

Submission to IPC in response to Santos' submission following the public hearings
From Malcolm Hartley, Coonabarabran, 2020 August 20

I wish to thank the IPC for this opportunity to comment on the response from Santos to the public hearings which ended on August 1 2020.

I made a verbal presentation to the IPC from Narrabri on July 21 2020 and I have also submitted a short written submission.

This submission will also be relatively short and will mainly address the executive summary to the Santos submission by Kevin Gallagher, the CEO of Santos, following the public hearings.

Practically everything Gallagher states in the opening paragraph is contentious.

I submit that the NGP is not in the public interest, it is mostly in the interest of Santos' shareholders.

The NGP is not critical for energy security or reliability in NSW or the country as a whole. To ensure that security and reliability we need to invest far more effort into renewable technologies now. Such investment will deliver the significant economic benefits which Gallagher highlights. To say that the NGP is unlikely to result in any significant impact on the local community or the environment is very wishful thinking.

Expert presentations from speakers as well as written submissions objecting to the NGP highlight the community disaffection with the project for a multiplicity of reasons. If anything, the public hearings reinforced the significant community concerns about the NGP, especially following the lacklustre presentation from the Department of Planning.

Like the IPC, I too have visited the gas fields in southern Queensland and in my opinion the environment has undergone significant changes as a result of gasfield infrastructure and poles and wires expansion.

The risks inherent in the continued use of fossil fuels such as gas are accepted by most thinking members of society, including gas miners. CSGs claim to be a clean transition fuel from coal to renewables is highly questionable when fugitive emissions are included in the equation.

Gallagher is a tad disingenuous when he states that the switch from coal to gas power in the UK has resulted in a reduction in CO2 emissions of 38% compared to 1990 levels. This data is extracted from a report by Zeke Hausfather "Analysis: Why the UK's CO2 emissions have fallen 38% since 1990". Amongst other findings the report states that just over a third of the reduction of 38% was due to a gas and renewables mix (in other words, approximately 14% of the fall was due to the uptake of gas and renewables). The report adds that in the electricity sector in the UK in 2017 the largest driver for emissions reductions is due to the transition to renewable energy (37%). Lower electricity use accounts for a further 33% and the switch from coal to gas accounts for a 29% reduction.

Santos' stated aspiration to net zero emissions is admirable but by 2050 it may well be too late from the point of view of global warming and the best way to reach a net zero target is by abandoning the NGP now.

The ACIL economic updated assumptions for the NGP to reflect current economic conditions add a highly questionable positive spin to the project.

Australia already has plentiful supplies of gas. I see no problem in having to import 95% of the gas used in NSW from other states. We "import" so many other products from elsewhere in the federation so why not gas too.

In the submission following Gallagher's executive summary Santos discredits almost all of our "experts" analyses and continues to assert that the issues we regard as being contentious can be summarily dismissed by their and the Departments exhaustive justification for the project to proceed. We are led to believe that adaptive management will be able to address "problems" as they arise. I find this "assurance" very unconvincing. The gasfield will be out of sight and out of mind and the consequences of this scale of industrialisation in the Pilliga are potentially irreversible.

On the IPCN website the long list of public submissions show that between 88 and 90% of people object to the project. That is a huge majority of "the people" not wanting the project to go ahead. Please, for the sake of future generations and the planet as a whole, reject the Narrabri Gas Project.