

Executive Director, Resource Assessments
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39 Sydney NSW 2001
22 May 2017

This is a submission to the Narrabri Gas EIS. Walgett's Dharriwaa Elders Group ("DEG") cannot support the expansion of CSG activities in the Pilliga Forest.

Dharriwaa Elders Group ("DEG") is an association formed in 2000 by Walgett Aboriginal Elders after they came together to maintain their community's cultural identity and wellbeing and work for their community's development. The DEG seeks to manage and maintain Aboriginal Cultural Values in its area of interest and this includes protecting the lands and waters in our area and our community's connection with them. Members believe that healthy rivers and environment support healthy people and that environmental values are and will be an important resource for the Walgett community's social and economic wellbeing. In addition, DEG believes that Aboriginal people have the knowledge and will to use these resources in ways that can benefit many.

DEG Members live beside the Namoi River not far from Pilliga and some Walgett families have direct cultural and family ties with Wee Waa, Pilliga and surrounds. Santos claims their plan has been developed with Aboriginal stakeholders¹. This is not true. DEG has not helped Santos with its plans.

DEG is not a powerful, well-connected mining or agricultural interest group but a group of elderly Aboriginal volunteers living in a disadvantaged community. We ask that our NSW Government and its servants' decisionmaking regarding this project is undertaken with the highest probity and considers responsibly the wellbeing of the land and waters, and all the life they support.

More biodiversity loss in our region will add to losses from other land uses that have already taken a large toll on the water quality of the rivers, the fertility of the soils, the quantities of groundwater, and the habitats of birds, animals and fish. DEG members are alarmed that the proposed project will require substantial clearing of native vegetation, destroying and disrupting more wildlife. Members fear that:

- habitats and culturally-significant native vegetation are threatened
- groundwaters will be put at risk
- methane gas emissions contributing to global warming will be released
- dangerous pollutants will be released including into our water supply
- environmental and public health threats are risked

Once valuable natural resources are lost, they cannot be replaced or offset. There has not been any consideration or measuring of the impacts on Aboriginal communities of NW NSW from the compounding losses caused by multiple waves of land development. No compensation or benefits accruing to our communities for their loss have been offered, either by this proponent or previous proponents. Successive governments have undervalued NSW's rich Aboriginal cultural assets and peoples. It has not been demonstrated to us in Walgett that NSW and Commonwealth governments will devote adequate resources to ensure that ACH values are maintained or strengthened in NW NSW. NSW Govt. agencies are not resourced to monitor compliance by Santos. We appeal to NSW Planning to build trust with our community and reject this costly project. It represents too great a risk for our community and for NSW.

Yours sincerely



Clem Dodd, Speaker, Dharriwaa Elders Group, Virginia Robinson, Secretary, Dharriwaa Elders Group

¹ Page 3, 3.1, Appendix N2, Cultural Heritage Management Plan