

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2015 9:45 AM
To: EPC
Subject: Submission to the Environment & Planning Committee Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria

To the Environment and Planning Committee,

I am writing to you to outline my concern about the lack of progress in achieving another moratorium banning Coal Seam Gas in Victoria or preferably, a ban on Coal Seam Gas operations in Victoria entirely.

My home city of Warrnambool derives its name from the local indigenous group, the Peekwhurrong people, a term that literally translates to "the land between two rivers". Water is a theme that is embraced by our city. From our city's official colours, our schools, our history of whaling, shipwrecks, our recreational activities and sporting teams are often maritime and water based. Our small inland communities including Allansford, Illowa, Panumre, Purnim, Ellerslie, Framlingham, Woodford, Bushfield, Cudgee in addition to the city of Warrnambool, are all built on the banks of the Merri or Hopkins River. Our communities rely on a range of industries including beef and dairy cattle and sheep, in addition to our economy's reliance on fresh fruit and vegetables grown in the volcanic plains of the Tower Hill and Koroit areas. Unusually gas fields will destroy the tourism industry throughout our region and most other parts of Victoria. Why we would contemplate compromising these successful industries.

Warrnambool is renowned for its windy weather. Wind turbines could generate the entire district and not interrupt the fragile nature of what is stored underground. 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.

Warrnambool like so many other 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 regional Victorian communities, who know the land that their families have been living in for many generations.

Increased employment has been raised as a possible benefit of introducing Coal Seam Gas projects to Victoria. By introducing these CSG projects, we are compromising the successful world class industries that are already operating here in favour of one single other. Essentially we are putting most of our eggs in one basket. Pursuing a renewable energy 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.

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. Please respect the wishes of these regional communities that have declared themselves CSG free and ban CSG licence distribution and mining in Victoria altogether.

Kind regards,

Robert Dart

