

Dear Independent Planning Commission,

My name is David E Kelly.

It's pretty simple, I'm writing this submission because I care about our planet.

I wish to formally object to the proposed Narrabri Gas Project due to its significant environmental, social, economic and heritage impacts.

The Pilliga Woodland is the largest and most intact temperate eucalypt woodland in eastern Australia. It constitutes over 500,000 hectares. The forest is located near the towns of Narrabri, Coonabarabran, Boggabri, Baradine, and the villages of Pilliga and Gwabegar. The majority of the project area is State forest. Whilst, private land supports agricultural activities such as dryland cropping and livestock. Nearly half of the Pilliga is allocated to conservation, managed under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. In 2005, the forest was gazetted as an environmental conservation area. The Pilliga is a unique ecological refuge. The forest has approximately, 900 plant species, 40 native animals and 15 frogs. It is home to many woodland species struggling to survive, including glossy-black cockatoos, barking owls, eastern pygmy possums, koalas, red-capped robins, regent honeyeaters, diamond firetails, swift parrots and bush stone-curlews and the unique Pilliga mouse.

The Pilliga is a vital recharge area for the Great Artesian Basin, the lifeblood of farmers and wildlife alike. The rivers and creeks of the Pilliga flow into the Murray Darling Basin. Already, the impacts of the first 92 exploration gas wells have directly destroyed over 200 hectares. It has put vital water resources at risk from the pollution of heavy metals, salts, and drilling fluids. This waste has leached from landfill and contaminated groundwater, farmlands and ecosystems. Up to 850 coal seam gas wells (425 new well pads) and ancillary infrastructure including: access tracks, gas and water gathering lines are planned. In addition, supporting infrastructure including water balance tanks and telecommunication towers. Also, gas processing and water treatment facilities are planned across the Pilliga.

Safety flares at Bibblewindi and one at Leewood are required for the safe management of gas and many others will operate. These flares will need to operate continuously. These flares will be visible at night, all the way to the Siding Spring Observatory. Due to the continual dry weather, the risk of fires will be very high.

The area is significant for its Indigenous heritage. The local Gomilaroi (Gomeri or Gamilaraay) have a strong connection to the Pilliga landscape and the thousands of cultural sites, native plants and animals within the forest. Unfortunately, it hasn't been adequately assessed and consent has not been obtained.

Also, there are many attractions in the forest. These include: Sculptures in the Scrub, Salt caves (There is a public fire tower located here), Sandstone Caves Walking Track, Dandry Creek Gorge, Pilliga Pottery and Bird watching areas.

Due to the above reasons I strongly object to the Narrabri Gas Project. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

For our and future generations. I look forward to hearing from you in regards to this submission.

To conclude: you and I have the opportunity to care for the Pilliga.  
'Water is Life'.

Yours sincerely,

David E Kelly

David E Kelly  
Mobile: 61 408 474 473  
Skype: David.Edmund.Kelly

Correspondence to:  
PO Box 87  
ISLINGTON NSW 2296