

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 July 2015 1:30 PM  
**To:** EPC  
**Subject:** Submission to the Environment & Planning Committee Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria

To the Environment and Planning Committee,

- We don't need an unconventional gas industry in Victoria to supply energy. While unconventional gas is often 'sold' as a lesser evil in terms of carbon emissions, this is a misnomer used by the industry to promote itself. Gas is a fossil fuel by definition, and we should be committed to leaving all fossil fuels in the ground to mitigate the drastic climactic change that threatens the future of life on earth. Methane is one of the most toxic global warming emissions and just this week a report has challenged the US EPA's estimate of the amount of methane escaping into the environment from UCG and shale oil mining:

<http://grist.org/news/methane-from-fracking-is-probably-more-of-a-problem-than-epa-thinks/>.

As opposed to risking our environment to a practice that has had nothing but negative impacts on the earth, we should be investing in and exploring the real potential of renewable energy sources, rather than opening the door to an industry that continues to trade in environmental destruction and resource depletion.

- We don't need an unconventional gas industry in Victoria to provide employment. As the Queensland experience has demonstrated, employment in the industry is by and large based on an initial boom of FIFO or DIDO workers who inflate local rents and do not shop or spend locally. This initial boom is associated with the construction phase of the gas wells and does not continue after the construction is completed. In Queensland, now the 'boom' is over, towns like Chinchilla, Tara and Miles in the Western Downs have become ghost towns, with local businesses failing, the agricultural sector irreparably damaged by fracking waste and drought. House prices have dropped while rental prices for the now vacant mine workers' houses are out of reach for many locals. These facts are not my invention - they are gleaned from ongoing conversations with those living through and with the CSG 'boom'. They are the inevitable fall out of an industry which is based on a short-term gain rather than on long-term, intergenerational consideration or commitment to a better future for all.

- All around the world people are speaking up against fracking - it is a clear instance of a vocal humanity, concerned about the future, the delicate ecology of the earth, and about each other, against the interests of the corporations. Based on the terrible evidence of unconventional gas mining's damage to the environment - to water, agriculture, ecology, humans and animals - that has emerged from the US, Queensland and Canada, to mention just the best known instances, the practice should never be entertained in Victoria, let alone across the rest of the country. Unfortunately for some states the UCG industry foot is already well and truly in the door, with the attendant water and air pollution, and damage to the health of the environment, animals and humans.

- France has banned fracking, as has NY state and Ohio. The Victorian community wants a permanent ban on UCG mining in Victoria. If this inquiry is serious about responding to the real concerns of the community, it would actually explore some of the over-whelming evidence available, from those already living with the fall out of the UCG industry, from the many documentaries that have been made, from the multiple independent reports that have been written, that this industry should never be allowed in Victoria.

- At least 30 Victorian communities have already declared themselves gasfield-free, and the number continues to grow. The Government needs to respect the wishes of Victorian communities and respect our role as custodians of a planet that is on the verge of ecological collapse.

Sincerely, Sophie Gebhardt

**Sophie Gebhardt**

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