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Stop Coal Seam Gas Blue Mountains, Springwood NSW, made the following submission on the project:

[Narrabri Gas Project](#)



Objects to this project

I wish to raise an objection to the Narrabri Gas Project on behalf of Stop Coal Seam Gas Blue Mountains, a group comprising nearly 450 mostly Blue Mountains residents. We believe the project should receive no further consideration for the reasons which follow:

(1) Firstly because of the lack of detail given in the EIS which provides no maps indicating the location of the 850 wells, lines and associated infrastructure. Santos is basically saying "trust us" but given their past record, trust is anything but what should be afforded them. An EPA report obtained under freedom of information legislation in 2014 by the Sun Herald and the Greens noted questionable safety procedures, leaking ponds, inadequate monitoring and unreliable analytical methods. Santos has a terrible history of the abuse of due process and has been inept at handling hazardous chemicals and waste products. Santos has experienced spills from evaporation ponds, pipelines, the waste-water treatment facilities and at well sites. A 10,000 litre spill polluted hectares of the Pilliga Forest and caused soil damage and tree deaths. Their operations polluted an aquifer with uranium and other heavy metals.

Their record of non-reporting of adverse events is now well acknowledged and prosecutions have followed. Santos has shown a total lack of responsibility in the past and this inadequately supported application shows an amazing arrogance and apparent belief that their irresponsible activities should be allowed to continue.

(2) Santos plan to clear 1,000 ha of the Pilliga forest. The Pilliga woodland is the largest and most intact eucalypt woodland in eastern Australia. It is a unique ecological refuge in a heavily cleared agricultural belt. It is home to many woodland species struggling to survive, including glossy-black cockatoos, barking owls, eastern pygmy possums, koalas, red-capped robins, regent honeyeaters and the unique Pilliga mouse which lives nowhere else. All up, 25 nationally listed and 48 state listed threatened species rely on the Pilliga for survival. The approval of this project will sanction the death and possible extinction of huge numbers of these animals and that is morally criminal. The forest's value lies in its flora and fauna, not in the dollars which will flow to Santos.

(3) The removal of 37.5 GL of groundwater from the Great Artesian Basin which Santos will require over the life of the gasfield cannot be justified. The loss of this vital resource in one of the driest continents on earth, particularly as droughts will be a much greater feature of our climate as climate change progresses, would be catastrophic and sadly for no good purpose.

(4) The CSG industry has no solution to the disposal of salt left after extracting and treating ground water. Peak salt production at this project will be a huge 115 tonnes per day or 41,900 tonnes per year to go into landfill. This will be an environmental disaster for wherever Santos decides to deposit its waste.

(5) The local Gomeroi people have a strong cultural connection to the Pilliga landscape and

the thousands of cultural sites, plants and animals within the forest. The fragmentation and industrialisation proposed by Santos will have a big impact on the Gomeroi heritage and connection to country.

(6) The considerable health risks posed by CSG activities are not addressed in Santos' social impact assessment. There is now a large body of research especially coming from the US where the industry has been operating much longer that exposes those risks.

Locally the 2013 report 'Is Fracking Good for your Health' by the Australia Institute and The Social Justice Initiative has examined available research and concluded:

"This report finds that unconventional gas should not be endorsed from an environmental and human health perspective and states that the current case against further expansion of the industry is overwhelming."

There has been little concern for or efforts to investigate the numerous and serious health impacts reported by the people in the region of Tara, Qld or Camden NSW who have found themselves living near CSG operations. Their experiences need to be considered in conjunction with the published research in any submission by Santos.

Allowance must also be made (but wasn't in the Santos application) for fugitive emissions which happen frequently enough in current operations but almost inevitably over time in supposedly sealed off, no longer producing wells. The methane they leak is not only a health hazard but a major contributor to global warming.

(7) Jobs are often cited as a justification for environmentally destructive projects to proceed. However, modern mining is becoming increasingly mechanised and few long term jobs can be expected. In this case, after the construction phase is over, only 145 jobs will remain. There is now a much greater realisation within the community that dirty power and the dirty jobs that produce it reside in the past. Whether the fossil fuel companies accept it or not, Australia and the rest of the world will be moving towards renewables at an ever faster pace and it is in this sector where many sustainable jobs will be created.

(8) There is no plausible justification for the project to proceed. When the enormous harm caused to the environment, the local Narrabri Shire economy and society is weighed against the economic gains (mostly going to Santos), the evidence against it is overwhelming. This project has become necessary because Santos and other big gas companies have contracted to sell more gas overseas than the CSG fields in Queensland can produce. Given that most Australian states have no gas reservation policy for local supply, gas shortages and outages are being experienced at the same time gas prices are at an all time high in line with overseas prices. In fact Australia has had to buy Australian gas back from overseas companies. This is a preposterous situation that will not be resolved by Santos plundering this environmentally critical area. Surely Santos' profit should not be the only justification for approval of this project.