



# Country Women's Association of NSW

ABN 82 318 909 926

*Incorporated in 1931 by an Act of NSW Parliament*

*All Communication to be addressed to the Secretary of Tabulam Branch  
16 Court Street, Tabulam NSW 2469*

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing this submission AGAINST Coal Seam Gas Mining in the Narrabri Area, for and on behalf of the members of the Tabulam Branch of the Country Women's Association NSW. This is to support the stand of the Narrabri CWA (and of NSW CWA) against the planned 850 plus gas wells to be put in by SANTOS.

The CWA is an Australia-wide Organisation of farmers' wives and Women of the Country. My mother, 50 –70 years ago was a member in South Australia. In the last few years it has become policy of the CWA to oppose Gas Mining for a number of reasons.

As wives of men on the Land, as women with families on the Land, and as mothers of future generations who plan to farm the land, we are concerned for the health of ourselves and our loved ones. Medical Reports, including that of Dr Geralyn McCarron's peer reviewed report on the negative health impacts from CSG in QLD, detail the health issues of those living in a Gasfield. These include recurring nosebleeds, especially in children, headaches, skin rashes, neurological problems and other problems. Coupled with this is the high suicide rate of farmers who have lost the capacity to produce food that is not laced with the chemical side-issues of CSG production. This is demonstrated in the Chinchilla gas fields:- people I (the writer of this submission) knew personally have taken their own lives as a result of this hopelessness.

Gas mining is destructive to the Environment in a number of ways. Whilst the gas companies are spruiking the "safety" or what they plan, this has NOT been supported in any studies done. To the contrary, it has been demonstrated that there are many safety issues. Chemicals which are poisonous and cancer-causing are used in drilling. The wells go through layers of the Recharge zone of the Great Artesian Basin, Australia's "huge water tank", most important to sustain farming across Australia. While Santos say there will be no damage, one small accident has the potential to destroy the G.A.B. THAT would be a catastrophic event for ALL Australia. This would destroy the livelihood of the Narrabri and area farmers, and many others. Couple with this the loss of billions of litres of water used in the mining operation. Part of the process of raising gas results in millions of litres of "produced water" being brought to the surface. This water is highly toxic, highly salt laden, radioactive, and contains destructive micro-organisms that were never intended to see the light of day. No safe way has been proposed or found to dispose of this chemical-laden salt, leaving it to become a threat to health and safety of the local people and their lifework. Coal seam gas (CSG) mining at just one Queensland site will produce three

million tonnes of salt - enough to raise a pile 10 metres high and 11 kilometres long, senators in Qld have been told. Santos will have the same problem.

Another concern in the light of the recent catastrophic bushfires is the demonstrated disregard of Santos for any sort of fire safety – refusing to extinguish huge gas flares in times of extreme fire danger – in a forest which has fought massive fires in 1997, 2002, 2006, 2013, 2016/17, 2019/2020... – in just recent times. Santos's fire policy in event of a fire at a gas well is to call the RFS to deal with it and RUN. The thought of fires in the forest fuelled by inevitable gas leaks from gas wells is horrific!

It has been shown in many instances that the promised jobs do not eventuate, or, if they do, they are short-lived. So, farmers who are forced to work off-farm because they have lost water supply, or suffered other issues related to mining, can not get work in the mine-fields as they had been promised, so have to travel away for work to sustain payments of farm costs.

Couple with this the total disregard held for what is left of the First Nation Culture of the region. The connection to Country is most important to our Indigenous Sisters and Aunties, and what little is left MUST be preserved for the Connection to Country for future generations of the Gomerai/Gamilaraay People. There is also the destruction of Iconic Australian Wildlife found only in the Pilliga Forest area:- the Pilliga Mouse, for instance. Santos has already begun the destruction of the forest whilst in exploration mode, by carving roads through the forest and segmenting areas that stops wildlife moving freely. There are already some areas destroyed by the poisonous Produced Water – these areas still have not recovered after 20 years (as witnessed by the writer of this letter).

In short, the CWA members of Tabulam stand with our sisters and their families in the Narrabri area, and call for the applications of Santos to open further gas wells in the Pilliga forest and farmlands to be cancelled. We must draw a line in the sand, and begin the reparation of our country, so Country and City Women alike can look forward without the fear of the pollution, lack of food, and the continued climate change threat pursuing Fossil Fuels will bring.

Felicity Cahill  
Member – CWA Tabulam Branch



Vicki Stebbins  
President – CWA Tabulam Branch

***"We acknowledge the Wahlubal people as the Traditional Custodians,  
of the land we stand on, and the Elders Past and Present"***