

**From:** [Min Bonwick](#)  
**To:** [IPCN Enquiries Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** Submission of Objection: Santos Narrabri Gas Project  
**Date:** Saturday, 18 July 2020 6:06:45 PM

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My name is Mignon Bonwick. I am making this submission on the Narrabri Gas Project and I would like to register my objection and concerns for this project.

I am a passionate Australian, who has been travelling around Australia for many years. Over that time I have learnt a lot about our beautiful country.

I have been to Narrabri several times and love the area. I have been a tax payer all my adult life. I believe I have been a contributor to society by teaching young Australians. First I taught in the Primary area, then Special Education and finally I started a school for homeless youth back in 1996 at a Year 10 level.

In 1998 I brought my school group up through Narrabri and Moree to try to show young Australians, my students, what our vast country and state had to offer. It was certainly an experience those students still talk about to this day. The purpose of the trip was also to gain some understanding of The Great Artesian Basin, which we had been studying in science. However we visited other fabulous areas such as Yarrie Lakes, The Pilliga Forest, the Rocky Creek glacial area. Such a fascinating history and they were ALL overwhelmed with this extraordinary area. I act on their behalf today also. They want a future of clean energy, as do I.

One of my students was from the Gamilaraay people. She was able to connect with them and I remember her being so emotional as they spoke with her and waved the smoke from the smoking ceremony over her body. She felt connected and knew she had a "place". From what I understand the Aboriginal heritage of this proposed area for this project has not been adequately assessed as yet. I find this surprising in this day and age. It would seem Santos have little understanding of the connection to country. The Gamilaraay are the Caretakers of this area. Time and time again we see total abuse of Aboriginal land. As our First Nations people we should be offering them respect. Not having an assessment totally rude.

I believe Climate Change is well and truly upon us. The Science is there for us now...no fossil fuel projects can be opened. We are learning that solar and wind are developing at a fast rate (Pegasus Economics October 2019 report). Which now brings me to The Great Artesian Basin. We live in the driest continent on earth. Can we afford to gamble with our precious water? The Great Artesian Basin is an aquifer which supports life across inland Australia. The Pilliga Forest is a critical recharge area. Can we afford to risk this precious resource? CSG risk contaminating the soil, surface and ground water. This project will remove 1.5 gigalitres of water each year from the Great Artesian Basin, threatening the water supply of local farmers who rely on it for stock and crops.

Is there an adequate plan to dispose of salt waste from this project? This is a huge amount of waste to dispose of daily. While a local landfill plan to dispose of this "waste" has been offered it would seem totally inadequate. Salty water can leach and contaminate groundwater and in turn farmland will be damaged and livelihoods jeopardised. Where will this waste go???? Will local councils accept this waste in

their waste disposal facilities? I doubt it.

Already Santos have had over twenty “spills” and leaks of toxic CSG water. Their track record is appalling. Spills cause forest dieback which many years later have not been remediated. We cannot have accidents, spills, and chemical or salt leakage. It is too risky. Please listen to the Chief Scientists, who as far back as 2014 made recommendations to the Government. 16 recommendations were suggested and only 2 implemented by 2020. Why? Does the Government prefer to turn a blind eye?

The clearing of land, nearly 1000 ha of Pilliga temperate woodland, will see animals and plant species threatened. As we know our iconic koala is now becoming one of these threatened species after our bushfires. We cannot allow this to happen. So far the Assessment Report fails to assure there is adequate knowledge and understanding of these threatened species.

This project brings huge infrastructure to this area and the serious risk of fire is a concern. The RFS have also expressed their concerns with the gasfield and the burning flares. The landscape becomes highly flammable in Summer and bushfires cause problems in this area.

Economically, The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis have made it quite clear that the Narrabri Gas Project will not bring down the price of gas and that it will be at an uncompetitive price globally. So why is it going ahead? It will only slow down renewables.

It is claimed this project it will bring jobs to the area. I am sure this is true, but look a few years down the track when farmers walk off the contaminated land or the water supply is contaminated with heavy metals. What happens to the beautiful township of Narrabri? Does it become a ghost town? Will contamination cause a class action?

In other places CSG brings upheaval to rural communities. The CSIRO put out a survey in 2014 and found **only 6%** of local people living in gasfield areas thought the industry had improved their lives. That is minuscule and ridiculous! A climate wrecking project which will effect the lives of these people in many ways and in turn destroy farmland and produce. As a country we rely on the land and our forests to breathe life into our lives.

There have been well over 22,700 objections to this project, and I remind you again of our NSW Chief Scientist and Engineers who highlighted the huge risks for this project.

I know in the near future I will be using an induction stove. To warm my house I can see we will be looking for alternative heating sources which does not emit CO<sub>2</sub>. There is already a new Australian product looking promising and would be an alternative to solar panels.

**97% of landowners are saying “no” to CSG according to ongoing surveys. 0% of Indigenous Land Use Agreements have been signed.** Negotiations have been ongoing in this area for years.

Why won't insurers cover farmers and their produce in this area? Why do so many local people object to the Narrabri Gas Project? Why do our Chief Scientists have so many concerns about this project. There are far too many risk factors and unanswered questions and hence I am passionately asking the Independent Planning Commission to stop the Narrabri Gas project going ahead.

Thank you for reading my submission and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely

Mignon Bonwick O.A.M