

Steve O'Connor
Panel Chair
Narrabri Gas Project
Independent Planning Commission

Subject: My Objection to the Narrabri Gas project
Proponent: Santos

Several years ago, I travelled to Narrabri and spent some days in the region, visiting the Pilliga forest, meeting the local First Nation Gamilaroy people of the area and visiting one of the demonstration wells which was open to the public for inspection (plus a generous morning tea with the Santos presentation).

My impression at that time and which still holds, was that the Pilliga forest , being a unique and precious part of that landscape, would be extremely vulnerable and at great risk if tampered with. It is an important refuge for wildlife and is part of a recognised National Biodiversity Hotspot. The proposed Narrabri Gas Project will increase the fragmentation of that landscape and create major disturbance through vehicle movement, produce noise, dust and light which is associated with gas mining. I do not believe that Santos, in its environmental assessment of projected effects of the project, has recognised the likely environmental consequences of the project. The Pilliga scrub is a most sensitive environment and will suffer greatly.

My main concern is the following:

CSG is a natural gas found deep under the surface of the ground and is located there by water pressure. Mining CSG needs drilling a well into the coal seam, which then releases this water. The well is drilled through various geological layers including where this groundwater is formed. This ground water is vital for our agriculture sector, namely

irrigators growing crops and for the cattle industry located there, as well being important for domestic use.

I understand that the targeted coal seams are underneath aquifers which supply this water and are important recharge zones for the Great Artesian Basin. I have read that the DPIE's assessment states that "the project would not result in any significant impacts on people or the environment"; I think that this is highly questionable because there are far too many unknowns in relation to groundwater risks, the contamination of ground and surface water because of spillage, leakage and well integrity failure which could allow gas/fluids to escape.

I understand that the Narrabri Gas Project is most at risk of creating 'produced' water which is pumped out of the coal seams, allowing gas to flow to the surface. This 'produced' water is high in contaminants, high level of sodium=saline, and heavy metals which prove to be extremely toxic to the environment.

This action would also facilitate the escape of methane gas which is deemed to be even more problematic than CO2 vis a vis the increase of global temperature (Climate Change) . I have seen video clips from around the world where methane gas bubbles up to the surface with dire consequences to the quality of ground water which is pumped up by bores for irrigation.

Santos plans to sink 850 wells over the life of the project, extracting, I understand approx. 37.5 billion litres of water . Surely, in this most dry of continents of all places, where water is so scarce and we suffer greatly from intermittent and growing periods of drought and where our farmers in particular, have great difficulty keeping both crop and stock alive because of paucity of water, we **MUST NOT** allow water to used for a mining project such as this.

We are facing uncertain times. The gas industry is facing uncertain times. We need to transition to a renewable energy economy and gas, although mooted by our Federal Government as the solution away from fossil fuels, cannot be part of that solution , as it is also a fossil fuel..

We cannot afford to go down this road at the expense of our precious water, our wonderful environment, the future of our farming community, and the loss of Country held so precious by the First Nation Gamilaroy people. All this must be considered before final approval is given .

I plead for the cancellation of the Narrabri Gas Project.

From a most concerned citizen and voter of NSW.Narrabri