

We don't want our children and their children in fact anyone's children, living anywhere near gas exploration, extraction or transportation.

The fugitive emissions, venting, spills, wells leaking, and the expert opinion of well failures- including that all wells fail over time- gives us no joy for the health of our people, water, land and air.

These issues are well documented in other jurisdictions (e.g. including Queensland and in Wyoming – “horrifying,” was the assessment of farmer John Fenton- on his Warning from Wyoming Speaking tour in Narrabri.

<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2015/203/7/unconventional-natural-gas-development-and-human-health-thoughts-united-states>

In Maules Creek we have already had folk hospitalised from toxic coal mining blasts - targetting the coal seams, and we see the dirty smudge in the sky each morning full of chemicals.

In our Branch, we supported The Gunnedah Basin Health Impact assessment process - born by the hard work of good people across our region. It was put to government as a way to involve the community in the planning of fossil fuel projects. But in the government's wisdom we got the conflicted-gas funded GISERA instead. This situation has increased the lack certainty around this project , making the NGP not in the public interest.

In our Branch we have listened to women who have come from gasfields, we have sought expert information, run forums, we have tried to understand what it might be like to live in a gasfield. And there is nothing like listening to the heartbreak and passion of a woman whose children have suffered health effects from this industry. We thank and support the efforts of women who have shared their stories, the researchers and specialist advocating for safe health environments for families and children.

In fact, looking forward the government is aware of the need to do something with coal seam methane emissions In the atmosphere- the Net Zero NSW govt Plan 2020-30, says “Methane released during coal mining is a potential energy source equal to the entire residential gas use in New South Wales each year.” This is staggering amount of methane already- in our atmosphere already. <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Climate-change/net-zero-plan-2020-2030-200057.pdf?la=en&hash=D65AA226F83B8113382956470EF649A31C74AAA7>

It is not in the interest of this Plan to proceed with the Narrabri gas project.

We and our children have witnessed the implementation of a controversial project in our region. Community need more certainty than the planning system can offer and this is an important reason why the Chief Scientists recommendations must be implemented to the fullest.

300 police in black riot gear- in the summer of 2013 occupied our local roads and surround the Leard forest to ensure it was destroyed and a mine established.

If you approve this project, will the force be in black riot gear and masks? Will the farmers and advocates for a safe climate face long jail terms?

We are at the pointy end- a tipping point- no matter the issue- health, insurance, culture, heritage, environment, economics, water, we ask you as the independent decision maker to carefully consider that this project on balance is not in the public interest.

Our Branch is concerned about the health of the Gunnedah Oxley basin aquifer from the expected "significant impact to the groundwater resources".

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<https://narrabrigasproject.com.au/uploads/2014/11/Narrabri-Gas-Project-EPBC-Referral-FINAL.pdf>

During our Water consultations last year, according to DOI water the Gunnedah Oxley Basin is quite close to the surface at Maules Creek. Water issues, in our region, already suggest that connectivity may exist within and between the adjacent and overlying aquifers.

This uncertainty is compounded for us by the NSW government's Baseline Project assessment of information research that uncovered a low level of available knowledge in government, industry and academic institutions of water quantity in the porous Gunnedah Basin water source.

And of the available metered use, regional models and regional level modelling data it was either of "of marginal value, not available or of poor quality". Further, the Baseline Project described known data to be "moderate or in-progress" for both government and company nested monitoring. (The slide taken from the link to the video presentation link- you will need to request it from DOI as it has been removed from the website.)<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/science/groundwater/baselineproject/gunnedah-basin>

In fact, there is uncertainty everywhere. The state of government bore monitoring generally is in crisis according the National Water Commission 2012 Report."

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-02/spike-in-groundwater-use-in-drought-sparks-warning/10850944>

This is the context within which the information for this major CSG project sits. We believe that scientific uncertainty around water- especially water that take 1,500 years to recharge, should not be a reason to approve this development. It is not a precautionary approach to simply say "with monitoring". Monitoring is about understanding the impacts after it occurs- not preventing water loss to a slow recharge aquifer. In drought and climate-stricken times the precautionary approach must apply.

When the Chief Scientist delivered her Coal Seam Gas Review report in 2014 she said "... it is inevitable that the CSG industry will have some unintended consequences, including as

the result of accidents, human error, and natural disasters. Industry, Government and the community need to work together to plan adequately to mitigate such risks and be prepared to respond to problems if they occur.”

<https://www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/reports/coal-seam-gas-review>

With 850 opportunities- what are the chances of unintended consequence, including as the result of accidents, human error, and natural disasters?

It is our view, that when the Department of Planning moved away from ensuring the full implementation of the 16 Chief Scientist’s CSG Review recommendations, opting to integrate the recommendation into a “yardstick,” for the Water Expert Panel, this project lost an important support pillar.

Our Branch members need to have confidence in the risk management of developments our government is asking us to consider hosting. The project needs to demonstrate that it will be safe for families and the environment to live with. Our patience and our confidence in the ability for this project to be safe are at an end.

Libby Laird President. Wednesday 22 July 2020. Narrabri studio