

TRANSCRIPT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Inquiry into unconventional gas in Victoria

Torquay — 12 August 2015

Members

Mr David Davis — Chair

Ms Harriet Shing — Deputy Chair

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Mr Shaun Leane

Mr Adem Somyurek

Mr Daniel Young

Participating Members

Mr Jeff Bourman

Ms Colleen Hartland

Mr James Purcell

Mr Simon Ramsay

Staff

Secretary: Mr Keir Delaney

Research assistants: Ms Annemarie Burt and Ms Kim Martinow

Witness

Mr Darren Noyes-Brown.

Mr NOYES-BROWN — My name is Darren Noyes-Brown. I live in Jan Juc, which is just next to Torquay. I am on the committee of the Surf Coast branch of the Surfrider Foundation Australia. Although I was not aware that I was going to do this today so I am not really representing them, what I am about to say is from a surf and environmental point of view.

I find that, having listened to the discussions today, I am quite concerned about the discussion about mitigating the risks of unconventional gas and potentially fracking. I just think the risks are so high to our soil, water, air and natural environment and the health of people. If we have got all this documented evidence from the northern states and overseas, the risks are so high that we should be saying no altogether. I do not think we should be having this discussion to start with, as has been stated earlier; we should be exercising the precautionary principle.

I am also a past member of the environmental advisory committee of Surf Coast shire. Six or seven years ago there was a proposal by Barwon Water to pump treated sewage into the aquifers around the back of Anglesea here. I could not believe it back then. I think it got knocked on the head because they did not know enough about the aquifers, so that was a win, but I do not think we know much more about aquifers in the time that has passed since.

I do not think we should be going down this path for that reason as well. From when we were briefed on that project I seem to remember that the aquifers extend past the terrestrial area to underneath the seabed. The water from those aquifers actually percolates through the seabed and into the ocean, so we do not want to see the chemicals — was it 560 chemicals or something listed in the United States? — a whole cornucopia of chemicals that can cause cancer, leaking into the ocean, which is under enough pressure as it is already from acidification, temperature rise, sea level rise, depletion of fish stocks et cetera.

I think that is it. I have kept it to 2 minutes.

The CHAIR — Well done.

Witness withdrew.