

TRANSCRIPT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Inquiry into unconventional gas in Victoria

Sale — 30 June 2015

Members

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Secretary: Mr Keir Delaney

Research officer: Ms Annemarie Burt

Witness

Mrs Maureen Versteden.

**Necessary corrections to be notified to
executive officer of committee**

Ms THOMAS — I am Maureen Verstedden of [REDACTED]. I want to talk as a nanna, a great-grandmother, mainly about the health effects on the children. To me, if we understand it properly, with fracking for tight gas we are getting the tiny specks of compressed gas from within hard rock that was put there billions of years ago when Earth was formed. That was during the time of fire and brimstone gases. There was nothing on Earth. It was a long time before humans, a long before the dinosaurs. They came and they died out because their environment went wrong.

What we are doing is letting everything out into our environment in strange numbers. In America there are over 1 million wells. There are 1.5 million to 2 million wells. You are letting that out of every well 2 million times. It is arsenic, lead, mercury, glycol ethers, BTEX chemicals and radioactivity. The numbers win it, but we are absolutely not familiar with them.

As you know, we are thoroughly tuned into our environment, like the plants. We have some that grow by the seaside and some in the desert. Some like water, some do not. Chameleons change their colours. We are tuned into our environment. If the chemicals change in our bodies, we might have too much iodine or not enough, too much salt, too much sugar. If we have two lots of chemicals, the chemist finds out what tablets we are taking before we take others. We are finely tuned into our environment but we are changing our environment so quickly that our bodies are not be able to change. Our children cannot catch up.

In America already there are 20 per cent more birth defects. There are health reports everywhere if you would like to look for them. In one area in America there are 10 times as many cases of breast cancer. There is a list of the harms. There are 16 000 people in the list of the harms if you like to google it. It is a great long list. It is not hearsay; that is a group of people who have been in the news. There are all the deaths. There are 16 000 people in the Pennsylvania list, but there are millions of others in America.

It is all covered up. You have to look for it, but you have to know where to look for it. You have to go to the universities and the National Toxics Network and google their site. Believe the toxics network and have a look at our health reports. Our environment is messed up and then that affects our health. Go to the health. Never mind about the little things. Go further on. We have the proof now. We have got it from America, we have got it from Tara and Chinchilla in Queensland. We have the proof. Thank you.

Witness withdrew.