

## Resolutions from local Councils

Friends of the Earth and Quit Coal initiated the campaign for a moratorium on new coal and gas with the following call. 57 groups and a growing number of local Councils have supported the campaign so far.

The text we are using:

*We call on the Victorian government to ban all new on-shore coal and un-conventional gas operations until there has been a thorough investigation into the likely impacts of this industry on:*

- *water resources,*
- *farmland and food security,*
- *local communities and natural biodiversity, and*
- *greenhouse emissions.*

Further information here: <http://www.melbourne.foe.org.au/?q=node/1124>

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**Below is a listing of the resolutions of local Councils and LG bodies in Victoria to date**

Most recent are at the top of the document

- Moreland (July)
- South Gippsland (June)
- City of Yarra (June)
- Port Phillip Council (May 2012)
- MAV state wide conference
- Bass Coast Council
- Colac Otway (April 2012)

## **MORELAND**

Notice of Motion  
01\_2012 Cr Lenka Thompson

## **MORATORIUM ON COAL SEAM GAS MINING**

*"That the Moreland City Council call on the Victorian Government to institute a moratorium on all new coal and on-shore un-conventional gas operations until there has been a thorough, independent investigation into the likely impacts of this industry on water resources, farmland and food security, local communities, natural biodiversity and greenhouse emissions."*

### **BACKGROUND**

1. Exploration of coal seam gas may seem relatively new in Australia, however the first exploration began in the Bowen Basin in 1976. The Bowen Basin is located in Queensland and covers an area of over 60,000 square kilometres running from Collinsville to Theodore.
2. Exploration was concentrated in the basin throughout the 1980s and 1990s and it was not until the mid-1990s that production wells began to operate.
3. Over the next decade this new form of energy has quickly become a significant source of energy with exploration of the Surat, Galilee, Maryborough, Clarence-Moreton, Sydney, Gunnedah and Gloucester basins across Queensland and New South Wales. More recently the exploration focus has moved to Victoria with exploration licences in place across the Otway, Bass and Gippsland basins.
4. Until recently many Councils have not been aware of the existence of exploration licences across land in their shires. In Victoria exploration and mining are regulated under the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990. Under the Act there is no requirement to notify Councils or landholders and so many licences have been issued without any community concern.
5. However over recent years with the expansion of the coal seam gas industry communities and Council are becoming more concerned about what the impacts of this industry may be on their land. This was the case for Bass Coast Shire Council who recently resolved to request that the Department of Primary Industries advise Council of any applications or changes in applications relating to exploration or mining.
6. Shortly after this resolution, Council were informed by Department of Primary Industries that exploration licence application EL5416 had been lodged with the department on 22 February 2012.
7. The application seeks to cover land across Bass Coast and South Gippsland for the purpose of Coal Bed Methane and Coal (Brown or Black) exploration. The applicant is Leichhardt Resources Pty Ltd who is a Queensland based resources company with existing licences in NSW and Victoria. Leichhardt Resources hold a current licence over land that immediately abuts this application to the east.
8. In response to this application Council has resolved to object to the application on the grounds that it could adversely impact agriculture, tourism, groundwater and the environment.

9. It is also unclear whether the regulatory regime in Victoria is able to appropriately regulate this new energy source. In Queensland, New South Wales and federally there have been significant changes made to the regulatory environment to manage the coal seam gas industry. It seems logical that a full review of the Victorian legislation will be required to ensure that the environment and landowners are fully protected as this industry evolves.
10. The extraction methods used are crude. Enormous amounts of fresh water are wasted and environmental and health impacts include scarred landscapes and contaminated groundwater from migrating gases and chemicals. In terms of the impact on our climate, recent studies have shown that far greater emissions of methane (typically 85 to 90 per cent of natural gas) are being released into our atmosphere than were suspected. Emissions from methane are at least 72 times, and possibly 105 times, more potent than CO2 in the atmosphere, when viewed over a twenty year time span.
11. Further to this, according to Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith – an expert in industrial chemicals and an advisor to the Federal government – of the 23 major chemicals currently used by coal seam gas companies in Australia, the national regulator has not tested any of them for their use in fracturing fluids. Given the rapidly mounting evidence that mining poses grave health and environmental hazards – including threats to water supplies and food security – the growing community opposition to the industry should come as no surprise to the Victorian State government. Protecting the health and security of its people is a fundamental duty of care for all democratic governments.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gz2mq5GYnR0>
12. The social licence for burning fossil fuels is expiring while renewable energy is 100% safe, clean, available and affordable now. A clean, safe and secure energy system that will create new jobs and investment in local economies – and pay dividends every time the sun shines and the wind blows – will benefit all Victorians. The time has come for us to directly challenge backward, entrenched fossil fuel corporations that are holding back energy innovation so that they can continue profiting at the expense of our community's social and economic wellbeing.
13. The following local Councils and LG bodies in Victoria to date have carried resolutions to date: Yarra, Port Phillip, Bass Coast and Colac-Otway Councils and the MAV state wide conference.

#### **PROPOSED MOTION**

That the Moreland City Council call on the Victorian Government to institute a moratorium on all new coal and on-shore un-conventional gas operations until there has been a thorough, independent investigation into the likely impacts of this industry on water resources, farmland and food security, local communities, natural biodiversity and greenhouse emissions.

*Supported unanimously*

#### **SOUTH GIPPSLAND**

Amendment

THAT COUNCIL:

1. WRITE TO THE VICTORIAN STATE GOVERNMENT CALLING FOR A MORATORIUM ON COAL SEAM GAS EXPLORATION AND EXTRACTION/MINING IN SOUTH GIPPSLAND PENDING FULL PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF ALL PROCESS CHEMICALS USED AND ALL OTHER FEATURES OF COAL SEAM GAS EXPLORATION/MINING BEING SHOWN TO BE SAFE.
  
2. SEEK FURTHER INFORMATION ON REGULATIONS AND CONTROLS IN PLACE IN RESPECT OF COAL SEAM GAS EXPLORATION AND EXTRACTION IN THE STATE OF VICTORIA AND HOW THOSE REGULATIONS AND CONTROLS COMPARE TO OTHER STATES WHERE COAL SEAM GAS EXPLORATION AND OPERATIONS ARE IN PROGRESS.
  
3. ENSURE THE COMMUNITY IS KEPT UP TO DATE WITH ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE THROUGH OUR WEBSITE, COUNCIL REPORTS AND CONTACT WITH CONCERNED COMMUNITY GROUPS AND BASS COAST COUNCIL.
  
4. THAT COUNCIL Opposes Coal Seam Gas exploration or mining / extraction on land it owns or manages until it is shown to be safe.

The Amendment was PUT and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY and became the Motion before the Chair.

The Motion was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

## **YARRA COUNCIL**

June 2012

### **Notice of Motion No 11 of 2012 - re Moratorium on Coal Seam Mining**

Responsible Officer: Acting Chief Executive Officer

I, Councillor Alison Clarke, hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Ordinary Meeting of Council to be held on 5 June 2012:

“That the City of Yarra call on the Victorian Government to institute a moratorium on all new coal and on-shore un-conventional gas operations until there has been a thorough, independent investigation into the likely impacts of this industry on water

resources, farmland and food security, local communities, natural biodiversity and greenhouse emissions.”

**Background:**

1. Exploration of coal seam gas may seem relatively new in Australia, however the first exploration began in the Bowen Basin in 1976. The Bowen Basin is located in Queensland and covers an area of over 60,000 square kilometres running from Collinsville to Theodore.
2. Exploration was concentrated in the basin throughout the 1980s and 1990s and it was not until the mid-1990s that production wells began to operate.
3. Over the next decade this new form of energy has quickly become a significant source of energy with exploration of the Surat, Galilee, Maryborough, Clarence-Moreton, Sydney, Gunnedah and Gloucester basins across Queensland and New South Wales. More recently the exploration focus has moved to Victoria with exploration licences in place across the Otway, Bass and Gippsland basins.
4. Until recently many Councils have not been aware of the existence of exploration licences across land in their shires. In Victoria exploration and mining are regulated under the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990. Under the Act there is no requirement to notify Councils or landholders and so many licences have been issued without any community concern.
5. However over recent years with the expansion of the coal seam gas industry communities and Council are becoming more concerned about what the impacts of this industry may be on their land. This was the case for Bass Coast Shire Council who recently resolved to request that the Department of Primary Industries advise Council of any applications or changes in applications relating to exploration or mining.
6. Shortly after this resolution, Council were informed by Department of Primary Industries that exploration licence application EL5416 had been lodged with the department on 22 February 2012.
7. The application seeks to cover land across Bass Coast and South Gippsland for the purpose of Coal Bed Methane and Coal (Brown or Black) exploration. The applicant is Leichhardt Resources Pty Ltd who is a Queensland based resources company with existing licences in NSW and Victoria. Leichhardt Resources hold a current licence over land that immediately abuts this application to the east.
8. In response to this application Council has resolved to object to the application on the grounds that it could adversely impact agriculture, tourism, ground water and the environment.
9. It is also unclear whether the regulatory regime in Victoria is able to appropriately regulate this new energy source. In Queensland, New South Wales and federally there have been significant changes made to the regulatory environment to manage the coal seam gas industry. It seems logical that a full review of the Victorian legislation will be required to ensure that the environment and landowners are fully protected as this industry evolves.
10. The extraction methods used are crude. Enormous amounts of fresh water are wasted and environmental and health impacts include scarred landscapes and

contaminated ground water from migrating gases and chemicals. In terms of the impact on our climate, recent studies have shown that far greater emissions of methane (typically 85 to 90 per cent of natural gas) are being released into our atmosphere than were suspected. Emissions from methane are at least 72 times, and possibly 105 times, more potent than CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, when viewed over a twenty year time span.

11. Further to this, according to Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith – an expert in industrial chemicals and an advisor to the Federal government – of the 23 major chemicals currently used by coal seam gas companies in Australia, the national regulator has not tested any of them for their use in fracturing fluids. Given the rapidly mounting evidence that mining poses grave health and environmental hazards – including threats to water supplies and food security – the growing community opposition to the industry should come as no surprise to the Victorian State government.

Protecting the health and security of its people is a fundamental duty of care for all democratic governments.

12. The social licence for burning fossil fuels is expiring while renewable energy is 100% safe, clean, available and affordable now. A clean, safe and secure energy system that will create new jobs and investment in local economies – and pay dividends every time the sun shines and the wind blows – will benefit all Victorians. The time has come for us to directly challenge backward, entrenched fossil fuel corporations that are holding back energy innovation so that they can continue profiting at the expense of our community's social and economic wellbeing.

13. The following local Councils and LG bodies in Victoria to date have carried resolutions to date: Port Phillip, Bass Coast and Colac-Otway Councils and the MAV state wide conference.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the City of Yarra call on the Victorian Government to institute a moratorium on all new coal and on-shore un-conventional gas operations until there has been a thorough, independent investigation into the likely impacts of this industry on water resources, farmland and food security, local communities, natural biodiversity and greenhouse emissions.

## **PORT PHILLIP COUNCIL**

May 23 2012

[http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/23\\_May\\_2012\\_Ordinary\\_Meeting\\_of\\_Council\\_Agenda.pdf](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/23_May_2012_Ordinary_Meeting_of_Council_Agenda.pdf) (page 10)

A Petition was received from 10 signatories in relation to calling on the Victorian state government to institute a moratorium on all new coal and on-shore unconventional gas operations until there has been a thorough investigation into the likely impacts of this industry on water resources, farmland and food security, local communities, biodiversity and greenhouse gas emission.

The Petition states the following:-

*“As you may be aware, Victorians are witnessing a wave in the issuing of exploration licenses for coal seam gas (CSG), coal, tight gas and shale gas.*

*The extraction methods used are crude. Enormous amounts of fresh water are wasted and environmental and health impacts include scarred landscapes and contaminated ground water from migrating gases and chemicals. In terms of the impact on our climate, recent studies have shown that far greater emissions of methane (typically 85 to 90 per cent of natural gas) are being released into our atmosphere than were suspected.<sup>1</sup> Emissions from methane are at least 72 times, and possibly 105 times, more potent than CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, when viewed over a twenty year time span.<sup>2</sup> Further to this, according to Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith – an expert in industrial chemicals and an advisor to the Federal government – of the 23 major chemicals currently used by coal seam gas companies in Australia, the national regulator has not tested any of them for their use in fracturing fluids.<sup>3</sup>*

*Given the rapidly mounting evidence that mining poses grave health and environmental hazards – including threats to water supplies and food security – the growing community opposition to the industry should come as no surprise to the Victorian State government. Protecting the health and security of its people is a fundamental duty of care for all democratic governments.*

*The social licence for burning fossil fuels is expiring while renewable energy is 100% safe, clean, available and affordable now. A clean, safe and secure energy system that will create new jobs and investment in local economies – and pay dividends every time the sun shines and the wind blows – will benefit all Victorians. The time has come for us to directly challenge backward, entrenched fossil fuel corporations that are holding back energy innovation so that they can continue profiting at the expense of our community’s social and economic wellbeing.*

*In the interests of protecting the Victorian community from social and economic harm, we the undersigned call on the Mayor and Councillors of the city of Port Phillip to join with us, along with dozens of other community and environment groups in calling the Victorian government to institute a moratorium on all new coal and on-shore un-conventional gas operations until there has been a thorough, independent investigation into the likely impacts of this industry on water resources, farmland and food security, local communities, natural biodiversity and greenhouse emissions.”*

#### **OFFICER COMMENT**

There has been an expansion of exploration licence activity for coal seam gas (CSG) in Victoria. Until recently, these gas deposits were too costly and difficult to exploit. However, with the development of the fracking production techniques (fracking is the process of pumping water, sand and chemicals, in order to fracture the ground allowing gas to escape) and an increase in wholesale price of electricity, this industry is now profitable. Victoria has two major gas basins. To the East the gas basin extends throughout Gippsland and to the West the Otway Basin extends all the way to the South Australian board.

There is a growing community opposition to CSG as fracking uses very large amounts of water (which results in a contaminated water waste stream) and produces greenhouse gas emissions. Waste water disposal has been raised as a concern by the community as this water can find its way into ground and surface water, endangering the health of local communities and ecosystems.

The Victorian Government facilitates the exploration of CSG through the provision of exploration licences. Three exploration licenses have been approved where the sole purpose of exploration is CSG fracking with a further 3 pending approval. There are an additional 26 licenses, either approved or pending approval, where CSG is one of the commodities being surveyed.

Supporting the petition to call upon the Victorian Government to place a moratorium on CSG would be consistent with the Council's *Toward Zero Environmental Strategy* to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2020. The exploitation of CSG will lead to an increase in Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions – as without a reduction in energy demand CSG will be used to expand our electricity supply capacity rather than displace existing base-load brown coal power stations.

#### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

Write to the Victorian Government to institute a moratorium on all new coal and on-shore un-conventional gas operations until there has been a thorough investigation into the likely impacts of this industry on water resources, farmland and food security, local communities, biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions.

Supported.

### **MAV state council**

May 2012

#### **Motion 12: Coal seam gas regulation**

**Submitting Council:** Bass Coast Shire Council

#### **Motion**

That the MAV

1. consult with member Councils to establish the experience of Councils in dealing with coal seam gas exploration across Victoria
2. consult with the Department of Primary Industry(DPI) to establish the extent of coal seam gas exploration and mining currently approved in Victoria

3. request the DPI to establish a Coal Seam Gas Working Party with the MAV to investigate the impacts of coal seam gas exploration and mining on existing land use patterns and economic activity, the environment and groundwater quality across the State
4. Request the state government to establish a parliamentary committee on coal seam gas to investigate whether the existing regulatory regime is adequate to control unconventional gas extraction
5. develop a communications and engagement plan to inform Councils and other key stakeholders of the issues and strategies being developed to manage this issue.

### **Submitting Council Rationale**

Exploration of coal seam gas may seem relatively new in Australia, however the first exploration began in the Bowen Basin in 1976. The Bowen Basin is located in Queensland and covers an area of over 60,000 square kilometres running from Collinsville to Theodore.

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existing licences in NSW and Victoria. Leichhardt Resources hold a current licence over land that immediately abuts this application to the east.

In response to this application Council has resolved to object to the application on the grounds that it could adversely impact agriculture, tourism, ground water and the environment.

It is also unclear whether the regulatory regime in Victoria is able to appropriately regulate this new energy source. In Queensland, New South Wales and federally there have been significant changes made to the regulatory environment to manage the coal seam gas industry. It seems logical that a full review of the Victorian legislation will be required to ensure that the environment and landowners are fully protected as this industry evolves.

**Supported by:**

Latrobe City, Baw Baw, South Gippsland, Wellington, East Gippsland, Bass Coast Shires

## **BASS COAST COUNCIL**

May 2012

<http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/getmedia/8cb53b95-bd29-4874-83f4-5a87f3494ef8/120516a.pdf>

(page 40)

It is recommended that Council prepare a detailed advocacy plan and resolve to request a moratorium on coal seam gas exploration in Victoria.

### Recommendation

That Council is opposed to coal seam gas exploration and mining and resolves:

1. to seek a moratorium on exploration and mining through the following motion:

Bass Coast notes the many legitimate concerns regarding the exploration for coal seam gas and calls on the Victorian Government to institute a moratorium on all new coal seam gas exploration and operations, until there has been a comprehensive investigation into the likely effects of this industry on:

- a) Pollution of underground and surface water resources.
- b) The many side effects on adjoining farmland and effects on food security.
- c) Dislocation of local communities, and including economic impacts.

- d) Adverse effects on biodiversity and resulting greenhouse gas emissions.
- e) Adverse effects on tourism and in particular tourism based on our natural environment.
- f) Designation of areas that should be exempt from exploration as they have been identified as significant in terms of the environment, or the agricultural or tourism economies.

## **COLAC OTWAY**

On 26 April 2012 the Colac Otway Shire unanimously supported the following resolution:

*Colac Otway notes there are many strong concerns regarding the exploration for coal seam gas and calls on the Victorian Government to institute a moratorium on all new coal seam gas exploration and operations, until there has been a comprehensive investigation into the likely effects of this industry on:*

- a. Pollution of underground and surface water resources.*
- b. The many side effects on adjoining farmland and effects on food security.*
- c. Dislocation of local communities, and including economic impacts.*
- d. Adverse effects on biodiversity and resulting greenhouse gas emissions.*
- e. Adverse effects on tourism and in particular tourism based on our natural environment.*