I wish to present an objection to the Narrabri Gas Project. My objection centres on the negative environmental impacts of the project. I am concerned about the extraction and treatment of enormous amounts of water, and the greenhouse gas (GHG) impact from both the project and the use of gas as a fuel, more generally.

In a country that endures extreme droughts – the consequences of which were tragically apparent in the ‘unprecedented’ 2019-2020 Summer bushfires – it is unreasonable and reckless to allow Santos (or anyone) to remove 37.5 billion litres of water from deep below the Pilliga. Moreover, the water needing treatment (at the Leewood water treatment facility) will produce up to 840,000 tonnes of solid salt, laced with heavy metals! There is no stated disposal plan by Santos for this toxic waste. With no ecologically sound disposal plan this waste has the potential to be a long-term environmental, health and social hazard over the 20 years that Santos will be extracting and treating the water and potentially long after.

Additional concerns are that removing this water will cause depressurisation and loss of water in the Pilliga Sandstone, the southern recharge of the Great Artesian Basin, which outcrops in the Pilliga. More research needs to be done to understand the deep aquifers that Santos will be tapping and the effects of gas extraction.

The environmental damage that will be caused is better understood and cannot be ignored. Even Santos anticipates leakage from the precious alluvium that lies above the coal seams although they claim there is no linkage between the water sources. Rightly so, local landholders who rely on the GAB, the Gunnedah Oxley Basin and other groundwater in the area are strongly opposed to the project and ought to be listened to.

The GHG impacts of the project are enormous and, as the whole globe is awakening to the need to reduce GHG emissions and halt global warming, this project is an aberration and, plainly, a joke. The total greenhouse gas emissions produced by the project are estimated to be as high as 127.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, or 5 million tonnes a year. This one gas field will *increase* Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 1% per year! Geopolitically it is an embarrassment, and, in climate terms, it is a tragedy.

Globally, the UN Environment Program’s *Production Gap Report* in 2019 found that, “With average lifetimes of 20 years or longer for pipelines, terminals, wells, and platforms, the time to begin planning for a wind-down of gas production is, as with other fossil fuels, already upon us.” Their report found that to achieve the Paris Climate Agreement goal of keeping average global warming well below 2 degrees, global gas production needs to peak by 2030 and decline after that. To meet the safer 1.5 degrees warming limit, gas production needs to peak this year.[[3]](https://www.csgfreenorthwest.org.au/narrabri_decision?utm_campaign=narrabri_sub_1672020&utm_medium=email&utm_source=lockthegate" \l "_ftn3)

The very small and unproven short-term gains from a project such as this are far, far outweighed by the long-term water impacts and the global warming effects.

I appeal to the Independent Planning Commission to reject Santos’ proposal and consider all of the powerful evidence and groundswell of public support for a halt to coal seam gas projects.

With kind regards.

Amalia Pearson   
17 July, 2020