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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 10 July 2015 4:03 PM
To: EPC
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

My name is Claire McKinnon of [REDACTED] (a previous Melbourne resident of 6 years) and I stand against all forms of unconventional gas extraction in Victoria and globally.

Unconventional gas (UG) extraction should be banned permanently. It is too high risk and places too much strain on our depleting water sources at a time when we need to urgently transition to clean renewable sources of energy.

I have been involved in a campaign against unconventional gas extraction in WA for 4 years now and am well aware of the vast array of risks and detrimental impacts it poses. I work with communities in WA who are working through a democratic process of declaring their communities 'Frack free' as well as working with a national and global alliance of individuals and groups working on this issue. Having studied International Aid & Development and Sustainable Development, the many impacts of this industry are more than clear to me. No amount of regulations can affect the extreme water intensity of the industry, the surface footprint or the detrimental impacts it poses on our communities.

Terms of reference:

(1) the prospectivity of Victoria's geology for commercial sources of onshore unconventional gas;

Irrespective of geology, UG extraction places too much strain on water sources, risks contaminating ground and surface water, impacts health, has a vast surface footprint, conflicts with agriculture and is of little financial return particularly for those impacted. Why place a collection of detrimental impacts on what we need (food, water, health, community) all for the profits of a declining fossil fuel industry?

(2) the environmental, land productivity and public health risks, risk mitigations and residual risks of onshore unconventional gas activities

Environmental risks of UG extraction are vast including land clearing, risks of spreading dieback, groundwater contamination through well casing failure (casings are made of cement and steel, both are materials that can and will corrode), surface water contamination via well heads (common) and through waste water dispersal and flowback ponds (eg. Uranium found in aquifer from CSG mining).

Land productivity is impacted through conflicts with farming – farmers deserve the right to know EXACTLY what this industry involves and the right to say no to it on and near their land.

Public health risks are vast from short, medium and long term impacts. Commonly used chemicals in frack fluids are largely carcinogenic. Naturally occurring volatile organic compounds found in target formations are mobilised and come to the surface, risking health and environment. TENORMS are also a great concern in relation to this industry.

No amount of regulation can stop the detrimental impacts of this industry and so it must be banned. The smallest accident can cause insurmountable damage and harm.

(3) the coexistence of onshore unconventional gas activities with existing land and water uses, including

(a) agricultural production and domestic and export market requirements;

Not possible. UG extraction directly conflicts with agriculture.

(b) the legal rights of property owners and the impact on property values; and

Impacts are detrimental. Land owners need to know ALL risks associated which isn't even fully known by industry or government as it has not been studied anywhere near enough. Property values are negatively impacted by this industry.

(c) any implications for local and regional development, investment and jobs;

This industry encourages FIFO lifestyles for site workers which is known to have an array of detrimental impacts. It also conflicts with the need to invest in long-term sustainable jobs that don't risk the health of workers.

(4) the ability of potential onshore unconventional gas resources contributing to the State's overall energy sources including —

(a) an ability to provide a competitive source of energy and non energy inputs for Victorian industries;

UG extraction is expensive, energy and water intensive and not a viable energy source given existing and future impacts of climate change. Investments must be instead made into renewable sources of energy not an industry that has a very short 'shelf life' with great risk and impact.

(b) an affordable energy source for domestic consumers; and

Given that the Asian gas market is such a drawcard, UG is unlikely to reduce the cost of energy for domestic use. Nor is such a toxic industry worth even potential cheaper energy. At what REAL cost??

(c) carbon dioxide emissions from these sources;

Total carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions (esp. methane) from UG extraction have been shown to be on par with that of coal (CO2 equivalent).

(5) the resource knowledge requirements and policy and regulatory safeguards that would be necessary to enable exploration and development of onshore unconventional gas resources, including —

(a) further scientific work to inform the effective regulation of an onshore unconventional gas industry, including the role of industry and government, particularly in relation to rigorous monitoring and enforcement, and the effectiveness of impact mitigation responses; and

Independent studies and monitoring are required, baseline studies, more research into all health impacts, separation of government and industry for true independent regulation and the need to seriously address climate change and it's impacts are needed. That aside, the risks, water and energy intensity of this industry mean it should be banned. Even with the best possible studies, monitoring, regulation etc etc the industry is still has far too many detrimental impacts to even be considered.

(b) performance standards for managing environmental and health risks, including water quality, air quality, chemical use, waste disposal, land contamination and geotechnical stability;

As above.

(6) relevant domestic and international reviews and inquiries covering the management of risks for similar industries including, but not limited to, the Victorian Auditor-General Office's report Unconventional Gas:

Managing Risks and Impacts (contingent upon this report being presented to Parliament) and other reports generated by the Victorian community and stakeholder engagement programs.

As above.