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To: ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au; 'Casey Joshua' <Casey.Joshua@planning.nsw.gov.au>; 'Troy Deighton' <Troy.Deighton@ipcn.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: Submission to IPC

To the Commissioners,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to present on behalf of the Coonamble branch of NSW Farmers Association.

My husband is a fifth-generation farmer in the Coonamble region, and we are totally, 100% reliant on our artesian water. We have 30,000 acres of rich productive land, but our rich black cracking vertosol soils cannot run water for dams, when it rains - so we are totally dependant on our artesian water. Our entire enterprise, and every facet of our lives and our business is reliant on our groundwater - and although our property produces thousands of tonnes of wheat, lupins, barley etc, and many hundreds of tonnes of beef in a year, we would literally have to walk off our property, if we lost the artesian water. Our property would be worthless. For all this to be put in jeopardy, for future generations, forever – just for a short-term destructive industry (the Narrabri Gas Project), that is economically and environmentally flawed, is beyond belief. Our son has been working on our property for thirty years, and we are hoping our grandsons will also take over the farm. We are worried about THEIR future - and the future of Australia, if we allow this industry to destroy the greatest asset Australia has – our Great Artesian Basin. Only the people who live there, and are totally dependant on the GAB water, can fully understand its worth. If we look after the GAB, it could be there for centuries into the future. If we allow the Narrabri Gas Project to destroy it, we will be known as the generation who allowed our greatest asset – our water – to be destroyed.

This Narrabri Gas Project is the most controversial in the history of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) attracted 22,721 submissions, of which 98% were objections.

Some of the NGP key concerns raised by landholders to date include:

- Risks to water sources in western NSW. The Narrabri Gas Project will remove 37.5 billion litres of water from water sources beneath the Pilliga region (subsidiary recharge aquifers of the Great Artesian Basin).
- The degree to which deep aquifer dewatering for coal seam gas will disrupt recharge of the Lower Namoi Alluvium by the Pilliga Sandstone;
- The presence of faults that might accelerate exchange of water or methane between water sources and to the environment.

As Professor Julian Cribb said many years ago, in the future wars are going to be fought over water, not oil. All over the world, the aquifers are drying up - and Professor Cribb (who was the guest speaker at a NSW Farmers conference ten years ago), spoke of “The Coming Famine.” He told how there are 216,000 more people on earth, *every day*, and that people will need to find food and water for about 11 billion people, by 2050. And yet, at the same time, groundwater is dangerously depleting everywhere. A “silent revolution” has taken place underground, he warned, as the amount of water sucked from below the surface, has tripled in the past 50 years.

“Current estimates indicate we will not have enough water to feed ourselves in 25 years’ time” (Professor Cribb said) - (and bear in mind

this was ten years ago). “Coal seam gas will TRIPLE again, the use of water, by 2050” he said.

But I was thrilled to hear that today at a meeting of the NSW Farmer’s Executive, they passed a Motion:

That the NSW Farmers’ Association lobby the NSW Government to:

- a) Not approve the Narrabri Gas Project (NGP)
- b) Extinguish the 11 expired and inactive petroleum exploration licences.

When our wonderful strong and enormous organisations like NSW Farmers Assn. and the CWA – the two largest and most representative organisations for regional NSW and our farmers – come out and directly oppose this project, then the govt. must listen. When 96% of 4 million hectares of the north west, which was surveyed, said they opposed the Narrabri Gas Project, surely the govt. must listen to them - or is this not a democracy any more??

Vast areas of inland Australia rely 100% on Artesian bore water. Our agricultural industry and rural communities must not be put at risk for CSG mining.

All over the world, the aquifers are drying up, and fossil water is now far more valuable than fossil fuel. As our wonderful MP for Barwon, Roy Butler, said: “Water is by far our most precious resource. You can make energy in other ways, but you cannot make water.” He also said, “We should not risk long term groundwater security for a short-term gain. Gambling with water should not be considered when it is central to everything we do. There are alternate sources of energy but no alternatives for water.”

I am old, and I know there will be enough food and water to see me out – but I am thinking of future generations. I have thirteen grandchildren, and I honestly fear for the future. CSG mining is a short-term destructive industry, that will leave an industrial wasteland behind, and destroyed aquifers; agriculture is a sustainable industry that can continue for many thousands of years - if gas mining doesn't destroy our precious water, and our arable land. We don't want to be remembered as the generation who destroyed our precious water.

Please don't approve this Narrabri Gas Project. And thank you for listening to my deep concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Kennedy

“Yuma”

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