

DUBBO FIELD NATURALIST & CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.



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Attn: Executive Director, Resource Assessments
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

19 May 2017

SUBMISSION ON NARRABRI GAS PROJECT EIS

The Dubbo Field Naturalist and Conservation Society, with 80 members, objects to this project and believe it should be rejected.

We understand from the EIS and other documentation that the proposal includes

- removal of just under 1,000 Hectares of high conservation value woodlands from the iconic Pilliga Forest. We note the area is the largest contiguous woodland area in Australia's southeast and contains a wide variety of threatened species.
- drilling into a key area of groundwater recharge for the Great artesian basin, which supports hundreds of agricultural businesses
- produce high quantities of waste water with high salinity levels requiring treatment and salt disposal.
- Introduce fire into the fire-prone Pilliga Forest
- Result in impacts to the dark sky area required for the Coonabarabran Observatory

In reviewing the EIS documentation provided by the Department we note that justification for the project is lacking in terms of real impact to Australian gas supplies and manufacturing industries. The 'Do nothing Option' (EIS report 8-1) does not discuss the fact that the majority of gas supplies are primarily exported. It also does not truly address alternatives that are available for energy supply, including quite suitable alternatives currently present and with more being developed.

We note the people living in the area and studies and cases both overseas and within Australia of health effects to those living nearby.

We also note that the project justification states that the majority of people in Narrabri are in favour of the development, however upon review of the Community Engagement report (Appendix D) we find no evidence that this is the case. We are aware of many local landholders, Narrabri residents, members of the irrigation industry and Aboriginal community that are strongly opposed to the project. Further evidence should be produced to validate this Santos claim of support.

We are also concerned that this project is a test case for more gas development which will affect many other areas including the Dubbo Local Government Area.

In summary we observe some likely economic benefits to the regional area of the central west (primarily short-term only employment during construction and lower levels during maintenance) with an unjustified claim of benefits to NSW's gas supplies, but definite high environmental impacts and high risks of even greater significant long-term impacts to both the environment and agricultural industries.

For the reasons above we cannot support the project, and call for it to be rejected. We suggest that Santos should invest in projects that secure our energy future in ways that do not put our environment and community health at risk. Perhaps in a show of support the Santos executives and their families should come and live within the development field for the next ten years, just as they are asking of local residents. We bet that they won't.

We would also advocate that the bioregional strategies of the NSW Government should exclude risky developments like this from being undertaken in key bushland areas and on prime agricultural land.

We look forward to further discussion with Council on this matter and would be happy to arrange further meetings to clarify or further develop any of the above ideas.

Yours faithfully,

Janice Hosking
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