

21 August 2020

To: IPC New South Wales
Re: Narrabri Gas Project

To the honourable commissioners of Narrabri Gas Project Independent Planning Commission (IPC).

The Narrabri Industrial Network would like to acknowledge and thank the Commission for their diligence.

We write this letter in support of the Narrabri Gas Project and in response to the additional information and economic modelling received from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and Santos.

The Narrabri Industrial Network INC firmly believes as stated in our previous submission that the Narrabri Gas Project is essential to providing our region diversification, job and energy security for future generations and that our home, the Narrabri Shire will continue to slowly decline without the Narrabri Gas Project.

Prolonged Drought periods in the region, Australia's energy security and domestic gas shortage and unsustainable manufacturing costs due to high gas prices should have been reason enough for this project to be already approved, when the scientific evidence and the DPIE have concluded "the project is in the public interest and is approvable subject to strict conditions".

The COVID-19 pandemic and economic devastation highlights furthermore why the Narrabri Gas Project must be approved. The projects significance is not only to our region, the Narrabri Shire but in our member's belief necessity to New South Wales and Australia. Australia unemployment level currently sits at record highs. NIN firmly believe that this project will help Australia to recover from the COVID-19 economic crisis and supply crucial gas for local manufacturing.

As stated in Santos updated economic modelling:

"Over the life of the NGP, it is projected that an average of 912 full time equivalent direct and indirect jobs will be created in New South Wales (an increase of 78 per cent over the earlier estimate). More specifically, it is projected that the Narrabri Gas Project will increase employment (by place of residence) in the Moree-Narrabri region by an average of 222 FTE job years each year over the life of the project (an increase of 17 per cent over the earlier estimate). These increases are in part a result of the reducing the severity of the constraint in national employment growth assumed in the earlier modelling and using the standard Tasman Global labour market framework"

“The number of jobs created for NSW is 17 per cent higher in the Moree-Narrabri region than in the original EIS and 78 per cent higher for NSW. This increase is a result of relaxing the national employment growth constraint in the modelling done for this update.

Growth in employment and output across industries overall also higher than in the original EIS. The rate of employment growth in the mining and manufacturing sectors is positive in the current assessment whereas it was slightly negative in the earlier assessment. It is important to note that the slightly negative result for agriculture is relative to the situation without the NGP and does not reflect an absolute decline in employment or output for that sector.”

COVID-19 has caused employment in the Narrabri Region to fall by 2.8% from March 2020 to June 2020 <https://app.remplan.com.au/northerninland/economy/covid-19/impact-on-employment?state=MRvOCR!zr6jFjYAMsmkk6etKvaM9c7TrHXyeF7HRMtBHo5tPSNEsnSppJmSeR2>

As stated in our previous submission, improvements in agricultural production efficiencies has caused employment opportunities within the ag sector to decline over the past decade in the region.

What is most concerning about the COVID-19 crisis locally, is that industries hardest hit by employment numbers falling, is not the agricultural sector.

The Narrabri gas project is so important, to ensure our community has future employment and business growth opportunities, as the long-lasting economic effects of this pandemic are unknown.

We ask the commission to consider our members’ views of the Narrabri Gas Project, all of which are local to Narrabri Shire whom overwhelmingly support this project and look forward to a timely decision.

Kind Regards,
Gilly Goddard

Secretariat
Narrabri Industrial Network Inc