



26 September 2014

To Geelong mayor and councillors
c/o Rodney Thomas
Manager Environment and Waste Services
City of Greater Geelong
P.O. Box 104
Geelong 3220

Re: Onshore Gas Extraction Submission

We welcome the opportunity to present this submission to City of Greater Geelong's enquiry into onshore gas extraction within its jurisdiction.

We are foundation members of Frack Free Geelong. We started this group because we were concerned about the negative impacts which this industry would have on our region, our environment and the well-being of citizens.

We recommend that the Council endorses the *One Planet Living Principles* which already have been integrated in the vision of Geelong Sustainability, and also was suggested as the principle supporting the Council's Environmental Management Strategy in its draft version.

The One Planet principles provide a framework that allows us to examine the sustainability challenges we face and develop action plans to live and work within a fair share of the earth's resources. The first principle is: "*Zero carbon – delivering all energy with renewable technologies.*"

Taking a stand on fracking can be boiled down to one simple choice about where your priorities lie.

Are our priorities to protect the land, the region, its economy and its people from the impact of carbon emissions, which result from fracking? This would help limit the impacts of global warming as well as help limit the mental anxiety and despair that follows from all this.

Or are our priorities to protect the interests of the fossil fuel industry?

Evidence against fracking

There is an overwhelming amount of evidence that fracking is damaging our environment, inspite of claims of the opposite from the industry itself. Fracking is a toxic and destructive gas extraction method.

There is a similarly overwhelming and alarming amount of evidence that climate change – which represents a very serious threat to our economy, prosperity and safety – is caused by our emissions from fossil fuels. Which means we have to stop our fossil fuel industry, regardless of how much gas there is in the ground and how much profit can be made from selling it in Asia.

We have posted hundreds of reports, interviews, articles, and videos about this. And we have produced numerous radio shows about it as well.

But don't worry. We are not going to send you a 30-page document with all this information in details. Instead we'll descretely include a list of weblinks below and refer you to these.

Now that we have your attention, we'd much rather make sure that you understand what is currently happening in your own community.

Know this: Your citizens are deeply concerned and nervous over this issue. In the last year, we have organised six public information nights and film screenings in Geelong, and every time we have had a room filled with between 30 and 120 residents who wanted to learn more, because they worry about what will happen to Geelong if this industry is allowed to begin industrialising our farmland.

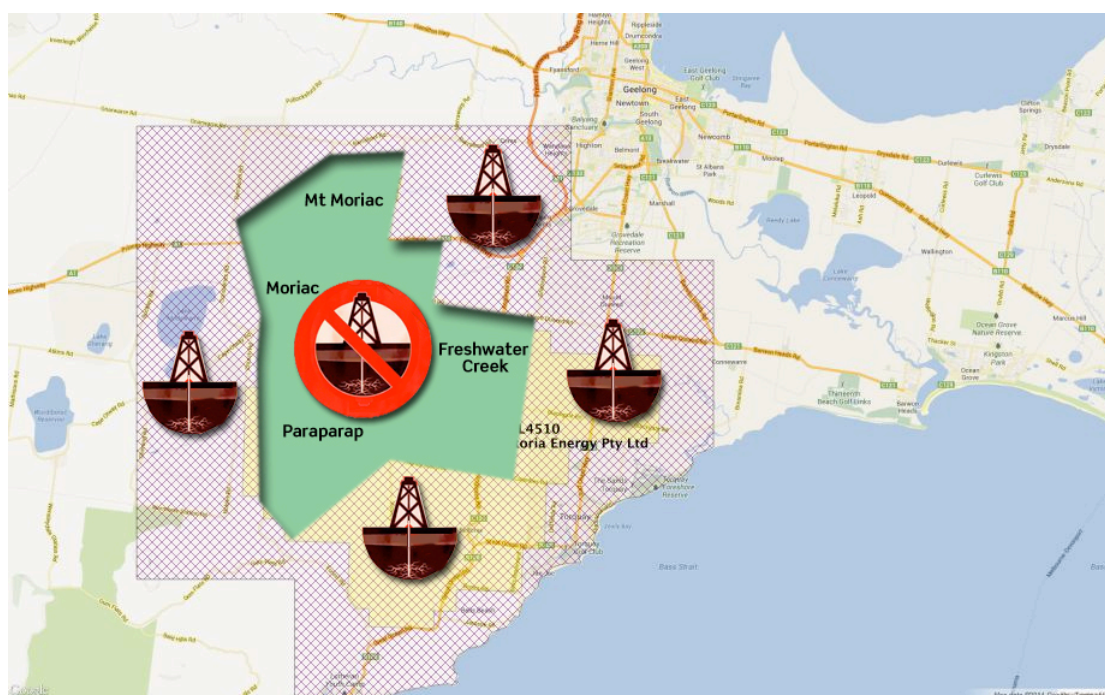


The whole of 3240-postcode around Moriac recently declared themselves as a gasfield free zone. In Moriac 97% of the recidents, in Mt Moriac 96%, in Paraparap 92% and in Freshwater Creek 93% all indicated that they wish to remain gasfield free, so on Sunday 14 September 2014, politicians from all major parties at federal, state

and local level assisted the citizens of four small towns to declare themselves ‘gasfield free’.

The declaration was presented to Surf Coast Councillors Mayor Rose Hodge, Cr Heather Wellington, Cr Rod Nockles, Cr Eve Fisher, Federal MP Sarah Henderson, and Federal Senator Richard Di Natale, State MP Andrew Katos, Labor candidate Andy Richards, Greens South Barwon candidate Lisa Ashdowne, Greens Western Victorian Candidate Lloyd Davies, and Save the Planet candidate Adrian Whitehead.

They spoke briefly and all congratulated Frack Free Moriac on the group’s results. All of them indicated that they would support the community and be advocates for them in parliament.



As seen on the map, this covers a substantial bit of the area in which Lakes Oil has been given a license to drill for gas.

Resolution: “No fracking ever”

At a public information night on Thursday 18 September 2014, a motion was put and debated that Councillor Stretch Konteji, who was present, would take to the City of Greater Geelong Council the following short but absolute resolution:

“We, the citizens of City of Greater Geelong, insist that both our local and state government ban onshore gas extraction (fracking) permanently once and for all: No fracking ever.”

A motion to put forward a five year extension to the existing state moratorium was voted down. You can listen to an excerpt of the debate at the meeting here:

www.climatesafety.info/thesustainablehour44/#infonight



The public meeting about onshore gas extraction was held in Manifold Heights Baptist Church on Thursday 18 September 2014 at 7pm. Approximately 80 citizens, candidates, politicians and one councillor from Geelong participated. More information about the program of the evening on www.climatesafety.info/gasrush

Moyne Shire Council lead in fight against gas mining

It is also relevant for you to take a look around to some of our neighbouring councils and be aware how they are addressing this serious issue of fracking in our region.

In March 2014, Moyne Shire Council called on all municipalities to oppose the exploration for and extraction of coal seam gas within the state. At the council's March meeting in Mortlake, Cr Ralph Leutton put forward a motion which sought the support of councils across the state.

In May 2014, Moyne Shire and Surf Coast Shire put forward a motion at the state council of the Municipal Association of Victoria calling on all municipalities to oppose the exploration for and extraction of coal seam gas within the state. The motion was carried.

Surf Coast Shire unanimously support 'extreme concern' motion

And while Geelong councillors have procrastinated on this issue, the Surf Coast Shire Council have been supporting a moratorium on fracking since 2012 while on 26 November 2013 they put forward a motion to state government in support of a *permanent ban* on onshore gas exploration.

Surf Coast Shire Council unanimously support an "extreme concern" about the state government's plan to start invading and exploiting our region with onshore gas extraction industry because of the potential environmental impact on the shire's communities and the lack of appropriate regulatory framework.

Surf Coast Shire Council has challenged all major political parties to declare their position on unconventional gas exploration and development before November's state election.

Council said it was aware of two current approvals relating to unconventional gas exploration in the shire — Western Victoria Energy Pty Ltd for coal seam gas and the other, Mirboo Ridge Pty Ltd for tight gas.

» *More on about this on www.frackfreegeelong.org/the-surf-coast-motion*

Health concerns

The usually conservative Australian Medical Association (AMA) has urged caution, saying we just don't know enough about the health impacts to proceed at this stage.

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) and the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) go a little further and suggest a ban until the industry is able to prove that it is safe.

We would particularly like to put your attention on a report from Public Health Association Australia which is recognised as the principal non-government organisation for public health in Australia and which works to promote the health and well-being of all Australians. The report is from 26 April 2013 and is called: 'The independent review of coal seam gas activities in NSW' (human health and environment effects).

» *Find the report on www.phaa.net.au/documents/130429NSW%20Coal%20Seam%20Gas%20Review%20FINAL.pdf*

The health concerns come from most aspects of the gas industry's practices:

- The mix of dangerous chemicals which are forced under pressure deep into the earth
- The risk of contamination of drinking water sources
- The impact on people living near the wells who are being exposed to airborne pollutants 24/7
- The impact on mental health of seeing the area being turned into an industrial zone.

» *You will find much more information about health concerns and reports on www.frackfreegeelong.org/about-fracking/health*

Economic concerns

In July 2014, we interviewed Mark Ogge who is a researcher and a public liason officer to the Australia Institute. What he told us live on air explains a couple of important points concerning the myths about fracking, jobs and economy:

“At the moment the industry is trying to argue that if we don't mine a whole lot more gas, then there'll be a gas shortage and gas prices are going up. The first thing to understand is there is no gas shortage. On the east coast of Australia it's all one big

gas network, and there is an unprecedented increase in the amount of gas being extracted through unconventional gas.

Gas demand in Victoria and the rest of south eastern Australia is actually falling, but the reason there is such a huge drive for more gas is to export it through the export terminals up in Gladstone. So this expansion isn't for domestic consumption. It is for export.

The gas industry argued that we need to extract more gas to keep gas prices down, but it's a really disingenuous argument because the reason that gas price is going up is that gas companies are now able to sell their gas to Asian customers, and the gas price in Asia is about five times the gas price in Australia. So they were selling it for \$4 a gigajoule, which is just a measure of the amount of gas, in Australia – but they can sell it for \$16 a gigajoule in Asia. So that's a huge incentive for them not to sell it to Australian customers, but to sell it to Asian customers. And what it means is that Australian customers have to compete with those prices.

So, Australian customers who used to buy their gas for \$4 will probably now have to pay about \$11 or \$12, because otherwise the big gas companies are just going to sell it to Asia. The fact that we are exporting the gas is probably going to triple or quadruple the gas prices for domestic customers. And it doesn't matter how much more gas you drill for – you could cover all of Gippsland and all of western Victoria in gas wells – it won't bring down the gas price at all, because the reason that gas prices are going up isn't because of the lack of gas supply, it's because we are part of a market that is now linked to Asia through export, and our gas prices are linked to the Asian gas market.”

» *Read more information about the economic impacts of fracking on www.frackfreegeelong.org/about-fracking/economy*

The alternative: renewable energy

With all these concerns about the negative impacts of this industry, we can't understand why we would be thinking of embracing unconventional gas in this area. There are alternatives, like clean renewable energy – wind, solar and wave energy, to name just three – which have none of these concerns and also have the potential to provide many more – and sustainable – local jobs in these times of high unemployment in the City of Greater Geelong.

Renewable energy sources like the sun and the wind are not only safer, but also will provide new jobs in Geelong and district.

We would like to see the world in which our children and grandchildren will grow up to be a healthy world with clean air and water, and a safe climate.

Unconventional gas mining doesn't fit into that picture.

Please apply for the exemption

Our neighbours in Surf Coast Shire have put forward a motion on Unconventional Gas Exploration and Development expressing concern about potential impacts and lack of regulatory framework. (See [council minutes](#) for motion details, page 177).

It seems the Shire can apply to be exempt from this type of mining, but needs the community to ask council, through letters and emails, to apply for the exemption. So this is what we would like to do here: We would hereby like to ask City of Greater Geelong Council to do the same. You must apply for this extension just like Surf Coast Shire is doing it and ensure that City of Greater Geelong remains gas mining free.

Geelong is at a crossroads. We can continue with fossil fuels which have served us well in the past, but which the rest of the world is now rejecting, or we can lead our state and country by embracing a clean energy job-rich future.

We urge you to choose wisely, CoGG councillors! We urge you to protect your citizens and reject this onshore gas extraction industry.

Sincerely yours

On behalf of Frack Free Geelong
Chris Johnson, Anthony Gleeson and Mik Aidt

c/o Anthony Gleeson, Unit 6 40 Buckingham Road, Newtown 3220



About Frack Free Geelong

Frack Free Geelong is an open network of 660 people who subscribe to the Frack Free Geelong newsletter and/or have 'liked' the Frack Free Geelong page on Facebook as well as around 700 people who have signed our petition which calls for a permanent ban on fracking. We will deliver this petition to you in the beginning of next week.

We are closely connected with the 'frack free' and 'gasfield free' groups in Torquay, Moriac, Bellarine, Grovedale and Warrnambool.

» Home page: www.frackfreegeelong.org

Further reading, listening and viewing

Geelong-focused radio podcasts, stories and links about fracking

Political support for gasfield free zones

18 September 2014

Radio podcast plus audio excerpts with interviews about fracking ethics, fracking chemicals, and Moriac's Gasfield Free Declaration:

- Alan Roberts, Nimbin Environment Centre
- Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith, National Toxics Network
- Ian Clarke, Frack Free Moriac
- Chloe Aldenhoven, Friends of the Earth Melbourne

Speeches (in excerpts) about Moriac's Gasfield Free Declaration:

- Richard Di Natale, Federal Senator, The Greens
- Andy Richards, Labor candidate
- Lloyd Davies, Western Victorian Greens candidate
- Adrian Whitehead, Save the Planet candidate
- Damien Marchant, Frack Free Moriac

www.climatesafety.info/political-support-for-gasfield-free-zones

Audio-postcard from the future of fracking

30 July 2014

An educational radio podcast for councillors and others about the prospects of turning our farmland into industrial gasfields.

www.climatesafety.info/audio-postcard-from-the-future-of-fracking

Gas rush – information page

26 August 2014

Links to gas fact sheets published by:

- Doctors for the Environment
- Beyond Zero Emissions
- Australia Institute
- The Climate Institute
- Concerned Health Professionals of New York

www.climatesafety.info/gasrush

Impacts of unconventional gas extraction

16 April 2014

The Sustainable Hour heads off for a seminar on unconventional gas mining to hear what the experts have to say about this controversial topic

www.climatesafety.info/impacts-of-unconventional-gas-extraction

Community outraged over fracking threat

19 October 2014

www.climatesafety.info/global-frackdown-on-19-october-also-in-geelong

Video

Films and video clips about fracking

www.frackfreegeelong.org/about-fracking/films

Why you should be concerned about fracking

www.climatesafety.info/why-you-should-be-concerned-about-fracking

More information about the One Planet Living Principles

One Planet Living is about enjoying a high quality of life within our fair share of the earth's resources. See: www.oneplanetliving.net