

Mullaley Gas and Pipeline Accord Inc.



I am writing to you on behalf of the committee of the Mullaley Gas and Pipeline Accord (MGPA) to object to the modification of the Queensland -Hunter Gas Pipeline.

A brief history of the MGPA

The MGPA was formed in 2010 in response to the Company Eastern Star Gas proposing to build a pipeline from the Pilliga state forest to Wellington NSW. This proposed pipeline traversed prime cropping and grazing land and posed a very real threat to the viability of many local farming businesses as well as leading to many associated environmental problems. The greatest environmental concern in this instance was the potential for drastic alterations in the flow of water across the landscape leading to devastating erosion on our very fertile, yet physically unstable soils. During this process soil scientists were employed to justify our case.

When Santos purchased Eastern Star Gas they withdrew this proposed pipeline and while we don't know their full reasons for doing so, we can only assume that part of the reason was that they saw the truth in many of our arguments. Since this time the MGPA has continued an active involvement in protecting our strong and sustainable agricultural industry in the Mullaley district and more widely in the Gunnedah Basin.

Our reasons for objection

- The proposed pipeline's 10 year deadline will expire in February 2019, so in our opinion, this is a last minute rush to extend the project without taking into account significant changes that have occurred during the past 10 years. For example, new ecological communities that have become endangered, National Park extensions, new towns or towns that have expanded, and new farming enterprises that have begun.
- The justification for the project has changed within the 10 year timeframe and that **MUST** be addressed appropriately.
- As farmers, we are extremely concerned about the rich agricultural land through which the pipeline would pass. Much of this land (in particular self mulching vertosols) has been deemed unsuitable to host infrastructure such as a large gas pipeline. It has been shown by our group in the past that the construction of a large gas pipeline through these unstable soils would unavoidably lead to massive erosion threats. The resulting problems from such erosion are as follows:

- Damage to the viability of agricultural businesses on which the erosion occurs. This includes the loss of fertile topsoils as well as physical damage to land and any corresponding earthwork expenses for repatriation.
 - Reduced access to areas on our farms with heavy machinery to comply with pipeline safety.
 - Inability to access the pipeline during times of above average rainfall/flooding. This presents the very serious threat that any damage sustained during an erosion event may not be able to be repaired in a timely manner. Such an instance would pose a very serious threat to the safety of the local community. Such an instance occurred in January 2010 when a 50m section of the central ranges pipeline was exposed after an erosion event. The pipeline was left suspended in mid air and very unstable for an extended period as repair crews were unable to access the site.
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- As farmers we see a legitimate threat to the biosecurity of our farms from the introduction of service vehicles and personnel. A considerable expense in any farming business is in the control of weeds and diseases and we take extra measures to prevent the introduction of further weed/disease threats. Service vehicles and people travelling from farm to farm across the length of the pipeline would break down any biosecurity barriers we have and place an extra cost burden on our businesses.
 - In general, landholders would bear an extra risk by having a high pressure gas pipeline under their land which would affect our ability to excavate and may increase our insurance premiums.

For the reasons stated above, we believe it is unacceptable for the Department of Planning to allow the modification of the Queensland-Hunter Gas Pipeline to go ahead.

Regards,

Maddy Adams
MGPA Secretary