

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Attorney-General
Minister for Resources



Friday, 5 March 2021

ENSHRINING VICTORIA'S BAN ON FRACKING FOREVER

The Andrews Labor Government has listened to farmers and regional communities and banned fracking in Victoria for good, enshrining the ban in the state's Constitution.

The *Constitution Amendment (Fracking Ban) Bill 2020* has passed through the Upper House and Victoria's Constitution will now be amended, safeguarding our regions from the threat of practices that could harm the environment.

Fracking was banned in 2017 and at the 2018 election, the Labor Government promised to put that ban in the Constitution – to make it harder for future Liberal and National governments to put our food and fibre sector at risk.

The restart of the onshore conventional gas sector is on track for 1 July 2021. This restart follows three years of detailed scientific investigations by the Victorian Gas Program (VGP), which found an onshore conventional gas industry would not compromise the environment or our vital agricultural sector.

Conventional gas extraction does not involve fracking – it is a tried and tested method to access gas deep underground trapped by an impermeable rock layer.

South-west Victoria and Gippsland are the main regions set to benefit, where geoscience studies have located potentially significant onshore conventional gas resources.

Production of the estimated onshore conventional gas resources could generate approximately \$300 million annually for regional economies and create up to 6,400 jobs over the lifespan of these projects.

Victoria's regulations governing onshore conventional gas exploration are being improved based on the recommendations of the VGP's independent stakeholder advisory panel, made up of farmers, environment groups, industry representatives and local councils. Public consultation on the new regulations will begin in April.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Resources Jaclyn Symes

"No other government in the world has gone as far as enshrining a coal seam gas and fracking ban in their constitution – but we're determined to make this a permanent decision."

"We've listened to our rural communities who have told us they do not want the unacceptable risks that fracking brings that could impact our farming and tourism sectors."