

I am writing this to object to the Narrabri Gas Project.

As a farmer in Central West NSW I have heard too many stories from my colleagues about the effect of coal seam gas projects on agricultural land. In this instance the problem is that the Narrabri gas fields are in a key recharge area for the Great Artesian Basin. It is estimated 37 billion litres of water will be removed from this system. This ground water is one of Australia's most precious resources and should not be jeopardised. In Southern Qld, nearly 600 bores on farms have lost their water supply due to CSG.

The CSG wells are going down over 1000 m to reach the seam, piercing a number of different rock layers. This industry has a history of leaks and "accidents". When this happens it is irreparable for the ground water. A parliamentary inquiry found that this industry was "uninsurable". In 2014 the Chief Scientist made recommendations about improvements that were necessary and these have been accepted by the government but not implemented. Why?

It is estimated that the saline water that is removed from the wells will contain at least 840,000 tonnes of salt that is laced with heavy metals. No disposal plan has been put forward for this toxic waste. This in itself is a threat to agricultural land. On a personal level -our ground water has doubled in salinity and the time frame coincides with the establishment of a nearby coal mine. This can never be fixed.

My second issue with this project is about the supposed economic and social benefits that will come to the community. I live in a coal mining district and I understand how important employment is in small rural communities. My sons' friends, and the sons of my friends work in the mines - often very reluctantly. As a teaching principal in our local one teacher school our small community was very hopeful that when a mine opened, in 1997, 30 km away there would be local work which would attract or keep the young families and children in our school. Do you know what? In all this time there has not one person in our school who worked in the mine? All the workers are from other communities where the mines have closed down. These projects are short term - this one is estimated to be no more than 25 years- and they cause disruption to small communities with often no real benefit.

How much better would it be for our communities, our environment and Australia's future if this submission was rejected and we were to focus instead on renewable energy projects for the Pilliga?