My name is Amanda Jones, I grew up, live and work in Coonabarabran - I have 5 children and run a small local business. Our workshop maintains farming equipment. We have already been affected by bushfires and a severe drought that has brought a financial crisis to us and our farming community that; like the rest of Australia, is now being affected by a virus. It seems that if there is a crisis, we have not been immune from it.

My partner and I own “Gibbian Park”, 600 Indian Lane, Baradine.  We purchased this land in 2017 as 2000 acres of already established forest that sustains and protects our native wildlife. We intend to use our land for carbon credit farming because we see this as a long-term sustainable project that encourages and depends on a healthy forest ecosystem. We run alongside other neighbouring projects who rely on the ground water for tourism and commercial trade in livestock and crops. Groundwater is essential to keep our forest for the majority of the year as we are in a highly variable rainfall area with severe droughts spanning years.

My view is that carbon credit farming, tourism and commercial trade are not projects that can co-exist with the Coal Seam Gas Project. Coal Seam Gas brings risks to my land and to me as a community member.

The position of my land is between National Park forest and State forest. This puts us at risk. The contaminated water from the CSG project will affect our rivers and groundwater and cause all the surrounding forests to die. Our area is prone to bushfires due to the hot and dry weather conditions. The fire risk from the gas field combined with such a large area and quantity of dead forest, would make my land a dangerous place to live-on and visit.

The most recent drought we experienced, and are still experiencing, has caused the surrounding communities to rely solely on groundwater because there was no more above-ground stored water that was usable. It would be an absolutely dire situation for our town and farming community to have that underground water source contaminated.

These issues alone would see the end of my forest and would end my small business. So what can I do to protect my land from the likely water contamination and fire? Underground water is shared. There is no such thing as my water and your water.  Contamination is shared. You cannot tame the fire as we have seen and there is no such thing as a fire-proof fence.

Fly in fly out workers will also create a false local economy.

Why would a Coal Seam Gas project care about a false local economy? To them it wouldn’t even be a risk – but to me and as a small business owner; it is absolutely important to be an active and long-term community member.

Coal Seam Gas is a non-sustainable energy and selling it for a low price is designed so that international customers will not try to migrate to sustainable options. This is the same pattern we have seen from other powerful countries for more than 40 years and we know it devastates international economies and **our** own.

This CSG project destroys the forest that not only cleans the air locally but joins forests all over the world to collectively offset the issues of our world cities and industrial pollution.

To accept Coal Seam Gas mining would just leave me waiting to be a victim. I don’t agree with the Mining of Coal Seam Gas to go ahead.  I’m saying No.

But not only am I saying No, I’m asking that decision makers consider that the common person; that is the land owner, the community member, the family; remain the stable authority when making impacting decisions. Every day we make a present conscious decision to care, maintain and live alongside nature. I do not see that Coal Seam Gas mining project has any such values and fining Santos does not fix the issues caused by them.

The Coal Seam Gas Project simply cannot coincide with our future, our town, our way of life. We hand this land on to the next generation who believe that sustainable energy is our future.

Keep Australia Clean and Beautiful