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**To:** [IPCN Enquiries Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** Submission re proposed Narrabri Gas Project - Objection  
**Date:** Sunday, 9 August 2020 6:17:50 PM

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I OBJECT to the proposed Narrabri Gas Project

You may publish my submission and name on your website

I live in the Illawarra and have been concerned about coal seam gas mining since 3 CSG licences were granted in 2011, (later cancelled in 2015) within our local water catchments, part of the drinking water catchments of Greater Sydney. Along with 1000's in our community, my concern grew as I listened to scientists and other qualified bodies who looked into the wider risks involved and as we saw consequences in other areas. I have continued to maintain an interest in this industry and my concerns remain.

The Narrabri Gas Project has much opposition across NSW and, as the risks could be far reaching, I feel it is appropriate that we all have an equal say, wherever we may live. Opposition is not limited to members of the public and environmental organisations. Indeed, Justin Field's recent Gas Moratorium Bill passed in the Legislative Council and only failed in the legislative Assembly by 2 votes, after a rushed debate on the following day, which surely shows that around half of our NSW Government agrees with a moratorium. Also, with only 2 of the 16 recommendations in the 2014 the Chief Scientist's Report having been fully implemented and 8 not implemented at all, how can it possibly be acceptable to approve the Narrabri Project?

Water security concerns me enormously with this project, with 850 wells crossing freshwater aquifers, including a sandstone recharge zone for the Great Artesian Basin. Dewatering of the coal seam will eventually cause aquifer draw down, risking groundwater supply upon which farmers and communities rely. Furthermore, there appears to be no satisfactory way to treat and dispose of the produced contaminated water and the huge quantities of salt. It is not acceptable to put such quantities of salt into landfill, where it is likely to leach into surrounding areas. There have been spills and leaks of toxic water in the area in recent years. Predictions that more spills are likely are very worrying. The precautionary approach should always be applied and risks are not acceptable.

Regarding methane, it is alarming that over 20 years it warms the atmosphere 86 times the rate of CO<sub>2</sub>. Recent research shows there is

evidence that methane emissions are greater than previously estimated. Fugitive emissions can occur throughout the whole extraction and processing system in coal seam gas mining. How can it be justified then that gas is a transitional fuel? It doesn't make sense. Greg Mullins, our respected former Fire Chief and a councillor on the Climate Council is concerned about the risk of fires starting, due to gas igniting in the Pilliga, along with risks to firefighters, should bush fires occur. Flaring of gas also brings risks of causing or escalating fires.

Concern re flaring has also been raised regarding potential effects from light pollution on the Siding Spring Observatory. The Dark Sky Park has international recognition and must be protected. It provides important opportunities for astronomers to explore the skies in conditions that are hard to find in our otherwise polluted world. I believe surrounding towns put hoods on street lighting to help maintain some protection. I would think that gas flaring in the region could become an issue.

We are already seeing warning signs of climate change, including horrific bush fires, droughts and floods just this year, predicted to be more frequent in the future. Surely, we must mitigate our risks to our fragile environment with much vigour, limiting our emissions and protecting our water and our land?

We need to safeguard our agriculture in the area and the jobs that go with that industry. Areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage also must be protected and I noted that the recent Closing the Gap Report includes improving land rights for Indigenous people in its targets. Furthermore, protection of flora and fauna in the Pilliga must not be compromised, with 35 animals and 10 threatened plants within the project area relying on the Pilliga for survival. Proposed clearing of almost 1,000 ha of this largest temperate woodland in the state would cause serious fragmentation, disturbing the habitat of koalas, already seriously compromised in the state by the fires earlier this year. With our rapidly changing climate, never has it been more urgent for us to prioritise caring for our environment.

Our economy is now suffering with the COVID-19 epidemic, yet I feel our Governments, State and Federal, seem bent on getting back to 'business as usual', especially when it comes to fossil fuels. Confidence in Government was especially knocked by many when it was learnt that the NCCC has executives on its panel who have backgrounds in fossil fuels. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, an unpublished report by the panel

recommended ‘cutting red and green tape’ to rapidly increase gas extraction! I find that grossly inappropriate. Some Federal Government cross-benchers recently criticised the Australian Government’s plan for a gas-led economic recovery, as recommended by the NCCC, saying that Australia must reduce, not increase, gas use to help meet Paris targets. The number of jobs bandied around is contested and no consideration is made regarding the jobs lost, should this project go ahead.

With prices of renewables now being cheaper and storage methods improving, demand for clean energy is growing. Many investors are getting out of fossil fuels and the growing jobs potential in renewables is enormous. We urgently need leaders who will take up the baton, acknowledge that fossil fuels belong in the last century and support clean energy jobs and science that will help us develop new technologies, that will lead us into a more sustainable way of living that will be good for long-term jobs and good for the environment. We owe this commitment to our children and their children, otherwise their future looks very bleak.

We live on the driest inhabited continent on earth, we are likely to be particularly affected by the consequences of climate change and we need to do all we can to urgently limit emissions. And with more frequent droughts forecasted, we need to acknowledge that water is our most precious resource and must be protected at all costs.

The proposed Narrabri Gas Project should not go ahead.

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