

Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW  
2000 ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au Dear Independent Planning Commission,

This is a submission objecting to the Narrabri Gas Project. In September 2018 I visited the Pilliga forest and walked with Gamilaraay elders and locals through part of the lands that will be destroyed if the proposed coal seam gas development goes ahead. It is beautiful undisturbed wilderness as far as the eye can see. I was told it was the largest remaining remnant bushland in NSW. It is of vital importance to the original owners the Gamilaraay people, the local farmers and producers on the land and the people of the North West district which they use the forest for passive quiet communion with nature. This is vital landscape for all people who love nature and wilderness and appreciate the therapeutic qualities it brings to human beings. We stopped for a rest at a high point overlooking the proposed drilling area. For as far as I could see the only mark of development was the CSIRO observatory in the far distance. The elders spoke of the immense importance of the place to them. The Government is always wafting lyrical about closing the gap. Well it is all just lies and rhetoric if they wantingly and wilfully destroy an area of sacred land for a whole tribe of Aboriginal people. It is just wrong and no spin by Santos or lies can ever make it right and no money can ever make it up to them. This will be a open sore on our relations with our Aboriginal people that will never heal. A horror that will be recoiled from in the years to come.

The Pilliga forest must remain. I am deeply concerned by the rapidly growing impact of climate change and the loss of biodiversity. Unless we make difficult decisions as a community our future is bleak. The summer of 2019, 2020 was deeply troubling to me, my family and friends. The scientific consensus expressed through the IPCC is that to limit climate change we must leave fossil fuels in the ground. The Narrabri gas project will increase carbon emissions in Australia by almost 1%. You would know better than I the scale of fossil fuel projects being proposed for New South Wales. Supporters of fossil fuel developments claim that they are necessary for both energy production and employment. This is not correct, there are better choices available to us. A study by Ernst & Young, reported in the Guardian Australia on 7 June 2020, says a government focus on renewable energy and climate-friendly projects to drive the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic could create more than 100,000 direct jobs across the country while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. My key objection to the Narrabri gas project is the contribution it will make to the climate emergency. This objection is multiplied by the specific facts of this project: • The Pilliga forest is a recharge area for the Great Artesian Basin which supports life across eastern Australia. No level of risk to this water is acceptable. • There are forty-five threatened animal and plant species within the protected area which will be broken up by the pattern of CSG wells. Australia has lost too many species since colonisation. • The Rural Fire Service has stated serious concerns about fire danger with the operation of a gas field in a landscape like the Pilliga. Due to the above reasons I strongly object to the Narrabri Gas Project.

I am also exceedingly worried about the disposal of the salt the CSG generates something like 100 tonnes of briny water a day. Santos says they will not be responsible for this salt as they have a contractor to do this dirty work for them. They do not want to take responsibility for this salt or lay claim to it as they have NO solution to its disposal. Salt is known to be exceedingly destructive on soil and I have seen evidence of spill zones in the Pilliga where trees even ones brought in from Santos from coastal areas are struggling to survive. This is an environmental disaster waiting to happen.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I look forward to hearing from you about this submission.

Yours sincerely,

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