

# **A Further Submission to My Submission (4<sup>th</sup> August 2020) Regarding Santos CSG and the Pilliga – The Narrabri Gas Project**

## Introduction

This submission is further to my submission (4<sup>th</sup> August 2020)

The basis of that submission was that we, Governments, the IPC, the Land and Environment Court, the people who presently occupy this great country of ours, and for that matter all the decision makers throughout the world, must not make decisions that could, in any way, possibly have a negative impact on the Environment - the land, the water, as well as on the people (our children, our grandchildren and future generations) and their communities – the Social aspect.

We do not have the right to make these decisions!

There is a clear message from the 401 presentations to the IPC Commissioners, and the thousands of submissions being sent in - there will, at best, be a severe negative impact, and at worst, it will be disastrous, if a decision is made to allow the proposal to proceed.

## **Submission**

Further, there is another aspect – what is the value of Santos to Australia? And this question can be asked of the majority of the fossil fuel miners.

Michael West, in one of his recent Weekly Reports – ‘The Top 40 Tax Dodgers’ – (31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 ) has Santos at No. 5 :-

5 yr total income	18,436,190,420
Taxable income	27,340,938
5 yr margin	0.12%
5 yr Tax payable	3,147,975
Tax rate	11.51%

‘Once again’ says Michael West, “ the annual Top 40 chart is veritably bristling with multinational fossil fuel companies”

“These names just keep bobbing up” says Jeffrey Knapp, retired accounting academic from the university of NSW. Referring to the now 5 years of transparency data from the Tax office.

He continues – “They just keep getting bigger and bigger, but will the Tax man ever see a dollar from these fossil fuel companies?”

‘It begs the question – as the bush fires rage across this drought-ravished land, and as throngs of individual tax payers make their personal donations, are these corporations pulling their weight? Should there be a fossil fuel levy?’

As UTS associate professor Roman Lenis and tax expert puts it, “many of these multinationals are anti-businesses, they are here not to make a profit, they are set up to make a loss – yet the auditors sign off as a ‘going concern”.

“The two consortia that own plants at Gladstone are led by Santos and Origin” says IEEFA gas analyst Bruce Robertson, neither of which paid tax in 2016-17, according to the ATO.

While the gas industry promised much in the way of Taxes and Royalties, “tax revenue has been pitiful” says Robertson

They presumably pay some royalties, but details are buried in secrecy, but that’s for extracting any taking it away and selling it.

### **Social Licence**

‘Like ordinary taxpayers, giant fossil fuel companies are protected by firefighters. They too enjoy access to and the protection of the law. They are big users of this country’s legal system. Their executives drive on Australian roads, their children go to school here, their plants consume huge amounts of scarce water, they enjoy the diesel fuel subsidy. They, like ordinary taxpayers, are protected by Australia’s armed forces, and the police.

‘They are subsidised, heavily subsidised by ordinary taxpayers, yet they return little or nothing by way of income tax ‘.

“It is crucially important as the function of our society”, says Tax Justice Network Australia’s Mark Zimzak of corporate tax. “It pays for the schools, the Universities’ the Court system, all the functions of Government and the things in our society from which these companies benefit.”

“They need to pay their contribution. These things benefit their businesses – they help them to do business here”.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the above, one has to ask, what is the value of these companies, Santos being No. 5 on the list, to Australia.

Sure, they pay some royalties, but I have never been able to find out how much – it seems to be a closely guarded secret. Similarly, how much do the Australian taxpayers kick in to support them being here? I have never been able to find that out either, but it must be substantial.

With the absolute knowledge that Renewable Energy is taking over the transition to net-zero emissions, and AEMO says we really don't need much gas, why would we make a decision to, at best, minimise the ability of our farms to maximise the production of food on a regular basis for more and more people, local and overseas - forever, or at worst to destroy their ability to do so - forever?

And, if approved, this would lead on to other rich food production areas in the NW of NSW that the company has its eye on!

And, let's not forget the serious impact on the valuable Pilliga forest, unique to Eastern NSW ?

**It would be an act of sheer and utter madness and irresponsibility, not only to today's generation, but more so to our future generations.**

Thank you

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Ref: The Michael West review 31 January 2020

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