

Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW
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Dear Independent Planning Commission,

This is a submission objecting to the Narrabri Gas Project.

My name is Melanie and I am a member of the Charlestown group of The Wilderness Society. I grew up on 10 acres in the NSW Hunter Valley, so my appreciation for nature started from birth. Living on tank water gave me an early understanding of how precious water is, being at the mercy of rainfall to keep our paddocks green, dam's full and household water available.

Since joining The Wilderness Society last year, I have become aware of the Narrabri Gas Project, and the devastating effect it will have on the Pilliga Forest, home to a number of native species and vast native habitats that are at risk of being destroyed, or becoming extinct if this project goes ahead. I attended a screening of the film 'Pilliga Rising', which showed all too clearly how destructive this project would be to the land, the native animals, the first nations peoples and ancient culture, as well as the livelihood and quality of life of local farmers and residents. The image of one resident discovering only shortly after moving to what was his retirement dream, that his water supply was contaminated and his newly acquired patch of paradise was basically now unliveable due to testing for the Narrabri Gas Project.

My key objections to the project cover a range of issues, as the negative effects of this gas mining are widespread. In light of the recent destructive bushfire season, more than ever we need to stop anything that will cause more harm to our native wilderness, or knowingly allow activities that will further contribute to climate change. A few key points relating to these areas of objection follow:

Climate change and greenhouse gas emissions:

- Extracting and burning gas will make the climate crisis worse. Science dictates that no new fossil fuel basins can be opened, if we wish to mitigate extreme weather events already impacting us all right now (<https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/download/>)
- NSW does not need more gas resources which fuel dangerous climate change. An October 2019 report from Pegasus Economics states solar and wind is developing faster than expected, reducing in cost and already displacing the need for gas-fired electricity (https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/lockthegate/pages/6326/attachments/original/1571263720/NGP_Economic_Report_online_version.pdf?1571263720)
- Total greenhouse gas emissions produced by the project could be 127.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, or 5 million tonnes a year. In a time when Australia is struggling to meet its commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement, this one gasfield would increase Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 1% per year.

Living culture:

- The Narrabri gas project threatens the living heritage of Gamilaraay peoples.
- Aboriginal heritage is not adequately assessed. No detailed new surveying of the

area for Aboriginal cultural heritage has taken place yet.

Biodiversity:

- 35 threatened animals and 10 threatened plants (within the project area) rely on the Pilliga for survival—including the endemic Pilliga Mouse, Squirrel Glider and Black-striped Wallaby. It also forms part of a stronghold for threatened woodland birds including the Glossy Black Cockatoo and Diamond Firetail.
- The project should not be approved as the Assessment Report fundamentally fails to assure there is adequate knowledge and understanding of the current status of the Pilliga Mouse or all 35 threatened fauna in the project area or of an appropriate management regime.

Water

- The Pilliga Forest is a critical recharge area for the Great Artesian Basin. Australia is the driest inhabited continent on earth. We cannot afford to gamble with our water. Underground aquifers, like the Great Artesian Basin, support life across inland Australia. CSG drilling is simply not worth the risk
- Over 20 years, Santos will remove 37.5 billion litres of water from deep below the Pilliga and removing this water will cause depressurisation and loss of water in the Pilliga Sandstone, the southern recharge of the Great Artesian Basin, which outcrops in the Pilliga.

Fire:

- Infrastructure of the Narrabri Gas Project poses a serious bushfire risk due to its highly flammable nature and the Assessment Report fails to adequately account for how this risk will be managed.
- The RFS has repeatedly expressed serious concerns about the operation of a gasfield and its burning flares in a highly flammable landscape like the Pilliga.

The negative impact of the Narrabri Gas Project to me clearly outweighs any perceived economic benefits. The loss on so many levels caused by coal seam gas mining, of irreplaceable habitat, native fauna and indigenous cultures, makes it clear to me that it should not go ahead, and that is why I strongly object to the Narrabri Gas Project. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment and for considering my submission.

Yours sincerely
Melanie Stanton