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To: IPCN Enquiries Mailbox
Subject: Make a submission - Narrabri gas project

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I wish to confirm that I absolutely object to the Narrabri gas project. Here is my submission:

Narrabri gas project submission

I am an 80 year old woman from North Eastern NSW. I was actively involved in resisting the unconventional gas devastation of my region, (see Bentley Blockade). So, I am keenly aware of the massive negative effects of the Narabri gas project, and could write a whole thesis on the topic.

However, I will address just a few of the issues, as I'm confident my fellow protectors will eloquently cover the whole scenario, citing the huge body of evidence against unconventional gas, and the Narabri project specifically.

Whereas, in the Northern Rivers' struggle against unconventional gas, I was fit enough to put my body on the line at blockades, with my increasing age and the event of Covid-19, I now voice my concerns in another form of 'on(the)line'.

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF UNCONVENTIONAL GAS

As a retired sociologist and mental health professional, I am all too aware of the social impact of unconventional gas. This awareness stems from a theoretical and academic interest, but also from personal experience.

The threat of unconventional gas development stresses, and can divide communities, as I have personally witnessed. The mental wellbeing of individuals can be impacted, which flows on to discomfort in the community. The ultimate disaster for individuals and the whole community is when a totally frustrated and disempowered citizen suicides, after years of battling the gas industry. A tragic example of the latter comes from Chinchilla in Queensland, where respected local, George Bender, took his own life in 2015.

Other common effects are strains on social resources, such as health care facilities, and raised rental costs, impacting on the poorest citizens, some of whom will be First Nation people. Even Santos itself admits this will happen.

Whereas unconventional gas projects are marketed as providing jobs in regional areas, the eventual workforce is largely fly-in fly-out, and overwhelmingly male. These workers have no loyalty to the area they work in, and, theoretically at least, lack the behavioural constraints of being embedded in the local community.

Added to the above, jobs will be lost in other industries, such as agriculture, manufacturing and mining.

I know of no location in Australia where the unconventional gas industry has a social licence to operate. This is certainly lacking in Narrabri, where 52% of locals surveyed were opposed to CSG and 28% supported it. (Lock The Gate, 2018).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The environmental impact of the Narrabri gas project is not just local or statewide, but international. Global heating is a looming catastrophe, maybe even an existential threat, and accepted to be an existential threat to a huge

proportion of the human population, as well as a substantial factor in the extinction of species in general. (Osaka and Yoder, 2020).

Globally, and certainly in Australia, we are living climate change. In 2019 the unprecedented drought conditions were a prime factor leading to the unprecedented bushfires, followed by severe flooding, which are all evidence of this. With regard to fires, the RFS consider the Narrabri, and all gas projects, to constitute a considerable fire risk.

Local, internationally acclaimed expert, Dr Mariann Lloyd Smith (2013) of The National Toxic Network and IPEN, claims that: “you cannot regulate this [unconventional gas] industry into safety - whatever you do, you are going to have serious risks.” There are many reasons for this, such as the copious amounts of toxic chemicals routinely introduced in the fracking process, of which 40 - 50% remain in the ground, and the serious threat to the Great Artesian Basin, (we’re talking about water here, on the driest populated continent on earth), but I will address just one. It can be suggested that all unconventional gas wells will eventually leak methane.

At what point, and to what degree, leakage will occur will differ from location to location. Leakages occur through casing failure and the ageing of wells themselves, as well as migration of methane through surrounding geological faults, some caused by the fracking process. Leaking wells contaminate aquifers and surface water sources, contribute to global heating and can cause explosions (The Conversation, 2020).

NASA (2020) claims that methane emissions are continuing to rise, and 20% of this rise can be attributed to fossil fuel use. Methane is a potent Greenhouse gas implicated in climate heating. It is 84 times more damaging than CO₂, though it doesn’t last as long in the atmosphere.

A BARE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT

At the very least the unconventional gas industry in NSW, including the Narrabri project, should not proceed until the recommendations of the Chief Scientist to ameliorate the risks of the coal seam gas industry, have been instituted. At the moment, only 2 of the 16 have been fully implemented and many have not been addressed at all (The Portfolio Committee, 2020). This constitutes gross negligence of both the State Government and the industry itself.

The writing is on the wall, and has been for decades, ask the insurance industry. The future, if there is to be one, is green. I have been teaching about climate change for thirty plus years. Two early writers warning about this issue, that I am aware of, are the Swedish researcher Arrhenius, in his work on ice ages in 1896, and British researcher Callendar in 1938, when he linked rising temperatures to increasing carbon dioxide, since 1850 (in Anderson, Hawkins and Jones, 2016). Gas is not our passport out of the present depression, sustainable, renewable sources of energy are essential.

We need to learn from the American experience. Milulka, (2020) claims that “The fracking experiment has been [a financial disaster](#). It has been a climate disaster. And it has contaminated [large swaths of water and soil](#) in places like North Dakota and is draining (and contaminating) [much-needed freshwater supplies](#) in arid regions. It has been potentially linked to [rare cancers in youth in Pennsylvania](#). Additionally, the industry is trucking [radioactive wastewater across the country](#) with little in the way of protections. All of these problems, and more, apply to the Narrabri gas project, to which I totally object.

Anderson, T. R., Hawkins, E, Jones, P. D., “CO₂, the greenhouse effect and global warming: from the pioneering work of Arrhenius and Callendar to today's Earth System Models”, Endeavour, vol. 30, issue, 3, September, 2016.

Hargraves, M, “**Enough to make you sick**”, Echonetdaily, November, 13, 2013.

Lock The Gate, “ The results are in: Narrabri wants renewable energy.” October, 11, 2018.

Mikulka, J, 2020, “This Problem With Fracked Oil and Gas Wells Is Occurring 'at an Alarming Rate'.” Website DESMOG, January, 23, 2020.

NASA, 2020, Methane Emissions Continue to Rise. Website Earth Observatory.

Osaka, S, Yoder, K, "Climate change is a catastrophe. But is it an 'existential threat'?", Website Grist, March, 3, 2020.

The Conversation, "A tenth of active and abandoned oil and gas wells in northeastern B.C. are leaking." March, 3, 2020.

The Portfolio Committee 4. Report 42. February 2020 "The implementation of the recommendations contained in the NSW Chief Scientist's Independent Review of Coal Seam Gas Activities in New South