

24 July 2020

To: Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW
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Dear Independent Planning Commission,

This is a submission objecting to the Narrabri Gas Project.

I am a concerned citizen of NSW and I need to speak out about the proposed Narrabri Gas Project. I have qualifications in business (B. Commerce), horticulture (Associate Diploma in Horticulture) and education (Graduate Certificate in Adult Education). I have recently retired after working as a sales and systems trainer and as an I.T. business analyst in a large media company and then for a private tertiary education company. Earlier in my working life I was employed for over 8 years in greenhouses and in the cultivation of mushrooms. As a result I have directly experienced the powerful effect of elevated CO₂ levels, albeit in enclosed areas. I have experienced greenhouses and the way they intensify insolation, CO₂ and heat. In mushroom cultivation, in the dark without sunlight, the accumulation of carbon dioxide and its corollary the accumulation of heat, are two key variables generating large effects that must be controlled.

Simple mathematics (i.e. known tonnages for coal, oil and gas mined since the start of the industrial revolution multiplied by the CO₂ produced when burned, e.g. from 1.1 kg to 3.37 kg of CO₂ for every kg of fossil fuel - depending on type*) easily accounts for the growth of the proportion of CO₂ in our atmosphere.

(* https://www.engineeringtoolbox.com/co2-emission-fuels-d_1085.html)

Greenhouse gases arising from industrial scale human activities are accumulating in our atmosphere and oceans and the effects are exacerbated by deforestation. Together this is causing global warming.

The build-up of greenhouse gases and thus heat in our atmosphere and oceans is intensifying the frequency and strength of weather extremes. Heat accumulation is simply the absorption of more energy thus greatly raising the risk of more intense and more frequent droughts, fires, ocean heating, coral bleaching, storms, increased rain intensity, glacial melting and reduced ice pack cover most notably in the northern hemisphere.

Increased atmospheric CO₂ is being absorbed into the oceans by wave action around the world and is leading to the steady acidification of our seas. Marine and terrestrial wildlife habitats are changing faster than creatures can evolve thus the bio-diversity that underpins the biosphere is declining.

NSW and Australia has suffered mass flora and fauna loss after the recent deep drought and devastating bush fires, which arguably were made more intense by global warming.

In addition, thermal lag means the atmosphere and oceans will continue to heat even after greenhouse gas accumulations cease. Therefore it is imperative that greenhouse gas pollution is curbed and eliminated as soon as possible.

I object to the Narrabri Gas Project for the following multiple reasons;

1. We must greatly limit greenhouse gas pollution. Bringing another fossil fuel source on line cannot help us reduce anthropomorphic global warming. This project will generate CO₂ from the burning of the gas and will also leak methane into the atmosphere.
2. The prospects for renewable energy and energy efficiencies are improving rapidly. A large investment now in fossil fuel production runs the very real risk of becoming a 'stranded' asset. The investment in and improvement of energy efficient technologies as well as the development of reliable renewable energy sources have been and will continue to accelerate in the coming years.
3. We need to preserve the last remaining areas of forest in our state. Incremental clearings for well heads, roads and other infrastructure will fragment the forest canopy making land much more vulnerable to weed infestations, contributing to loss of soil moisture and stranding wildlife in 'islands'. It will make desertification a greater danger than it already is.
4. Loss of bio-diversity. Fragmented tree cover severely impacts the habitat of arboreal and forest dwelling fauna, especially small mammals, lizards, insects and birds. Wildlife must cross open ground to move from forest 'island' to 'island', making them more vulnerable to predation by both native and feral predators. It also changes the habitat for flora, including fungi. Mycorrhizal associations with trees are vital to forest health and when it is damaged, will contribute to tree decline and further ecological degradation.

5. Pollution from mining by-products. Saline and toxic ground water will be generated in very large quantities. The disposal of polluted and/or saline waste is an enormous problem. Storage indefinitely in surface dams is not a long term solution and is a poor short term option. Trucking it to remote locations only shifts the problem, increases the risk of spills and increases the carbon footprint of the project.

6. The potential damage to aquifers by drilling through them into saline coal seams below is a huge risk. Water suitable for human, stock and irrigation use is a most precious resource in this dry continent. It must not be endangered in this semi-arid region of the driest inhabited continent. Damage to aquifers can affect areas far larger than the surface footprint of the area of the wells.

7. Flares from multiple well-heads present a huge fire danger. The region is noted for prolonged hot, dry weather which is set to intensify over the coming decades. An uncontrolled bush fire in the area will be catastrophic for the flora, fauna, gas infrastructure and people of the region. It will have state-wide and nation-wide affects.

8. The size of the project, it's widely dispersed spread over a large area increases the potential for leakages and spillage that can go undetected for some time. The huge costs of rectification will render the project an economic failure and would be an ecological disaster taking hundreds if not thousands more years to recover from. The risks to farm land, ground water, habitats, wild life and eco-systems are too great.

Due to the above reasons I strongly object to the Narrabri Gas Project.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

I look forward to receiving feedback in regards to my submission.

Yours sincerely,

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