I **WISH TO MAKE THE STRONGEST OBJECTION TO THE NARRABRI GAS PROJECT:**

* Santos plans to develop 850 new coal seam gas wells across 95,000 hectares in the north eastern part of the Pilliga forest **the largest east temperate woodland in eastern Australia** near Narrabri, clearing close to 1,000 hectares of the forest in small patches and connecting lines in the process.

- There are two pipeline options associated with the gasfield: an eastern Queensland-Hunter Gas Pipe to Newcastle and Western Slopes Pipeline to join the Moomba-Sydney pipeline

* **I strongly object to the Narrabri Gas Project and the pipeline**. This project is very destructive with the possibility of not even short term gains for Australia.  Gas (especially domestically) needs to be phased out and retained simply for heavy industry until other reliable fuel sources are implemented.

- Globally, the UN Environment Program’s Production Gap Report in 2019 found that, **“With average lifetimes of 20 years or longer for pipelines, terminals, wells, and platforms, the time to begin planning for a wind-down of gas production is, as with other fossil fuels, already upon us.**”

* The Environmental Impact Statement attracted 22,721 submissions, of which 98% were objections
* The majority (63%) of the 470 submissions from the immediate local area were also objections.
* **This is supposed to be a democracy and not a dictatorship**.  The Australian people do not want these destructive projects destroying forever this beautiful country.
* **The NSW Chief Scientist in 2014 made 16 recommendations to guard against the risks of coal seam gas, only 2 have been fully implemented, and half haven’t been done at al**l.  Why not?
* The Pilliga is a biological diverse area supporting a significant koala population already impacted by drought and bushfires, that Santos proposes to clear 1,000 hectares of this area in patchwork and pollute water is criminal.

- Santos has used the most basic level of groundwater model because of how little is known about the deep aquifers they will dewater to extract gas.

-Over 20 years, Santos will remove 37.5 billion litres of water from deep below the Pilliga and treat it in the Leewood water treatment facility. This treatment will produce up to 840,000 tonnes of solid salt, laced with heavy metals, for which Santos still has no disposal plan.

* 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.
* Santos anticipates leakage from the precious alluvium that lies above the coal seams despite claiming there is no linkage between the water sources. **Landholders that rely on the GAB, the Gunnedah Oxley Basin and other groundwater in the area are strongly opposed to the project.**Social and economic impacts

-  Santos claims the gasfield is needed to “increase supplies” of gas, but there’s a glut of exported gas.

 -  Claims of job creation are crucial to the project’s justification, with an anticipated average 190 jobs created locally and 322 in the rest of the state, but this anticipated job creation comes at other industries’ expense. **Santos’ own assessment admits there would be lost employment in agriculture and manufacturing as a result of the project, despite unsubstantiated claims of flow on jobs in NSW.**

**Aboriginal cultural heritage**

The Pilliga is a hugely significant landscape for Gomeroi people. Santos’ Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment identified 90 known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites in the project area, including rock shelters, burials and historic camps and hearths.

Santos promises its drill pads and infrastructure will avoid these sites, but they’re based only on previous work. No detailed new surveys for Aboriginal cultural heritage have taken place yet.

Santos proposed to undertake detailed surveys after it gets approval and avoid newly found sites of high significance but by that time it will be too late to stop the gasfield.

**Environmental Impact**

* The Pilliga is the largest temperate woodland in eastern Australia and CSG will industrialise 95,000 hectares of it, clearing nearly 1,000 hectares in small patches for well-pads, infrastructure and gaslines, including removal of several endangered ecological communities.
* Only limited surveys were actually undertaken as part of the assessment of the gasfield, but these found 10 threatened plants and 35 threatened fauna in the gasfield area, including pygmy possums, koalas and the Pilliga mouse.

- The Pilliga once hosted one of the most important koala populations in New South Wales, but the species is now on an extinction trajectory in the area. With so much habitat and lives lost to recent bushfires, it is crucial to the survival of the koala that its bushland habitats be spared industrialisation.

**Greenhouse gases and climate change**

**-  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!**

-  Mobilising methane in coal seams could lock in ongoing fugitive emissions of this potent greenhouse gas for decades to come.

There is no good outcome from this development.

Please reject the Narrabri Gas Project

Lesley Willing

26/06/2020