

Submission to the IPC – Narrabri Gas Project

From Nicky Kirkby – Narrabri Shire Resident – *Nearly 100 yrs Farming*

Good afternoon,

Today I am talking to you on behalf of my family of passionate and extremely knowledgeable dryland broad acre farmers who are very strongly opposed to this proposal and have been protesting it for six years.

Bruce last son of Kenneth Kirkby former driver for the New State Movement and I are parents to Georgia 14yrs and Boston 11yrs both kids with knowledge and skills that you couldn't achieve in a lifetime without being bred into it. The farm courses their veins, they are a serious resource for Australia's future supplying food, problem solving and leadership for the growing needs of the world.

I should say that we are not far from celebrating 100 yrs of farming at "Koiwon" having commenced farming on the amazing highly sought after rich black self-mulching soil plains in 1923.

Essentially our farming system is based on storing soil moisture from rain in our exceptional deep self-mulching soils. We have a three year rotation that includes summer cropping of Dryland Cotton and winter cropping of Bread Wheat, Durum (Pasta) Wheat, Chick Peas, and lastly fallow (no crop but managed for weed control) to collect and store moisture.

Our no till cropping systems use GPS Guidance at 2cm tolerance on controlled traffic 12m wheel track spacing, Rotations for cover crops, soil health and reduced disease which are second to none worldwide.

John Deere International use us to test protocol harvesting machines prior to worldwide commercial production. Italian pasta producers who buy durum wheat from our region regard it as the best in the world due to its very high viscosity.

Our farm of 8200ha has an average gross income \$23,011,638

As a contribution to the economy that is:

6 million loaves of bread

4.7 million Packets of pasta

75 mill tubs of humus

2.6 mill pairs of jeans

End point product of \$764 mill

We employ up to 25 permanent and seasonal staff, who live locally with their families as a part of our town.

The Broad acre farmers in our district are recognised as some of the most efficient and productive growers worldwide.

Our farm is totally dependent on rain that we store in our fallow soils, we have no other surface water. Last year our farm ran out of surface water (our dams dried up, our tanks were empty, our soils moisture totally depleted). Our stock survived on the Artesian Water that we collectively capped and piped in a govt. initiative in 2001 which was 50/50 funded to reduce the use of this precious resource from open flowing bores. Like us our towns are totally reliant on bore water. To risk this in any way is simply preposterous.

We are absolutely astounded that anyone could think it sound to approve a project with such short term gains and for who?? At the risk and cost of our water resource and extremely productive agriculture that has stood the test of time and still does in a sustainable long term manner.

Our farm is in the area of one of the seven gas fields that Santos has proposed to its shareholders as future expansion of the current Narrabri project area.

The nature of dryland farming on our unique soils does not lend itself to the infrastructure requirements of a gas field and it is not possible to think it could co-exist. Our equipment is very wide and built to cover vast expanses of reasonably flat land 12m wheel track spacing's to reduce compaction. Whilst the land is relatively flat water moves across it and any infrastructure causes changes to the flow and can cause major flooding and damage and lack of storage of soil moisture, thus productivity.

Any further increase to climate change through further fossil fuel extraction will risk a negative impact on farming.

In 2014 120,000 Ha of predominantly productive family farms, north of Narrabri and west of the highway was surveyed and declared Gas field free with a 93% of the vote. Based on our farms average production of \$2.8 mill/ha that's \$336 mill total gross income for our survey area

Narrabri and Moree Shires are unparalleled with any other shire in Australia for agricultural returns 2.5 times greater than their closest competitor.

As a former research liaison officer directly involved in the submissions of two successful renewals of Cotton CRC's, I am very aware of the difficulty in maintaining independent research where industry fund science projects. The reduction of the federal and state budgets for research leave this wide open for abuse as the nature of the research funded needs to support the industry paying!!

Needless to say any research from GISERA suggesting there is no risk to water through this project is fraught with problems in methodologies, inadequate cherry picked sampling, poor extrapolation of models without adequate ground trothing, misrepresentation and manipulation of outcomes by media.

Research that was undertaken during the terms of the Cotton CRC's suggested there is much we don't know about how water tables interact with each other and recharge areas, however there are distinct relationships. Valuable ground trothed research is both time consuming and costly.

I would also like to note that GISERA's Community Consultation through their NSW RRAC group is totally non representative of the community and is weighted to pro- gas with over half of its member being recipients of funds from gas companies either directly, as a consultant, or as scientist with projects funded.

In this very short time I hope I have painted a picture for you of our farm and our biggest concerns with this project for our district.

Christina Lagarde as chairperson for the International Monetary Fund 2011- 2016 stated we needed a new way of measuring Gross Domestic Product Internationally that included a value on the externalities; clean air and water.

If only we had this now!! To help balance this argument and put it in perspective. Please say no to the Narrabri Gas Project.