

To: Independent Planning Commission, NSW

Re: Objection to the Narrabri Gas Project

From: Pip Hinman, Stop Coal Seam Gas Sydney

Dear commissioners,

You may wonder why so many are urging you not to approve Santos' application to drill for coal seam gas in the north west of New South Wales from all over the state.

It's because **so many of us have faced the threat from the industry** setting up near our homes, our workplaces, our schools and our parks.

I first learned about the dangers associated with coal seam gas when Dart Energy (which merged with iGas Energy in 2014) attempted to undertake a test drill site in St Peters — about 6 kilometres from Sydney's CBD — in 2011.

The local community found out, and quickly educated itself about the risks that the industry posed — both to those living nearby and to the broader environment.

Stop Coal Seam Gas Sydney helped organise information sessions, film showings, rallies, human signs and more.

We heard from former industry people (who had warned us about it).

We learned about the damage caused in Queensland and we decided the risks were too great.

We did all we could, along with other community groups (including farmers from the Liverpool Plains) to stop the test drill.

After several years of community work, in March 2015, the NSW Coalition government decided to **cancel Dart Energy's petroleum exploration licence**

463 — a vast licence which covered the whole of metro Sydney and extended from Sutherland to Gosford.

It also **cancelled 16 other licences** admitting it urgently needed an audit because licences had been issued under the Labor government “like confetti”.

NSW Gas Plan

Later in 2015, the Coalition government introduced its “NSW Gas Plan”, which allowed it to buy back coal seam gas titles and applications, which had covered **more than 60% of NSW**.

It claimed the gas plan was a response to the **NSW Chief Scientist’s 16 recommendations** on managing the inevitable risks of CSG.

But an Upper House inquiry in 2019 found that **only 2 of those recommendations had been fully implemented by Santos**. Others were only partially implemented and some not at all.

It appeared **back in 2015** that the NSW government had decided the risks from the industry were too high for those living in the city.

So why has it decided that the risks are lower for those living in regional or rural areas?

No to Santos

Why, after knowing the risks, has it decided to recommend that Santos be given the go-ahead – even while the company publicly states the risks of CSG mining to the Pilliga, the Great Artesian Basin and other aquifers are “**negligible**”?

Any risk to the GAB and other aquifers is **not acceptable**, apart from the many significant risks of this project outlined in these hearing by the Gomeroi people, farmers and townsfolk.

As overwhelming numbers of people have addressed the project's specific inadequacies, I want to spend the rest of my time on the **existential threat** we collectively face if fossil fuel extraction companies, like Santos, are allowed to proceed.

Existential threat

I'd expect that commissioners have children, perhaps grandchildren.

But even if you do not, you would know that young people are understandably worried about the climate-challenged world they are inheriting.

Last December, as the **Black Summer fires** were taking hold of the NSW south coast, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres told world leaders that global average levels of carbon dioxide had already exceeded what had previously been considered an "unthinkable global tipping point".

Globally, there are already *too many* approved and contracted fossil fuel extraction projects: the **world is on track to warm up** a lot more than 1.5° Celcius – the globally agreed target.

Just three years ago, Santos told shareholders that its **business plans** were based on an increase of 4 degrees Celcius in the global climate.

Further, climate scientists say **Australia is not on track** to meet its agreed targets under the Paris Agreement.

On a per capita basis, Australia's carbon footprint — including exports — is nine times higher than China's, four times that of the United States and 37 times that of India.

This is relevant to any consideration about whether or not to give Santos the first approval to extract gas in NSW since 2001 (when AGL received its licence to frack in in Camden area).

The **Paris greenhouse gas emission targets** agreed to by others — European countries, in particular — means that they will not be wanting Australia's fossil fuel exports for much longer.

They will be looking to import clean energy.

Australia has **abundant benign sources**.

All jurisdictions have to make a conscious decision to make the switch away from fossil fuels. We know it would create a green jobs bonanza.

Even Santos is starting to develop clean energy!

I urge the commissioners to think about the future, and **not allow Santos approval for dirty fossil gas** in what it hopes will be the first of many unsafe CSG projects in North West of NSW.

Thank-you.