



*Media release - 30 January 2013*

## **Council's environment strategy must take a clear stand on fracking**

**In its comment on the City of Greater Geelong's Draft Environment Management Strategy 2013-2017, which is open for commenting until 28 February, Frack Free Geelong has proposed that it should ensure that no gas mining will be allowed in Greater Geelong before a comprehensive investigation has been conducted into the likely effects of unconventional gas exploration and mining on public health, the environment, agriculture and food security, local communities and tourism.**

"I find it deeply disturbing that the Geelong Council has failed to make a single mention of fracking in their Environment Management Strategy. Hydraulic fracturing, 'fracking', devastates the environment and with areas in Geelong and surrounding regions earmarked for gas exploration, it's mandatory that the Council takes a clear stand and regulates on this toxic practice," said Anthony Gleeson, spokesperson for Frack Free Geelong.

In their feedback-letter on the draft strategy to the council, the group wrote: "In failing to regulate, the Council is essentially promoting new, high-risk fossil fuel extraction in Geelong region. This is a blow for Geelong citizens, for the environment, and for the Environment Management Strategy."

"The biggest problem, and perhaps the Council is indicative of this, is lack of awareness. So many people don't know what fracking is, they don't know the harm it does, and they don't know that it could happen right here," said Anthony Gleeson.

Which is why Frack Free Geelong, among other activities, is organising an action on Saturday 15th of February 2014 at 2pm in Highton.

### **Surf Coast motion**

Frack Free Geelong commends the Surf Coast Shire Council and Barwon Water for taking the concerns of their constituents seriously:

"On behalf of Frack Free Geelong I would like to congratulate both the Surf Coast Shire Council and Barwon Water for their recent public statements of concern about the negative impacts which they believe the exploration and extraction of unconventional gas will have in our area," said Anthony Gleeson:

"Now we would like to see the City of Greater Geelong Council, and Barwon Health make a clear stand against this practice as well. We invite representatives from both organisations to come to our event on 15th of February in Highton and let everyone, including the press, know what they are doing to stop this destructive industry."

## Have your say

Frack Free Geelong encourages all citizens who have understood that this is an important strategy document for Geelong, and that it is deeply worrying that the environmental concerns over the new gas mining and fracking in our region aren't even *mentioned* in this paper, to send a personal message to the Council asking them to consider adding a paragraph or a section about the Council's position on fracking.

It can be as simple as sending an email to: [environment@geelongcity.vic.gov.au](mailto:environment@geelongcity.vic.gov.au)

or go to this page and fill in the form:

[www.geelongaustralia.com.au/council/yoursay/consult/item/8d0cae103b24f87.aspx](http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/council/yoursay/consult/item/8d0cae103b24f87.aspx)

What you need to say is that this is an issue that you are concerned about and that you would like to see it included as a matter of importance in this document. Use your own words as it will make a greater impact than if we all say the same thing.

*Before you submit your response, take a look at the draft strategy paper here:*

['Environmental Management Strategy 2013-2017'](#)

## Film evening

On 18th of March, a film evening is organised at Beav's Bar for everyone who wants to know more about fracking and gas mining.

*For comment and more information about the coming events, please contact:*

Anthony Gleeson

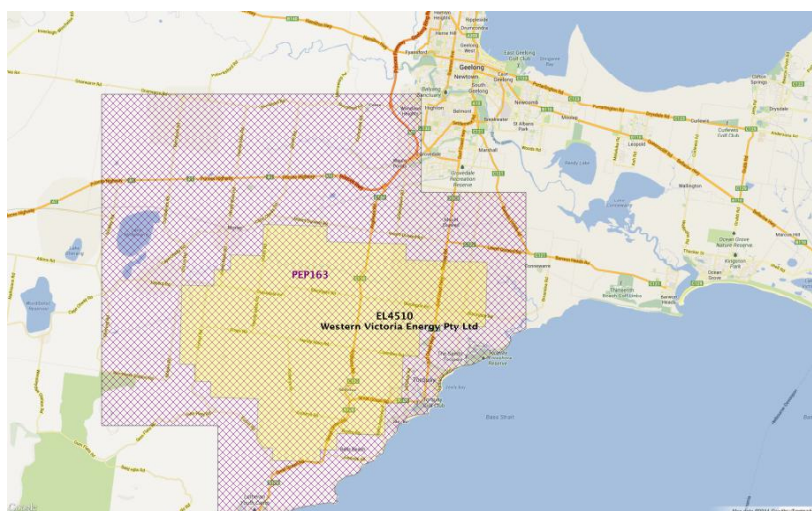
» Phone: 0447 619736

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*For more information and high resolution photos for download see:*

» [www.frackfreegeelong.org](http://www.frackfreegeelong.org)

**Frack Free Geelong are a newly formed community group concerned about the risk that coal, coal seam gas, tight gas and shale gas exploration will have on Geelong and the Surf Coast. The group currently consists of approximately 400 concerned citizens in the Geelong region.**



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27 January 2014

The Manager  
Environment and Waste Services  
City of Greater Geelong  
P.O. Box 104  
Geelong 3220

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environment Management Strategy 2013-2017.

Frack Free Geelong would like to congratulate CoGG on the quality of its EMS and would like to make the following suggestions about it. We propose that the CoGG Environment Management Strategy:

1. expresses the Council of Greater Geelong's support for the continuation of the current moratorium in Victoria on gas exploration and operations; and
2. ensures that no gas mining will be allowed in Greater Geelong before a comprehensive investigation has been conducted into the likely effects of unconventional gas exploration and mining on public health, the environment, agriculture and food security, local communities and tourism.

## **Rationale**

The State Government is currently considering a report on coal seam gas mining in Victoria. The report recommends support for coal seam gas mining, including hydraulic fracturing, proceeding in Victoria.

Currently, the state government has approved two unconventional gas explorations in the region – one for coal seam gas held by Western Victoria Energy Pty Ltd and one for tight gas held by Mirboo Ridge Pty Ltd (Lakes Oil).

In failing to regulate, the Council is essentially promoting new, high-risk fossil fuel extraction in Geelong region. This is a blow for Geelong citizens, for the environment, and for the Environment Management Strategy.

There are significant potential risks from coal seam gas, tight gas and shale gas mining, including adverse impacts on key industries like tourism and agriculture, public health and wellbeing implications and environmental implications, potential contamination of groundwater.

Unconventional gas mining is a matter of serious concern to communities in the region of Geelong. Community meetings on fracking have been held in Torquay on 1 October, Moriac on 13 November 2013, Deans Marsh on 25 November 2013 and in Geelong on 12 December 2013. A meeting is scheduled for 2 February in Apollo Bay, and meetings are also being planned in Armstrong Creek and Bellbrae.

These communities are preparing campaigns which will declaring themselves 'coal seam gas' free consistent with 'Lock the Gate' campaigns conducted in Queensland, New South Wales and Gippsland, and are establishing action plans should the gas mining companies start to explore in their area. (For more information on this, see [www.frackfreegeelong.org](http://www.frackfreegeelong.org)).

While the concern of Geelong's citizens is to protect the city's aquifers, it is also about protecting the atmosphere from more pollution with greenhouse gases, and the climate change which is caused by this air pollution. Pushing ahead with gas extraction is a waste of effort and capital at a time when we need to be looking for ways to use less, not more fossil fuels.

It is actually very disturbing that exploration for gas mining has been allowed at all without any environmental impact assessments, clear separation distances and bans in environmentally-sensitive areas.

The Surf Coast Shire Council resolved on 22 August 2012 to call on the Victorian Government to institute a moratorium on all new coal seam gas exploration and operations until there had been a comprehensive investigation into the likely effects of the industry on the environment and local communities. This investigation has still not occurred. It is critical that a comprehensive investigation be conducted and the results shared with the public before the State Government gives any consideration to lifting the current moratorium.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth Packett

on behalf of  
Frack Free Geelong  
- a local community group  
[www.frackfreegeelong.org](http://www.frackfreegeelong.org)

## Appendix I

### **Farming for coal, gas**

*Letter to the Editor, 24 January 2014, in Geelong Independent:*

Coal and coal seam gas exploration licences cover large areas to the west of Geelong, along the coast as far as Anglesea and Port Campbell and across the Bellarine Peninsula.

Farmers can be forced to permit companies to carry out exploration and, after obtaining the relevant licences, commence drilling, fracking or mining on their properties.

Coal seam gas extraction with associated fracking can result in water pollution, reduced water availability and salinity. The extraction process involves the use and transport of heavy equipment and many trucks. The large vehicles servicing drilling rigs, travel country roads frequently and can cause serious damage to roads.

Pipes traversing the paddocks can be a hazard.

These are problems frequently reported by farmers in New South Wales and Queensland. Valuable farmland might eventually be lost, causing reduced food production.

Farmers are becoming more concerned about the threat posed by coal seam gas and coal mining and are attending information meetings in country halls.

Perhaps our politicians are taking notice.

*Joan Lindros and Rod Clark  
Geelong Environment Council*

## Fracking is being banned

**It is important to understand that around the world, the practice of fracking has been banned in numerous countries and states.**

**The list** is only getting longer and longer. There is a reason for this, and the reason is the high risks of contaminating water resources along with the numerous other environmental concerns. The practice of hydraulic fracturing has been permanently banned, for example, in **France, Bulgaria, Newfoundland, Scotland,** and **many many more places.**

In the United States, the list of cities, counties and states which have put a stop to or a ban on fracking is growing as well. **Vermont** was the first U.S. state to ban fracking. Most recently, **Dallas** have imposed local restrictions on fracking. See the list on **foodandwaterwatch.org**

In Australia, the Government of Victoria has issued a temporary so-called 'moratorium' on fracking until June 2015

» **List of bans on fracking world-wide**