

## NARRABRI GAS PROJECT

Dear Commissioners Stephen O'Connor, John Hann and Prof. Snow Barlow,

OBJECTION: I urge you NOT to recommend the Narrabri Gas Project as per the Dept of Planning's current approval and recommended conditions.

I also urge you to recommend that the 2014 NSW Chief Scientist & Engineers Recommendations be implemented before any future development of this project, and other CSG projects in NSW.

I have found it difficult to set aside time for this written submission predominately due to the effect it has been having on mental wellbeing at this time. Given the range of expertise and experience of citizens submitting to the process during the Public Hearings I feel my voice cannot add anymore. Listening to the wave of community opposition, and the enormity of negative impacts across all spectrums ( social, economic, environmental, cultural, spiritual ) I'm left exhausted by the 'um yes we considered all this' responses of David Kitto at the closing of the Public Hearings.

Even I know that one cannot perforate an area with as many wells as this project intends to do and not effect the structural integrity of the bedrock and aquifers. The argument that Phase One should proceed so that they have more data to assess how much damage would occur is lunacy.

I spoke at the Narrabri Studio during the public hearings on Wednesday July 22<sup>nd</sup>. I will not repeat my presentation but will expand a little on some points I mentioned.

I have been saddened to hear of the effects CSG industry in Queensland has had on small businesses, similar to mine, in the regional communities. I have heard of these impacts through friends and visitors who have related experiences of small business closures. Small businesses that do not service the CSG Industry but were previously an important part of a vibrant country community and economy. The boom/bust nature of project development has created a pattern of dying townships whereby the diversity of businesses and business interests is lost. I fear the same thing will occur in Narrabri and the consequences of that will ripple out and be felt in townships such as my own. During the Public Hearings you heard from researchers who studied these impacts in Queensland and the findings confirmed the pattern.

If Stage 1 is approved, then Stage 2 is most likely to follow. To protect Narrabri from the boom/bust nature of large rapidly rolled out projects such as this, Phase 2 should be broken into smaller phases. Eg 50 wells not 850. Given the experiences in Queensland and the costly economic and environmental mistakes that have occurred there due to the rollout of CSG projects, I'm surprised the Dept has not stipulated a smaller number of wells over more stages in order to monitor, adjust and potentially halt any adverse economic impacts, environmental impacts and respond to changing demand for supply, which is likely to reduce as we transition to renewable energy.

These changes need to be made before the approval of Stage 1.

Concerned that the Narrabri community, the broader north west region and indeed the state of NSW are being ripped off in regards to royalties. There have been a number of submissions during the public hearing and no doubt written ones too that point to the lack of economic benefit that will be received by this project.

I like you to consider whether the deposit for rehabilitation of phase one and the entire project is adequate. Australia has a horrible history of not securing adequate financial deposits to deal with rehabilitation. Especially when dealing with stranded assets, which this project has an increased likelihood of becoming when you consider the current and increasingly rapid movement away from fossil fuel projects and investment. Many financial and insurance institutions are divesting from fossil fuel projects or have policies to do so within the next 10 to 20 years. Even BP is selling their petrochemicals business as they deploy their resources elsewhere in order to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 or sooner, as reported by CNN Tuesday June 30, 2020.

I have concerns with the landfill solutions for the salt. My community is within 150km of the project. My community would not be happy about that prospect. I'm also worried that impacted landholders will end up resigning to hosting this salt waste on their lands and this will become an issue over the course of time, degrading land with the dispersal of salts across the landscape through wind erosion and unprecedented flooding.

I was also less than impressed by David Kitto's response at the end of the Public Hearings that a plan for the salt waste does not need to be considered before production commences. This coupled with his off-the-cuff suggestion that we could possibly dump it in the sea did not leave me with a lot of confidence in the Department of Planning's attitude or assessments.

There are two main reasons why this project should not proceed. Climate Change and water security.

In our region we have been beating records hot days not by 0.2 degrees but by whole degrees. In 2019, across our northwest region, we beat drought records not by 2ml; not by 10ml; but by 50ml *or more*. This is the effect of global warming. When the number of consecutive Summer days *and nights* over 35 degrees, increases by weeks. When a record breaking drought becomes an **unprecedented** record breaking drought. These unprecedented conditions occur when the global average temperature sits at 1degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Imagine in 5 to 10 years when we will be sitting at 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

All this has significant economic and social costs. Our region produces considerably to the GDP of NSW and that contribution is at grave risk due to Climate Change impacts.

If we are to adapt and get control of run-away climate change then **no new** fossil fuels projects can proceed from 2020. Especially not projects that extract methane gas!

The economic benefit that this project promises fades into insignificance compared to the long term devastation it will bring.

Kind regards

Kerrie Matchett

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