Western Region Environment Centre

Coal Fact Sheet

NO Coal Mining In Melbourne's West

Traffic Impacts of Coal Mining

The mining of coal and Coal Seam Gas (CSG) can create major traffic problems within communities.

> ***Each (CSG) well will produce about 1.2 million gallons of wastewater that can contain chemicals introduced during the drilling process and dredged up from deep within the earth.***
>
> Joaquin Sapien and Sabrina Shankman, "Drilling Wastewater Disposal Options in N.Y. Report Have Problems of Their Own", *ProPublica* Dec. 29, 2009.

Traffic issues include:

- Increases in the movement of heavy machinery for coal mining: drilling rigs, excavation equipment, heavy transport equipment.
- Increases in the movement of chemicals required for the CSG fracking process.
- Increased construction and supply traffic.
- A large number of water trucks carrying waste-water from the mines and wells to storage ponds or waste treatment facilities.
- Many additional truck movements to carry the coal and/or the liquefied coal seam gas.

These increases will cause:

- Increased traffic congestion on roads already suffering from serious traffic problems.
- Increased risk of serious traffic accidents.
- Increased risk of air and water contamination from spills.
- Increased air pollution from the diesel fumes for transport and mining.
- Substantially increased road damage and maintenance costs.

Thousands of trips on our roads by these trucks

In the USA estimates are that 1,000 or more truck trips are required per CSG mining well[1].

Regal Resources have indicated they will construct 200 mining wells in Balliang – this could require at least 200,000 extra truck trips to rail heads or sea ports in the West of Melbourne!

The amount of traffic involved will be large regardless of the type of coal mining involved. Open cut mining will not involve nearly as much chemical transport or waste water as CSG or possibly other technologies such as the proposed Underground Coal To Liquid (UCTL) or oil technology. On the other hand CSG and UCTL technologies do not have to transport the bulky brown coal which will require many more trucks and other infrastructure.

A US study of the road costs for transporting lignite (brown coal) found that road and bridge maintenance costs would be a minimum of $346 pa/truck of 39 tonne gross vehicle weight and up to $4,377 pa/truck that is less efficient.

Effects of Hauling Timber, Lignite Coal, and Coke Fuel on Louisiana Highways and Bridges, Roberts et al, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, March 2005

In all cases there will be major negative impacts on traffic, road safety and the environment.

8 Reasons for opposing coal mining in Melbourne's West

1. **Groundwater contamination.** The chemicals used and the waste water the process creates, involve millions of litres of contaminated water needing to be 'disposed' safely.
2. **Waterways contamination**, including the Parwan Creek, Werribee River and Little River.
3. **Impacts on regional agriculture.** Serious impacts on agriculture could result from the risks of groundwater contamination, preventing the use of vital bore water, as well as the alienation of agricultural, food producing land, especially with open cut mining.
4. **Risks to health of residents in the region** due to the air, water and land pollution that accompanies coal mining, not to mention the potential chemical, oil and coal spills both on site and in transit.
5. **Impacts on the well-being of local communities**, their sense of place and their community pride. In addition, tourism, land and housing values will be negatively impacted, as will employment.
6. **Substantial impacts on the endangered Werribee Plains Grasslands & habitat.** These include the destruction of native flora and fauna as well as the displacement of fauna due to the dust, atmospheric pollution and contamination accompanying such mining.
7. **A large impact on traffic and road maintenance** as a result of the thousands of heavy vehicles, trucks and supply vehicles required for the mines
8. **Climate Change - The most dangerous risk of all. A continuation or acceleration of fossil fuel use and carbon emissions will create a catastrophic risk to human health.**

Protect our health – Protect our community – Protect our environment
No Coal Mining in Melbourne's West

Prepared by the Western Region Environment Centre Climate Action Campaign, May 2012
A more detailed paper with references, entitled *The Health Risks from Coal Mining,* is available on the web site or from WREC. For further information or fact sheets contact: www.wrec.net.au Email: wrec@envirowest.org.au