Letter for Government Geelong MPs

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I live in your electorate and I am writing to you to express my objections to Viva Energy’s proposed LNG gas import terminal.  I care deeply about <<<<climate change / our environment / the safety of residents / the amenity of Corio bay.>>>>  because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I believe that this is the wrong direction for this state to take, and I am calling on you to advocate to the Planning Minister to reject Viva’s terminal – like was done for the almost identical proposal by AGL in Westernport Bay. The terminal threatens the safety of Geelong residents, the health of the environment of Corio bay, and increases the impacts of climate change.

The project involves the construction of a new pier, pipeline, the mooring of a massive LNG processing ship (300m long and 50m high) for the life of the project, and up to 40 giant LNG tanker ships a year negotiating the narrow and shallow channel into Corio Bay.  The project is in the process of undertaking an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) process, the report from the Inquiry panel is due to be handed to the Minister soon.

My understanding is that serious shortcomings were identified in the safety and risk management of Viva’s project during the EES hearings, such as not considering the contributory effects of positioning the terminal next to two major hazard facilities (a refinery and chemicals import terminal). These shortcomings in the risk assessments compound with the fact that the proposal was already closer to residents that all other LNG terminals in Australia. The transiting vessels full of LNG will pass within 250m from homes in North Shore, if there was a spill and a fire it would likely cause instantaneous fatalities such is the intensity of the radiant heat from burning LNG. All of which make me as a Geelong resident concerned for my safety and of the belief that the proposed location is not suitable.

The hearing also heard from a marine ecologist who identified that Viva’s statement used outdated literature and  inadequate underwater surveys. They concluded that the marine ecology assessment did not meet scientific standards.

Importing fossil (“natural”) gas by shipping it as LNG emits huge amounts of greenhouse gases - up to 600,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions in Viva’s own projections if they import gas from Qatar.  And that’s even before counting the emissions created when the gas is burned in homes and businesses. This project claims it would import up to 160 petajoules of gas, which is the equivalent of 8.8 million tonnes of greenhouse pollution per year, or 9% of Victoria’s annual emissions. These emissions run counter to Victoria’s legislated emissions reduction targets, and the Government’s Gas Substitution Roadmap which models a 50% reduction in gas use by 2030.  I am concerned about the future we are creating if we continue to approve fossil fuel projects.

The gas industry wants everyone to believe that more gas is a necessary part of the transition to an entirely renewable and electric economy.  This statement is incorrect, we have the technology available right now to skip gas and go straight to an all-electric all-renewable future.  The majority of gas usage in Victoria is easily replaced with reverse cycle air conditioners, heat-pump hot water and induction cooktops.  Increasing the rate that consumers switch away from gas through increased government subsidies and grants will reduce demand on the gas network such that the need for new gas infrastructure is eliminated.

Your government has taken laudable measures to increase the amount of renewable energy generation in this state — but more is still needed to mitigate the climate emergency.  It’s inconsistent and illogical to be increasing renewable generation while also approving fossil fuel projects.  Renewables need to displace fossil fuels from the energy mix of our state.

I am asking you to call on the Planning Minister and explain the significant objections to this project outlined in this letter and why this is the wrong direction for the State of Victoria. Can you let me know your position on Viva’s gas terminal and the response that you receive from the Planning Minister.

Thank you for considering my letter,

Name