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### **Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria**

I am a farmer and native plant nurseryman on my property to the East of Hamilton. This area around Hamilton has a long history of farming and could be considered as prime grazing and cropping land as rainfall reliable and fertile as anywhere in the state of Victoria. In keeping with the clean green image of agriculture promoted by producers and governments, I believe it is a very bad move to give the go ahead to UCG drilling and lacks foresight.

I would like to make a submission to the State government's Inquiry into unconventional gas.

I would like to make it clear that I do not support UCG drilling. I will therefore limit my comments to the terms of reference that seem most relevant to me.

I believe there is a compelling case to place an outright and permanent ban on all onshore unconventional gas drilling in Victoria.

The New Zealand experience with Fonterra refusing to buy milk from dairy farms irrigated with frack water and sludge demonstrates that this industry can not co-exist safely with other land uses like farming as well as conservation and tourism.

Victoria is a densely populated state which is heavily reliant on agriculture and associated food processing. Nature based tourism is also significant across much of the state where the UCG industry wants to get established. Gas drilling will industrialise the landscape, impact on rural communities and people in adjacent areas and it is likely to have significant public health impacts.

The benefits associated with any royalties that are likely to be delivered as a result of drilling need to be carefully considered against possible negative economic impacts. The costs are likely to far outweigh any short term benefits, e.g. who will pay for the infinite maintenance of thousands of abandoned wells once industry has left?

The negative effects that unconventional gas fracking could bring to Victoria include:

- Increased gas price due to the government refusing to establish a 'Domestic Gas Reserve', Australians will have to pay the high World market prices, i.e. 3x the current price.
- Air impacts that could affect respiratory health due to increased levels of particulate matter, diesel exhaust or volatile organic chemicals.
- Drinking water impacts from underground migration of methane and/or fracturing fluid chemicals associated with faulty well construction or seismic activity. Research has shown that on average there is an immediate bore failure rate of 6% which then increases to 50% within 30 years and continues to increase. The risks are too great and cannot be mitigated.
- Climate change impacts due to methane and other volatile organic chemical released into the atmosphere during unconventional gas extraction and use is no better than burning coal.

- Surface spills potentially resulting in soil, groundwater and surface water contamination and surface water contamination resulting from inadequate wastewater treatment.
- Earthquakes and creation of fissures induced during the hydraulic fracturing stage.
- Community impacts such as increased vehicle traffic, road damage, traffic accidents, noise, odour complaints and increased local demand for housing and medical care.
- And finally, I point out that this industry does not have social license to operate, as shown by the 60+ communities declaring themselves 'Gasfield Free' across southern Victoria.

I strongly recommend you to diligently read the comprehensive "Final Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement" issued by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, following seven-years of research and over 260,000 public comments. The report, comprising of over 2000 pages, notes that considerable uncertainty over the adverse environmental and public health consequences of fracking has "grown worse over time."

I include this report as part of my submission, see attached link:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/75370.html>

Also included as part of my submission is the 'Compendium of scientific, medical and media findings demonstrating risks and harms of fracking (Unconventional gas and oil extraction) adopted for use in many areas of the world including Australia. The full report highlights many significant health issues and can be accessed via the following web link: <http://concernedhealthny.org/compendium/>

I urge you to recommend that Victoria ban all unconventional gas drilling permanently as the risks far outweigh any benefits.

Yours sincerely

David Franklin