

I am making this submission in opposition to the Narrabri Gas Project. The plans for Santos to develop 850 new CSG wells across the Pillaga near Narrabri are unacceptable.

The Pillaga is the largest temperate woodland in eastern Australia and CSG would industrialise 95000 hectares of it, clearing nearly 1000 hectares for infrastructure, well-pads and gaslines.

Amongst other endangered flora and fauna, the Pillaga hosted one of the most important Koala populations in NSW. Now as a result of bushfires and habitat destruction koalas are seriously facing extinction. Especially now, after the bushfires, it is crucial to the survival of the koala that their habitat be preserved.

The Pillaga is also a hugely significant area for Gameroi people. Santos itself identified 90 known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites in the project area including rock shelters, burials sites and historic camps. Industrialisation of this area cannot be entrusted with protecting these irreplaceable sites.

Water will no doubt be adversely affected by Santos project. Over 20 years they will remove 37.5 billion litres of water from deep below the Pillaga 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.

Santos has used the most basic level of groundwater model because of how little is known about the deep aquifers that they plan to extract from.

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

Santos claims of job creation - anticipating 190 jobs created locally, cannot outweigh the potential loss of employment in agriculture and manufacturing that they admit in their own assessment. This along with their admitted "almost certain" impacts on housing affordability in the Narrabri area make the project unappealing to locals. It is no surprise then that the majority of local submissions to the Environmental Impact Statement opposed the project.

This added to the fact that of the total 22,721 submissions, 98% were objections, prove this project is not popular.

Santos also claims that this project is needed to "increase Supplies" of gas. This is untrue. There is an excess of gas exported from Queensland and ships of Australian gas are sitting idle, unused.

To allow this unnecessary, unpopular and destructive gas project to proceed would be wrong.

The total greenhouse gas emissions produced by the project could be 5 million tonnes a year. This at a time when Australia is challenged to meet its commitment under the Paris Climate Agreement makes no Environmental sense.

I am objecting to this project in the strongest degree on environmental and humanitarian grounds.

It is unacceptable to support this Narrabri Gas Project in the face of the damage it will cause, to our precious and unique environment, to the local communities and to Australia as a whole.