Good afternoon. My name is Angela Hanigan. I am a 32-year-old resident of the Coonamble Shire. I am a teacher at the local high school, on the board of the Coonamble Golf Club, a committee member on the Great Artesian Basin Protection Group.

Four years ago, I returned to the Coonamble community to be closer to my family. A community that was about to face a savage and debilitating drought and yet I found a community that was in many ways thriving.

For years, I had been mildly amused as my conservative parents began to object to a project in the Pilliga scrub not far from where I had grown up. However, as the phone calls became more frequent and frantic I made it my business to understand why.

It was not long before I had the same fears about increased bushfire hazard, damage to ground water environmental degradation, increased greenhouse gas emissions, threats to native flora and fauna, damage to cultural sites, and to The Great Artesian Basin.

Today I am voicing my objection to the Narrabri Gas Project.

My objection to a project that places The Great Artesian Basin, this region’s only secure water supply at risk.

The Narrabri Gas Project will produce toxic waste water and toxic salt. Treatment of water brought up from underground will produce up to 840,000 tonnes of solid salt waste, laced with heavy metals. Santos still have not said how they will dispose of this waste. Their estimated volumes of salt waste have roughly doubled since their first estimates. Where will they put the tonnes of salt waste?

The DPIE Final Assessment Report has concluded that the NGP:

*‘· has been designed to* ***minimise*** *any impacts on the region’s significant water resources, including the Great Artesian Basin,*

**Minimise** means reduce (something, especially something **undesirable**) to the smallest possible amount or degree. We would like to know what Santos’ measure of “**minimising”** the impacts are before the project goes ahead. What will it be minimised to? Minimise is not good enough.

However, **minimise** also means to represent or estimate at less than the true value or importance. Which is how the affected communities have been made to feel by Santos.

Santos have **minimised** and **devalued** our concerns about how the toxic salt will be disposed of.

Santos have **minimised** and **failed to address** our concerns about the threat this toxic salt could pose to our precious water.

And Santos have **minimised** their own history of fines and breaches at the exploration phase.

However, these concerns should not be **underestimated** or **minimised** by the IPC when making their decision.

Earlier this week, Santos chief executive Kevin Gallagher said “the time for political games is over”. This is **not a game**. When the Barwon electorate voted out the Nationals after 69 years in power it was not a game. This may stop on the 4th of September for some but we will live with this decision for the rest of our lives. If this project progresses it will be life changing. A **future** of uncertainty. A **future** that is uninsurable. We don’t deserve a **lifetime** of **uncertainty**.

**In its current condition,** this project is not approvable unless you think, **without a shadow of a doubt,** that it is safe for communities. In 2014 the NSW Chief Scientist, Mary O’Kane concluded that if 16 conditions were implemented the risks could be managed.  Earlier this year, a hearing by a NSW Upper House committee found that, of the 16 recommendations, many were not being implemented at all, and some only partially implemented.

How can risks be **minimised** to the smallest possible degree when less than 25% of recommendations are being followed.

 In the DPIE assessment report it says The Independent Water Expert Panel for the project identified some **uncertainties** that could be managed.

Well let me give you some **certainties;**

* **Certainty** that a chemical spill has already occurred in the exploratory stage and despite thousands of dollars being thrown at it, rehabilitation will not be possible.
* **Certainty** that an aquifer has been contaminated by uranium in the exploratory stage.
* **Certainty** that Tony Pickard’s Bore along with numerous QLD bores have already been compromised with many more predicted.
* and, **Certainty** there is no social license – the community does not want it.

Mr O’Connor, Mr Hann and Professor Barlow, I understand that **as educated and experienced professionals**, you have been given a job, but I’m speaking to you as people. When you make your decision, you are framing our future here in regional New South Wales.

We, as Australian citizens, deserve a guarantee that our water will be safe. We need to be certain when it comes to something as important as our only secure water supply. Please, be certain. I’m not. Are you?

Thank you for your time today.