

To the Environment and Planning Committee,

I would like to make a submission to the State government's Inquiry into unconventional gas. AND make it clear that I am opposed to Unconventional gas (UCG).

I believe that there is sufficient and compelling evidence to support a ban of unconventional gas drilling onshore. And hope that this inquiry will offer the chance to stop this industry before it gets established in Victoria.

Working in health I see how ill health has huge financial costs that extend beyond the individual to the community, in addition to the emotional and social effects for that person. I value health greatly and therefore firmly believe that any potential threats to health is not worth risking. Especially where industry is concerned.

There has been compelling evidence to show that there is genuine health risks associated with unconventional gas and the argument that systems and processes can avoid this risk in my view are great in theory, but in practice do not hold merit. Too many times across many industries including unconventional gas has experience in the real world shown that contamination has, and does, occur.

When health is affected adversely it can be difficult to hold industries accountable and there are real immediate and long term financial and social consequences to the individual and the community, which are not always recognised or valued as much as I believe they should be.

In addition to this UCG is not a renewable source of energy. It is well known to use large amounts of water which competes with resources farmers need to produce our food supply. With increasing research showing how much what we eat influences our health and therefore productivity in the workforce I think we should not underestimate the importance of clean water, access to pollutant/chemical free food from our own land. Given that UCG is an energy intensive process, can pollute and contributes to climate change while also conflicting with other viable industries I see no reason why we need it, especially when we have many other renewable options to supply energy with. I do not believe UCG is worth the cost. And given our current trend to sell off our assets in the long term the risk to health, environment, social morale and alike is just not worth it.

In regards to possible employment opportunities related to UCG I think that it would be at the cost of many jobs and industries already in the area. Meaning the proposed benefits are not really there. Victoria has a strong agriculture and associated food processing industry which plays a large contribution to our economy and requires healthy land and access to clean water to be prosperous. UCG is a very water intensive process, it competes with farmers water needs, places another burden on our water supply, and potentially could ruin farming land. ...Likewise UCG industrialises an area requiring additional access roads, water processing facilities and alike which alters the aesthetics of the area, fragment local habitat therefore impacting on tourism, local flora and fauna and morale of the community.

I do not believe that the industry can co-exist safely with other land uses such as farming, conservation and tourism. And given that many of the areas proposed for UCG are in these farm and tourism areas I believe

the risks to the regions overall well being is not worth it.

I think it far more viable to invest in the renewable energy sector, tourism and farming which are gaining increasing interest and 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. So do we move forward or stay stuck in old ways?

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.

The risks to environment and health are real and most wont be reversible. Therefore the risks are far too great to be mitigated or outweighed by any benefits.

And lastly 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.

Thanking you

Kimberley Nightingale

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]