In what has been described as a collection of "systemic failures", the Review of Failure of Morwell River Diversion report released last week has identified five key aspects considered to have cause the failure, targeting fundamental design flaws in the \$250 million project.

The use of incorrect materials, a failure to fully integrate design aspects into risk assessments, and the sole reliance on a membrane seal in vital parts of the diversion were among three pages of dot-pointed failures identified in the report's executive summary."

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/7-coal-mine-sites-at-risk-20130620-2olr7.html>

"But warnings about the "performance" of the Morwell River diversion were raised a few weeks before the collapse by the government's technical review board on mine stability, which has also expressed concern about other sites in mines."

<http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/1592270/mine-stability-at-risk/?cs=1462>

"At least three trouble spots in the state's brown coal network are 'at risk' of failure, according to a "damning" review by an expert geotechnical panel, warning instability in the open cut sector has reached serious levels.

In the sternly worded report alluding to a vast array of shortfalls in Latrobe Valley's coal mine stability, the Technical Review Board was unable to assure that all 'at risk' structures in the sector had yet been identified, "or that there will be no further failures of identified structures". "

<http://www.energyandresources.vic.gov.au/earth-resources/policy-and-legislation/advisory-councils-and-review-boards/technical-review-board/technical-review-board-annual-report-2011-2012/executive-summary>

"This has led to the current situation where there has been virtually no advancement for many years in the industry's understanding of the characteristics, mechanisms, and movements of slopes and batters and the consequences of these movements for public safety, surrounding infrastructure, continuity of coal supply and the environment. This is particularly unfortunate as it coincides with an increase in the number, density and proximity of surrounding infrastructure, increased public scrutiny, and requirements for higher standards of environment and community governance."

<https://www.viclabor.com.au/media-releases/naphthine-ignored-hazelwood-mine-safety-warning/>
"The Naphthine Government ignored at least six warnings about the worsening condition of the Hazelwood mine's northern batter.

The annual report from the Technical Review Board, which reports on mine safety to government and industry, was held back from public release by the Naphthine Government for at least eight months.

As early as December 2012, the board made recommendations about the state of the northern batter and its possible effect on public safety should something go wrong.

The Government has had three Energy and Resources Ministers since this time. Nothing was done about the condition of the batter, which contributed to the complexity of the fire disaster."

<http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/story/2708429/unacceptable-risk/>
"Latrobe City ratepayers could be forced to foot the bill for any future Morwell Main Drain disasters depending on the results of a Supreme Court battle.

According to Latrobe City Council, Hazelwood Power Partnership is seeking to have the drain next to its open cut coal mine declared a public drain and shed responsibility for "considerable" ongoing running costs."

The technical review board reports are found here-
<http://www.energyandresources.vic.gov.au/earth-resources/policy-and-legislation/advisory-councils-and-review-boards/technical-review-board>

Thankyou.

David Hollis

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