

Statement

I am making this submission in my private capacity as an individual and the views and opinions expressed are solely my own and are not intended to, and do not, reflect the official policy or position of any company or entity that I am associated with.

I support the development of the Narrabri Gas Project as it will bring great benefits to the State, regional North West and local Narrabri community. I am confident that any risks from the project are mitigated by high standards, regulation and a willingness by Santos to meet community expectations and address concerns.

My experience

In 2009, Santos requested access to my farm in the Tooraweenah district to undertake exploration activities. The experience was positive and I continue to benefit from that engagement on my farm. In 2012 Santos asked me to assist other landholders by using my experience help landholders understand the process of working with the gas industry. I continue as a contractor working part-time within the Land Access group.

I continue to operate a 3000 breeding merino ewe farm at Tooraweenah in conjunction with my brother Peter at Quambone again 3000 breeding ewes and 300 cows. My primary income is the farm, however my role with Santos working on bringing this opportunity to regional communities is a project I'm strongly committed to.

I have previously worked within local Government and worked overseas in the area of sports development. This varied background has given me a perspective of taking advantage of opportunities as they arise and helps to inform my supportive position on the Narrabri Gas Project.

I have experienced of a number of industries and witnessed the various aspects that the gas industry has in common with other industries. I can only comment positively on the different approach that Santos has in comparison.

As examples,

The approach to drilling bores for water extraction and gas wells, use the same process but are a worlds apart, with the gas industry having a much more stringent framework.

Consultation with the community as compared to other major projects or community changes – living on the highway I have never been notified of dangerous goods passing or Agricultural Chemicals disbursed.

A comparison between the procedures for dealing with Health and Safety in comparison to agriculture are much stronger.

Contracting to Santos has benefited personally, locally when I service vehicles and to the community through participation, spending and sponsorship.

Regional Opportunity

Regional NSW continues to shrink in population and opportunities. Agriculture has suffered a long debilitating period of low growth and reduced job opportunities, with new technology and further mechanisation of farming also reducing the workforce needed. Seasonal conditions mean that there

are bad years. This in turn can cost government and those farm communities that remain to support the services that are needed. Agriculturally secure communities such as Narrabri have seen seasonal conditions and technology reduce job opportunities and therefore economic benefit.

Jobs

The Narrabri Gas Project will provide an opportunity for other careers and wage levels for local job seekers. The jobs in the gas and resource industry often command an above average wage and therefore attract new residents with different skill sets or encourage those already living here to stay.

Job equality and diversity

Regional agricultural communities were often male oriented as farm work traditionally involved hard physical work. This is changing and it's good to see plenty of women in agriculture these days but for those women not interested in a career in agriculture, the resource industry offers a wider range of careers that are unisex in opportunity and help retain local female job seekers. The diversity of jobs from university educated, to trades and on the job training also brings a variety of people and helps to attract specialised skills to the area.

Jobs in management, environment, logistics, cultural heritage and engineering specialties all can be provided locally or be connected to a new career for school leavers. In the event of the Santos Narrabri Gas Project progressing and also with other projects proposed such as the Inland rail, in combination with the existing industries of agriculture, irrigated farming and coal mining, there are many opportunities for people, particularly young people, to develop their skills and move amongst industry to seek job opportunities and promotions.

Large corporate companies like Santos have formal policies and adherence measures to meet community expectations about diversity in their work places. This is not usually possible or adhered to in smaller business. Indigenous, female participation and disabled policies ensure large corporate companies like Santos provide opportunities for the entire community. The Santos Narrabri Gas Project brings these policy setting to the community in Narrabri and the region.

Cultural heritage work

The Santos Narrabri Gas project has opened the door to Community cultural heritage opportunities. Acknowledging the cultural heritage requirement in the State EIS process, the Narrabri Gas Project has and will continue to provide local and regional indigenous community access to better employment opportunities, participation and involvement in looking after their cultural heritage.

I have attended cultural heritage surveys in my role with Santos and have gained a greater understanding as to the significance and regulation surrounding Australian cultural heritage. Personally on our family farm, we are participating in an Indigenous cultural heritage survey proposed by the Local Central West LLS service because I have participated in surveys with my role in Santos. By having a better understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage, I am happy to participate but I know that many rural landholders are reluctant to participate in similar surveys due to misinformation about the process. Most of the landholders that have been involved in cultural heritage surveys with Santos are now happy to participate as they no longer have concerns with what was previously something that we knew nothing about.

Santos has engaged indigenous staff to liaise and assist with the various community consultation activities over the past couple of years. Training to improve the survey work outcome has also occurred.

Economic diversity

The long term permanent staffing is not the only benefit, many related service industries will evolve to provide jobs and support to the industry. Even the regulatory jobs with Government bring new people and jobs to the area which also assists our local community. Those new jobs bring spending and support – classrooms grow, health services grow etc etc. More food is delivered and sold, more entertainment provided and community groups can grow. Narrabri is very lucky that it has a mix of quality land for farming and other country that is rich in resources to have a gas industry, a coal industry, irrigation and broad acre farming and also grazing livestock.

Staff at Santos in Narrabri live in Wee Waa and Narrabri and many are local people born in this area. Santos has attracted new residents to Narrabri from Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and elsewhere in New South Wales who now call Narrabri their home and also provide employment to people such as myself from Tooraweenah and others in Gunnedah. The Narrabri Gas project will drive great economic benefit through new jobs, new contracts, and new services.

Santos has a preference to support local employment and local based employees wherever possible and also does this through supporting buying goods and services as much as possible locally too.

Industry Co- Operation

The Narrabri Gas Project has involved information gathering on flora, fauna, cultural heritage, soil, air and water. All of the scientific research and ground work has added to information not previously available or completed. I am not aware of other local industry being required to complete the extensive scientific studies to support the development of a project or the ongoing collection of environmental information for monitoring.

Environment

I have personally participated in many flora and fauna studies in the Pilliga and surrounding farm land that would not have occurred without Santos proposing this project. Government doesn't have the funds or people to do surveys of this size and length and time and private landholders rarely have the time, money or inclination. This information both protects partly understood areas in the Pilliga forest and surrounding farmlands. With greater understanding landholders can tailor land use to minimum impact and work to get improved environmental outcomes with their agricultural pursuits.

Feral animal management

Santos supports feral animal controls in the project area, something local authorities often struggle to fund and support. Many of the feral animal's resident in the Pilliga forest also impact the farmland near the forest and to the south in the Conservation area. Reducing or controlling the feral pests in the Pilliga will improve outcomes for those near the forest. Ultimately this will improve native animal survival. A careful corporate company like Santos, working in our community in land areas that don't generally receive a lot of funding for this type of work can only assist the community and have positive environmental effects.

Private landholders immediately bounding the Pilliga forest area, history shows these areas as contributing to agriculture, a family life and the community fabric. As with many land use changes,

they are accompanied by innovation bringing opportunity. The possible opportunity of non-farm income on properties from gas wells can enable people to have the cash flow to invest in better productivity, education and new ideas. Providing treated water to the community as an opportunity to diversify the farm business may also be a significant economic stimulus.

Soil - BSAL

The soil type study to identify if there were any Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land in the project area has in itself assisted planning and landowner knowledge. The Narrabri Gas Project has provided that information and enabled this discussion about what is strategic now or in the future. The project will not impede, damage or change the soil types due to exploration, appraisal or production. Instead it will help landholder's financially that may support better land management outcomes. There are few new financial opportunities for private landholders for making money from their property without something new like the Narrabri Gas Project.

Air Pollution

Community concerns about methane in the air has initiated a better understanding of the shared space we live in. Methane emissions from the gas industry are understandable and measured however similar emissions from agriculture, other industries and general community are seldom identified, let alone measured. Large scale projects that require assessment and public interest, lead the way for the community to become part of the process. Regional Air Monitoring in intensive agricultural areas, industrial and extractive areas can only benefit the community.

The Narrabri gas project is only part of the discussion and I look forward to the greater understanding of these effects from other extractive industries, agricultural and industrial chemicals and dust. If these are all part of the same monitoring scale, this will assist community discussion and mean that our air will be cleaner.

Soil disturbance

Typically agricultural pursuits involve soil disturbance so having an industry like Santos undertaking a project such as the Narrabri Gas Project improves the local skills and understanding for other land use and development. The cycle of farming requires fallow periods, minimum tillage and periodic cultivation. These activities continue to be practiced in the Narrabri and surrounding area.

The possible soil disturbance by the Narrabri project's 1000 hectares is barely acknowledgeable with a predicted short term disturbance during construction and an agreed rehabilitation reducing and settling the site impacted.

The Santos rehabilitation standards should be considered in many other areas of land use change and disturbance. General land clearing would look very different with an environmental bond and enforceable site rehabilitation attached. As a farmer currently operating a mixed farming business, there is no environmental bond attached to the property.

Water

The Leewood Treated water project will be a benchmark in water storage and treated water use. The ponds that hold the water are state of the art and the technology associated with them is very interesting,

The modelling and monitoring done in the project area for groundwater will continue to grow the knowledge of water use and movement in this area. The Santos focus on water in response to

community concerns has really enhanced my understanding of the Great Artesian Basin, surface aquifers, and groundwater as well as how the industry takes all that into account when planning on drilling a well.

It amazes me the technology that the drilling team uses to isolate various geological layers from the target geology and how much this has changed since the early artesian bore drillers to today's gas exploration. Whilst at the end of the day the same process has occurred, the quality of the well is greatly improved, although it does make me wonder about some of the old bores that are still around on farms that haven't been properly abandoned, the artesian bores that haven't been capped or piped with the salty water flowing freely onto the ground.

There's a lot of talk about protecting the Great Artesian Basin but from my experience with the Narrabri Gas Project, gas wells are the least of the worries of things that will have a detrimental effect on the Great Artesian Basin. In complete contrast there are environmental bonds, enforceable standards and EPA policing of the Santos assets. I am confident the Narrabri Gas Project will prove little to no threat to the GAB.

Human agricultural land use has occurred in the known recharge areas with greater activity over the past hundred years. If contamination has occurred by human activity it will have been in the early days of agricultural chemical use when little was understood about the impacts. Today's very regulated gas industry is highly professional in comparison to the then agricultural use.

Health and Safety (H&S)

The Narrabri Gas project has introduced a culture of great personal safety to staff and associated service providers. This cultural approach to Health and Safety is driven by the corporate culture along with the other industries such as coal mining. Extending the stronger H&S culture into the agricultural industry more broadly will only improve the unfortunate on farm injury record.

There has been a significant reduction of on-farm injury related deaths over the last 20 years. Around 63 persons died from non-intentional injury on Australian farms in 2016. This has fallen from an average of 146 deaths per year from 1989-1992.

Agriculture has an envious lifestyle, but it also comes with a greater risk to Health and Safety. Any safety conscious industry operating in a rural community will be influenced by those that do this better. Eventually the Health and safety culture will migrate across to Agriculture and other local industry.

Our family farm has directly influenced by my involvement in the Narrabri Gas project, as I have now implemented better health and safety training on farm, begun an audit process and purchased equipment prioritised for safety. The Individual providing the training is a landholder that is also involved in the Narrabri Gas Project.

Criticism

My family was personally affected by the community's response to this new industry, receiving criticism and negative comments from some that knew very little about the gas industry and its long history of safe operation in Australia but had listened to a disingenuous very long and loud campaign about groundwater or other misinformation.

The NSW Government was slow to prepare for a new industry, overregulated much of the activity when comparable activities occur with much less oversight and administration, and were initially absent in the process when it came to addressing and responding to community concern.

Government has now stepped up their information and response and this is clearly giving confidence to the community that their concerns have been heard, acknowledged and where legitimate, protections put in place. People though do expect that Government fairly and consistently address like issues across various industries and not just penalise an industry that has a small and noisy group criticising everything it does. In turn this would ensure a clear business playing field encouraging investment and progress, delivering greater benefits to our community.

Summary

I support the Narrabri Gas project EIS submission as a Santos contractor, mixed farming business partner and community member.

- The Project will raise the standard of many cohabited industries – Water, Health and Safety and communication.
- The Narrabri Gas project will deliver more than just direct economic benefit to Narrabri and surrounding regions.
- It will provide better opportunities to the future local and state job seekers.
- I firmly believe the Santos' Narrabri Gas Project EIS addresses any risks - real or perceived.
- It will contribute to the fabric of Narrabri society through community investment, science, and new technology and people.