

To the members of the IPC Panel, determining the development consent status of Narrabri Gas Project SSD 6456 – Chairman Stephen O’Connor, Professor Snow Barlow, John Hann.

The simplest way to describe the Santos Narrabri Coal Seam Gas Project, that is currently being assessed and reviewed under Division 4.7 of Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979), by your consent authority, is that it fails to enjoy broad community support. Perhaps Narrabri Shire Council and Mayor Cathy Redding have been swayed somewhat by the possibilities that may come from the Community Benefits Fund which Santos have claimed would earn the community \$120 million over the life of the project, and the Voluntary Planning Agreement- which Narrabri Shire Council have agreed in principle to, potentially earning Council a \$14 million windfall. However, as Councillor Ron Campey questioned recently, is \$60 K as part of the Voluntary Planning Agreement, really enough of an incentive for Council to continue its public support of the project? The maintenance budget is to look after all the roads running in and out of the project area – and the upkeep of other local roads – since \$60K wouldn’t be enough to look after local roads let alone, the roads affected by the project.

Similarly, the state government will look at the total royalties of the project - \$1.2 billion generated in total, over the life of the project, and the jobs created during the construction phase, and after initial construction, the ongoing jobs – and they will think this is a nice easy fix for a budget that could do with a boost, however there is a fundamental shift occurring in the supply of electricity and now with battery storage, the cost of supplying electricity into the grid is falling and total demand on the grid is lowering – yes some manufacturers still rely on large amounts of electricity – but this can be supplied by strategic investment in new lower emissions technologies and demand-management systems in electricity, micro-grid systems, integrated systems. Narrabri Gas Project is not strategic and it is not low emissions technology. There is currently an international glut of gas – supply exceeding demand – and because there has been a decline in the oil price – the oil-linked LNG cargoes have dropped by 25-30 percent. Spot LNG prices have been as low as \$3 / MMBtu.

\$40 - \$50/b is a more realistic level for Oil than \$30/barrel, long term however the pandemic has seriously dented demand for LNG, in China and in other countries like India, the gas purchase contracts are based on price sensitivities.

This project will always fail to gain community support from a wide cross-section of our community, because people in Australia value their natural environment, they value the Great Artesian Basin and all of the existing groundwater resources. It would appear that Australians know intuitively, and from researching this project extensively, that the resultant web of wells and pipelines as well as a large transmission pipeline required to transport the gas to customers on the East Coast is not a small footprint as the company likes to claim, and that the fugitive emissions produced just takes us further away as a participating nation-state from our target to reduce emissions by 26-28 percent on our 2005 levels, by 2030. We also have a highly aspirational target of net zero emissions by 2050, that is why we are seeing the level of disruption occurring in other industries, traditional industries like transport, with companies like Uber AIR. Large evaporation ponds, large quantities of salt to deal with, as a by-product of this mining process, sizeable fugitive emissions – keeping in mind that methane is 36 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than CO2 is. Even with all the conflicting accounts of whether the aquifers are actually ‘intercepted’ during the drilling of the wells, which they clearly are, and there are surface water impacts and there are possible seismic events. Even after considering that there are considerable impacts on flora and fauna and on light pollution to the Siding Springs Observatory, and not to mention a bushfire Hazard – with no clearly articulated position coming from Santos as to how it would even deal with extreme bushfires in the vicinity of the project. The coal seam gas companies and other companies who have approached landholders

to host transmission pipelines on their properties have fragmented and divided many communities already and Queensland has not been a good test-case for how coal seam gas positively affects the human population/human health.

Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions which are still quite low by world standards – just 1.2 percent of that total global budget currently, even though we desperately need an economic revival, a manufacturing revival - after the Covid 19 Pandemic and governments get very lazy at trying to derive some sustainable sources of revenue from sustainable firms and sustainable companies who are vested into Australia for the longer term, and at the same time making sensible cut backs in their own expenditure if they are not managing sustainable budgets. Even when considering the economic head-winds we are facing, the Narrabri Gas Project is still inconsistent with a sustainable or sensible long-term energy strategy and it does not enjoy community acceptance nor a social licence to operate. The resultant infrastructure is clearly not a small footprint as other companies have claimed including AGL at Broke, NSW. Our summer of extreme bushfires as well as this pandemic have shown us how important food security is going forward, and farmers are getting a little tired of being so marginalised as they have been in recent years. The recent years of drought, for the year 2019 – we recorded 190mm of rain. These extended rainfall deficiencies – over the cropping zone have shown us clearly what a changing climate can do, to town water supplies, to fodder supplies and what havoc it can wreak upon civilizations and farmers, food supplies and people's mental health. By supporting the Narrabri Gas Project - you are supporting more ongoing climate chaos.

I am aware that the federal government recently signed an agreement with the NSW government to supply more energy into the grid and that the PM Scott Morrison has claimed that we need to clearly get more gas out of the ground to stabilise the grid and sure up supply of electricity and he recently stated “there is no credible plan to lower emissions and keep electricity prices down that does not involve the greater use of gas as an important transition fuel”. The agreement involves NSW-based emission reduction initiatives and \$960 million in federal funding to achieve this, as it was to the tune of \$ 2 billion – delivering another 70 petajoules of gas– into the states supply, NSW demands 120 petajoules per year - that some people have surmised that this is just the quantum likely produced from the Narrabri Gas Project, within the first few years of its construction. At the same time, we have new evidence emerging of the importance of biogas, biomass and biodigesters with Bioenergy Australia CEO Shahana McKenzie and Chair John Hewson, speaking on the technology on a recent Landline Program, ABC. Bioenergy Australia are a leading authority on the transition required to augment our existing electricity and transport fuel supply.

I appreciated David Kitto's, presentation to the IPC clearly showing that 1500 petajoules over the life of the project – 200 terajoules per day is not sufficient quantities of gas to make any sizeable dent in the domestic price – and keeping in mind Santos first priority is returns on its investment – and \$3.6 billion is a sizeable capital outlay – they will not supply cheap electricity – cheap gas into the NSW market – using open cycle gas turbines or any other technology the resultant electricity prices are unlikely to reduce much compared to the cost it would involve to import the gas into an import terminal built in NSW.

Ross Garnaut predicted that by 2020 there would be a sizeable shift away from traditional electricity supply to alternative electricity supply and that day has certainly dawned. Snowy Hydro 2.0, Sapphire Wind Farm, White Rock Windfarm, Tilt Renewables, Crookwell Wind Farm, Hills of Gold Wind Farm proposal at Nundle, Wandoan South Project, with Vena Energy as well as all the other projects awaiting Major Project Status. How absurd to give Sun Cable – AA Power Link Project, Major Project Status, to export renewable energy using an underwater cable and then be seriously

reviewing this project of unconventional gas extraction onshore? Its completely inconsistent with our goal of a sensible economic transition and necessary environmental transition.

I have read Professor Snow Barlow's Biography and the extensive research programs into Climate Change and plant systems and food systems so that gives me hope, you will reject this proposal outright.

Capturing methane from landfill waste will only grow in stature and if more local councils invested into this form of electricity generation, we would potentially grow some regional value-adding businesses, other uses of electricity – like new materials sciences projects.