I am writing to raise my objections to the Santos Narrabri Gas Project.

My first concern is the long term safety of the wells. I recall an interview I listened to on the ABC radio a couple of years back. They spoke to a retired gentleman who spent much of his working life in the drilling industry. He worked on projects such as this proposed for the Pilliga. His comments were of great concern to me. He said that when done correctly the gas wells will be safe for some time but after about 25 years they start to fail, resulting in contamination of the various layers of water that have been drilled through to reach the gas seam. He also said there could be some gas that finds its way to the surface as the well starts to fail.

What use would it be to go looking for someone to hold responsible when this happens, all the current crop of decision makers will have moved on and, besides, there is nothing that anyone could do any way to repair the damage. The next generation will be left with live with damage that was left to them. There is only one Great Artesian Basin it needs to be protected for the future of this Nation.

The next issue of great concern is the salt (bi-product) that will be brought to the surface over the life of the project; this has not been adequately addressed by Santos. It would be highly irresponsible to give Santos the go ahead and then wait to see what they actually do when the salt starts to pile up.

The hypocrisy of the State Government is very baffling. A few years ago they shut down a viable timber mill in the Pilliga forest, which employed about 60 staff from local the community. The timber mill was harvesting logs in a controlled sustainable manor for the building industry. Those trees were always going to grow back keeping the industry sustainable.

Now they want to allow Santos to completely clear 1000ha of the forest with a network of roads, pipelines and well sites, which will have to be maintained forever for fire protection. I can’t begin to imagine the danger of fighting fires in the Pilliga in years to come when all of gas infrastructure starts to age and the wells potentially start to leak.

I believe the risks involved with this project, far out ways the short term gain.

For this reason I believe this project should not be given the go ahead.