

Kirrily Blomfield  
President SOS Liverpool Plains  
Caroona, NSW

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

21<sup>st</sup> May 2017

Re: Submission to the Narrabri Gas Project Environmental impact Statement

**I write on behalf of SOS Liverpool Plains to object to the proposed Santos coal seam gas project in the Pilliga Forest and surrounding farmlands near Narrabri. This proposal must not be allowed to proceed.**

#### **Introduction.**

SOS Liverpool Plains, established in 2008, is a women's group actively raising awareness of the potential effects of coal and coal seam gas on water, communities, soils, health and agricultural production of the Liverpool Plains region.

The Liverpool Plains is located just south the proposed Santos project.

#### **Agricultural Production of Liverpool Plains**

- The Namoi, Gwydir, Walgett and Bourke regions cotton production for 2016/17 was \$1.24Billion. (Cotton Australia May 2017)
- Red meat production for the combined Namoi/ Border Rivers-Gwydir region was \$777Million for 2014/15. (MLA May 2017 from ABS data).
- Sorghum production NW Slopes and Plains 2016 - \$67 Million
- Bread wheat production NW Slopes and Plains 2016 - \$81 Million
- Durum wheat production NW Slopes and Plains 2016 - \$96 Million
- Barley production 2016 NW Slopes and Plains - \$30 Million
- Chickpea production NW Slopes and Plains 2016 - \$82.5 Million
- Sunflower production NW Slopes and plains 2016 - \$35 Million  
(All grain statistics from Dolbel Consulting, May 2017)

The Liverpool Plains, although renowned for a thriving irrigation industry, are also made up of many 'dryland' farmers whose enterprises depend on groundwater for stock and domestic use. Most of our communities and towns also depend on groundwater. Surely the government decision makers would be found culpable should these critical supplies be damaged in any way?

The agricultural production of this area must not be risked, nor should Australia's 'clean green' image be tarnished and exports risked due to contamination by drilling fluids or by heavy metals that are brought to the surface in produced water.

### **Climate Change**

Unfortunately, class actions will surely result against the State Government for approving such projects that have known effects on climate change and the human race. Santos, with its predominantly foreign ownership in this project, may see itself as immune from such claims.

Further to this, Santos has admitted that their business plan is based on a 4°C temperature rise (as a result of climate change). This admission shows an irresponsible and cavalier attitude in light of much evidence of worst case outcomes predicted as the earth passes significant milestones for global warming and risks the very future of human beings on earth.

For the Government to be linked to approvals of projects with a company displaying such negligence is irresponsible indeed.

### **Cumulative impacts**

There is nowhere in the NSW planning system that allows for the consideration of the cumulative impacts that this project might have in conjunction with the other extractive industries already in the Narrabri region and proposed projects further afield such as Shenhua.

### **Water**

Water resources in Australia are the most crucial of resources both for now and the future. Water, on the driest inhabited continent on earth, must be THE most valued resource above all - above gas and coal. Santos has already contaminated an aquifer in the Pilliga. It is often overlooked that other countries benefit from snow melt and thriving river systems while Australia remains the driest inhabited continent in the world.

Not only is it evident that it cannot unequivocally be stated that water will not be harmed - but Santos themselves state that *"the duration and ...extent of depressurisation of groundwater head within the coal seams and adjacent strata will cause a significant impact to the groundwater resources of the Gunnedah – Oxley Basin..."*.

### **No Social licence**

Santos clearly has no social license with regard to this project. Community surveying in the region has shown strong opposition to the project with polls showing over 90% opposition.

Similarly, the number of objecting submissions to this EIS alone should prove enough to indicate there is no social licence for this project; both locally and across Australia and it therefore should not proceed.

### **Risk of Earth Movement**

The Liverpool Plains are bordered by the Hunter-Mooki fault line which results instability and earth movement of this region. I attach a film of large cracks running through the ground on a neighbouring property. These are not merely topsoil cracks due to dry weather, as the film was taken following a time of much rain. *Please contact me so I can provide the video evidence .*

The impacts that earth movement in our region, will result in much instability and threatens the integrity of CSG well casings. Anecdotal evidence from a former driller shows casings twisted from the effects of earth movement, increasing fugitive methane emissions, subsidence and cross-contamination of aquifers.

### **The Future**

The uptake and increase in renewable energy continues to surpass the predictions of virtually all in the industry. This could mean a short life for the Santos project, with little financial benefit to the State.

### **Reject the Approval of this Project**

SOS Liverpool Plains objects to the Santos Coal Seam Gas project at the Pilliga and surrounding farmlands. This project should not be approved by the State Government.

Sincerely



Kirrily Blomfield

President SOS Liverpool Plains