28th July 2020

Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to the IPC regarding my concerns and objection to the impending determination on the Santos’ Narrabri Gas Project.

I have been a resident of the Coonamble Shire for the past 30 years. I live in Coonamble with my husband and together we raised our 3 children here. We own and operate a rural based business (Stock and Station Agency and Real Estate and Property Sales servicing Coonamble, Gulargambone and Warren); We also own rural properties in the Coonamble Shire; Our primary producer business is cattle production with some farming. Our children are young adults who are keen to pursue their professional development, education and training in the agriculture industry and plan to return to Coonamble to be involved in our businesses. An exciting thought for any family and their successive planning for the future.

Water is an **essential** and enormous component of our ability to live in our chosen region and to operate successful agricultural businesses both professionally and privately. We rely heavily on the water from the Great Artesian Basin that provides quality bore water supplies to the Coonamble Shire townships of Coonamble, Gulargambone and Quambone and the entire rural surrounding districts. Plus, this district is an important food producing area for both the Australian population and the export industry.

My concern on the Santos’ Narrabri Gas project getting the green light is:

***Where is the guarantee there will be no contamination or loss of our districts clean water supply, and no contamination of land?***

**If there is no guarantee, why risk contaminating the Great Artesian Basin fragile environment.**

1. If Santos has been unable and unwilling to meet all the Governments own key requirements in the past, then why should they be given access to operate in the proximity of the Great Artesian Basin? Why is Santos being given the opportunity to operate on such a fragile environment?

The Australian agricultural industry is important and worth protecting.

For example, all the State and Territory Governments have strict border crossing regulations in place for all travellers, impacting all individuals and businesses. Specifically implemented and monitored to prevent and protect all Australian agricultural industries from the *threat of contamination* by diseases and pests.

Why then does this importance and common-sense approach to protect our agricultural industry from the threat of contamination disappear with the Narrabri Gas Project? This project provides no substantial and conclusive evidence that it won’t damage the Great Artesian Basin; that it won’t introduce ground contamination; it can’t guarantee the safe and successfully removal and storage of the high volumes of salt waste. Salt waste which is to go where? To be stored how? And by whom? And will it eventually contaminate the environment around it!

**Why then is a big company like Santos allowed to only meet 12.5% of the scientific vital requirements set by the Government? If Santos can get away with operating at 12.5% of their operational obligations what does that mean for the Great Artesian Basin? The water source is the lifeblood to so many – residents, towns, businesses, schools, hospitals, farmers & graziers, tourism, local governments, just to name a few!**

1. Contaminated water or loss of supply from the Great Artesian Basin means the end for not just our own agriculture-based business but a huge number of others both large and small in this fertile western NSW region. This area is an important supplier of both domestic and export meat being beef and lamb primarily. It is also a major grain producing district of grains eg wheat and chickpea. **What is the guarantee that these vital industries will not have to deal with contaminated water, or no water, and contaminated land? Where is the consideration of these industries? What makes Santos gas a priority over the Australian owned agriculture industries and the healthy and viable future of Coonamble and neighbouring districts?**
2. Why is this gas project being given such priority and access in an area that encompasses the Great Artesian Basin? Please look at a map at just how big the Great Artesian Basin is, this is a big deal. It potentially affects many towns, businesses and districts across a large area.
3. Why has gas been given the priority over renewable energy? Our area and in fact right across Australia, there is such potential, opportunity and enthusiasm for renewable energy projects which would last longer than the Santos Gas project (only looking at 25year max life in Narrabri)? *Renewable energy will only grow - it doesn’t use and run fossil fuels dry, it doesn’t destroy natural water supplies, it uses natural energy, it creates investment opportunities, it creates jobs along with clean water, air and food supplies for the people of Western NSW and Australia.*
4. What happens to Narrabri when this project is all over? When the Santos 25year tenor is up? What will Santos leave in its wake? When the gas project jobs have dried up and land is unfarmable and cannot sustain livestock?

I ask the good people of the Independent Planning Commission to consider all the elements that Coal Seam Gas brings with it. Not just the threat to the Great Artesian Basin but the potential harm to the affected districts. The township and district of Narrabri and our own Coonamble Shire?

I ask you

* Consider there are no guarantees the Great Artesian Basin will remain unaffected along with the towns and districts that rely on it to survive
* Consider the volume of salt waste this Gas project will create and require disposal and storage of
* Consider the volume of agricultural industries that stand to be affected and how this will impact the domestic and export industries
* Consider the bigger potential renewable energy brings not just for this area but all of Australia and its population
* Consider the human right to clean water, air and food.
* Consider what environment you would like your family, friends, and community to live in?

And finally, I would like you to not just consider the argument being put forward by a powerful mining company but the argument of the everyday rural Australian citizens who actually live and work in the affected area? So, who does live in the area to be affected -

Do the owners of the Santos – NO, does the Government Minister Rob Stokes – NO, do other Government Ministers and Officials – NO, do you yourselves as members of the IPC - NO?

Just think if you had your family, your family home, your livelihood, your community, your environment, your water supply, your clean air, your food all being threatened you would fight too, like we are? And what would you hope and expect of the IPC? ***Especially when Santos themselves, and the science, cannot guarantee no contamination will occur to the great artesian basin and the surrounding environment!***

If you cannot confidently and without any doubt guarantee that the Great Artesian Basin, a major water supply, and viable farming/grazing land will not be affected by this Santos Gas Project

and

if you cannot confidently and without any doubt guarantee that Santos will comply and follow 100% the NSW Chief Scientist recommendations and the NSW Government key requirements,

***then please do not approve of this project.***

Yours faithfully and respectfully

Angela Thompson

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