

File No: 09/611  
Reference No: OUT15/1580



Monday, 13 July 2015

Keir Delaney  
Secretary  
Environment & Planning Committee  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Secretary

**RE: INQUIRY INTO UNCONVENTIONAL GAS IN VICTORIA**

I write on behalf of Indigo Shire Council and its Environment Advisory Committee to provide Council's view for consideration by the Committee.

Indigo Shire Council has declared itself a Coal Seam Gas free shire in February 2015. Councillors voted unanimously to oppose the industry. The vote meant that councillors with a range of political backgrounds and allegiances were united in their opposition against the exploration and extraction of coal seam gas in any location within their shire boundary.

Indigo Shire Council's community has already expressed deep concerns about the impacts of onshore unconventional gas on their landscape, livelihoods and lifestyles, as shown in the large attendance at a community information night on Coal Seam Gas held a number of years ago sponsored by the Ovens Landcare Network, a recent sold-out public screening of the film Frackman, and a position paper on CSG prepared by the Indigo Environmental Advisory Committee. Therefore, for the Inquiry to be meaningful and to do justice for future generations of residents of Indigo Shire, the Terms of Reference must include a thorough review of the long term environmental, social, cultural and economic consequences of this activity, including lessons learned from overseas and elsewhere in Australia. As such, the following suggestions are proposed for amendment or consideration under the Terms of Reference.

Point 2

*This point should consider:*

- (2) the environmental risks and contributions to carbon emissions, risks to land productivity and public health risks, risk mitigations and residual risks of onshore unconventional gas mining activities.

Point 3

*Include considerations as follows:*

- (3) the coexistence of onshore unconventional gas activities with existing land and water uses, including-
- (a) **on-going protection of natural biodiversity assets and reserves including national and state parks;**
  - (b) agricultural production **and food quality**, and domestic and export market requirements;
  - (c) the legal rights of property owners and the impact of on property values and farmer livelihoods; and
  - (d) any implications for local and regional development, investments and jobs *(in light of a desired future as articulated by the Shire an its community - see Indigo Shire vision).*

Point 4

*Additions to 4(b) and 4(c)*

- (b) an affordable energy source for domestic consumers, **based on a local domestic gas price, given that the gas belongs to the commonwealth of Australia i.e. all Australians;** and
- (c) carbon **dioxide and fugitive** emissions from these sources.

Point 5

*Additions as follows:*

- (a) further scientific work to inform the effective regulation **and independent monitoring** of an onshore unconventional gas industry, including the role of industry, **government and local affected residents;**
- (b) performance standards for environmental and health risks **for ensuring no environmental and human health risks including compromises** in water quality and air quality;
- (c) **further scientific investigations by an independent agency, to assess** the effectiveness of industry impact mitigation methods.

Indigo Shire Council supports the intent of the Inquiry, however, we believe that efforts, resources and consideration should be placed in the investment and rollout of alternative renewable energy resources for a fossil fuel free energy future.

Yours sincerely



**Gerry Smith**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER