

# TRANSCRIPT

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

### Inquiry into unconventional gas in Victoria

Hamilton — 23 September 2015

#### Members

Mr David Davis — Chair

Ms Samantha Dunn

Ms Harriet Shing — Deputy Chair

Mr Shaun Leane

Ms Melina Bath

Mr Adem Somyurek

Mr Richard Dalla-Riva

Mr Daniel Young

#### Participating Members

Mr Jeff Bourman

Mr James Purcell

Ms Colleen Hartland

Mr Simon Ramsay

#### Staff

Secretary: Mr Keir Delaney

Research assistants: Ms Annemarie Burt and Ms Kim Martinow

#### Witness

Mr David Smith.

**Mr SMITH** — Thank you for the opportunity. I am David Smith, and I am living near Tarpeena, just over the border. I organised a troupe that has been referred to in America. Before that I made blind phone calls into the USA. On the fourth phone call I made I came across a family that had their stock water contaminated by fracking chemicals, and this was confirmed by the EPA. On the fifth call I made I discovered that the farmer there had naturally occurring sulphides that were released from the fracking operations and came up into stock water and again killed stock. It had me interested in organising a trip to America. That was the obvious place because they have been using this latest technology for approximately 10 years.

Our group included 11 Australians. There were four politicians from South Australia. I certainly invited some, by the way, from Victoria. There was also a doctor and a vet. We met with 20-odd speakers, including Louis Allstadt, retired executive vice-president of Mobil worldwide. He points out that 6 per cent of wells fail in the first year and that 100 per cent of wells will fail in 100 years. Professor Tony Ingraffea addressed us. He points out the extreme concern of methane leaking. Jannette Barth, an economist, addressed us. She makes it very clear that short-term gains are there but long term there will be a definite loss. We also met with an assistant professor, Elaine Hill, who was mentioned. She has done a report, a study, and found that there has been a decrease in human birth weight where mothers live within 2 kilometres of the wells. Another lady, Lisa McKenzie, has done a study and found an increase in human birth defects. There is a study by the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University which has linked hydraulic fracking to an alarming increase in hospitalisation. Finally, when making your decision, please ask yourself if you would want your children to live in a gas field.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you.

**Witness withdrew.**