**Santos CSG Submission**

The NSW Berejiklian government this month defeated a Bill which would place a moratorium on the Santos Narrabri gas project until the Chief Scientist’s recommendations were completed. This go-ahead given to Santos effectively opens up a possible 850-well gas field which extends north to the Queensland border, south beyond Gulgong, west beyond Coonamble and east to Scone.

A NSW legislative council inquiry into the Narrabri Santos Project found that 14 of 16 recommendations from the 2014 report by the Chief Scientist had not been implemented in full. Half were found to have not been completed at all. Effectively, our community and the world, has been told that this industry which is condemned by historical evidence of destruction, will operate with no rigid monitoring, accountability or perhaps, any, oversight.

It has been reported by the ABC (10/6/2020) reported that Australia’s largest insurance company [Insurance Australia Group] will no longer cover farmers for public liability if they have coal seam gas (CSG) infrastructure on their property. IAG’s decision will affect some landholders within weeks and farmers are now fearful they will have to cease farming altogether if they cannot get cover.

201 chemical compounds have been identified in fracking produced water. Many of the chemicals are carcinogens, solvents and petroleum distillates that can directly contaminate drinking water sources. This is the water Santos releases into holding dams which have already leaked and destroyed sections of Pilliga Forest vegetation. Drilling occurs directly above the Great Artesian Basin.

I was one of the 18000 objecting submissions received in 2017 of 23000 (78%). If the NSW government wants to prove that community consultation is of purpose, then this proposal should stop now. WE object!

The Climate Council reports that “extraction of gas, and particularly unconventional gas (or coal seam gas), is a highly polluting activity. Gas is primarily made up of methane, a greenhouse gas which is up to 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide in the short-term. Massive quantities of methane are released into the atmosphere through gas exploration, extraction, processing, and consumption.

After 30 years of inaction on climate change from successive Australian Governments, there is no room to develop further fossil fuel infrastructure... Australia is the sunniest and windiest inhabited continent on the planet [and]… has everything it needs to make deep, enduring and immediate cuts to greenhouse gas emissions that far outstrip the marginal — and possibly non-existent — benefits of gas.”

The Climate Council “contradicts our government who promises that by opening up more of the Gas industry they will lower electricity prices. Much has been made of increasing electricity prices in the south-eastern states in recent years. Recent increases have occurred [**specifically because of increased gas extraction**](https://theconversation.com/we-really-must-talk-about-gas-64213) [their highlight].This is the outcome of complex contracting dynamics with our largest export partners that have seen us paying more for Australian gas than our export partners overseas. This has been the primary driver of increasing electricity prices since at least 2016. Renewable energy, on the other hand, is the lowest cost form of new electricity generation and is still coming down in price each year.”

More jobs could have been created by a post Covid-19 government focus on renewable energy and climate-friendly projects. Such a focus, according to professional services firm, Ernst & Young, could create more than 100,000 direct jobs across the country. Their report estimates that every $1m spent on renewable energy and exports creates 4.8 full-time jobs in renewable infrastructure or 4.95 jobs in energy efficiency. By comparison, $1m on fossil fuel projects has been found to create 1.7 full-time jobs.

Finally, I grew up in Coonabarabran, a location of the greatest beauty, nestled in the Warrumbungle Mountains. I care deeply for my homeland and for the people who have settled there. Many depend upon the tourism and business that is provided by the National Park and Siding Springs Observatory. Light pollution will severely impact the research of this scientific station, respected and of high value worldwide. It was located there solely because of the lack of light pollution. Why destroy this when it is not necessary, not the only option, and not the best option?