

Submission to the Santos EIS

Attn: Executive Director, Resource Assessments

Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney
NSW 2390

From Denise Murray
PO Box 371
Narrabri
NSW 2390

I object to this project and believe it should not be approved. There are many reasons why the Narrabri Gas Project (NGP) should not be approved, one being the adverse social impact on the communities affected by the Coal Seam Gas (CSG) industry.

This submission deals with some of the adverse social impacts of the CSG industry on the Narrabri Community and surrounding districts. There has been numerous studies done in south west Queensland including one by GISERA which was funded by the gas industry. More recently the first part of an excellent study by The University of Newcastle into local attitudes to Changing Land Use-Narrabri Shire Dec 2016 has been published.

The Newcastle Uni study mention briefly the land use change when the Cotton industry arrived in the Narrabri district and has also been mentioned by others describing the fact that this industry has been accepted by the community, therefore assuming the same could happen with the CSG industry. In no way should they be compared.

The adverse social impacts caused by the arrival cotton industry would hardly register when compared to what is happening with the arrival of the CSG industry. The acceptance of the cotton industry was relatively smooth, and has now been here for 57 years with no sign of it going away. In comparison the NGP is not an agricultural industry, is not sustainable and if approved will only last 20-25 years. During the exploration phase it has already been dogged by controversy because of its, social and environmental impacts together with the potential to damage the Great Artesian Basin water resource. Demonstrations, marches and blockades sometimes involving hundreds of people have been common. Many people have been charged and or arrested. Police from Narrabri and surrounding towns as well as the riot police from Sydney have been involved. This controversy is being covered regularly by the local regional and national media. At least once even England's BBC television covered this story. If the NGP is approved there will be an (exaggerated) boom with some winners and some losers, followed by the bust with a legacy of unknown size left behind. Do not compare the cotton industry with the CSG industry.

My husband an agronomist and I a school teacher came to Narrabri in the 1960's and we observed the development of the cotton industry from its infancy. We married and raised our children here. We are now self funded retirees, living in Narrabri, but run a small herd of breeding cattle on 688ha. Our property is situated on the east of the Pilliga Forest about 4km from the edge of the Santos PEL 238. We are also very disappointed Santos shareholders.

We purchased our property in 1995 unaware that approximately 25% was covered by a Whitehaven coal exploration licence the other 75% being covered by Santos's CSG exploration licence.

Our first contact with these extractive industries was in 2007 when we were approached by Whitehaven to drill four exploration holes on our property to which we naively agreed. A few years later in 2013 they returned wanting to drill more exploration holes. We refused on the grounds that they did not honour all their commitments made during their first visit. Our experiences with Whitehaven were not pleasant and we increasingly became involved in the campaign to oppose the extractive industries, but particularly the Santos Narrabri Gas Project.

We also became members of a group called People for the Plains a group of Narrabri Shire residents who have sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of the processes surrounding coal and CSG developments, and the impacts of those processes. Its charter is to educate and advocate on these issues in North Western NSW. People for the Plains is also part of the North-West Alliance made up of thirty or more like minded groups such as ours.

The CSG industry has developed a reputation that is so bad it has caught up with them in Narrabri and resulted in the NGP being embroiled in controversy. This bad reputation now precedes the CSG industry across most of Australia.

The studies into the social impacts contained in the reports mentioned are proof there is a problem and are very relevant but more general in nature. The following information gives more detailed information into the strength of the discontent the CSG industry has brought to our community.

Our group People for the Plains, often in association with the North-West Alliance organise community information presentations.

An early presentation was a guest speaker an American John Fenton from Wyoming talking and showing pictures of his experiences with the CSG industry. Approximately 700 hundred people attended which gives an indication of the interest and concern that the local and surrounding community had.

At this meeting 27/2/2014, what is called The Narrabri Resolution was voted on and unanimously passed. It states. We the community of North West NSW strongly oppose the Narrabri Gas Project and call for the protection of our water resources environment and culture from coal seam gas fields. We demand that all levels of Government listen to the concerns of farmers and regional communities, and bans coal seam gas in NSW.

Ref 1. You Tube - John Fenton Speaking Tour Narrabri - Parts 2 and 3 in particular. (John Fenton Speaking Tour can be found on the DVD attached to this submission.)



Above: John Fenton speaking at the Crossing Theatre, Narrabri – 2014. Below: A packed out audience.

Santos' Pilliga gas project is one of the front lines in the campaign against coal seam gas



Of the other community information forums, we have organised three in particular deserve a mention. They are noteworthy because the venues we had booked rang and cancelled their bookings with us, just a few days before the events were to be held.

One venue was the Narrabri Golf Club who receives sponsorship money from Santos. The speakers on this occasion were Senator Glen Lazarus and financial analyst Bruce Robinson. We were able to make alternative arrangements at the Crossing Theatre. Enquiries were made as to why the Golf Club had cancelled the booking. The answer briefly was that Santos had spoken to the Golf Club mentioning that, our public information event to be held at the Club had come to their attention and asked them what they were going to do about it. In plain English this means Santos is threatening to withdraw their sponsorship if the Golf Club did not cancel the booking.

Ref 2. Statement of Hugh Barrett has more detail and follows.

Ref 2

Statement of Hugh Barrett

On the morning of Thursday 25th February 2016 I had a phone call from Naomi Hodgson of The Wilderness Society informing me that the Narrabri Golf Club had cancelled the availability of the club's auditorium for a North West Alliance meeting scheduled for Saturday 27th February. Naomi said that she had made the booking about two months ago and confirmed it earlier in February.

As I am a member of the Board of the Golf Club, I offered to ring the Club to find out why this had occurred. I was unaware of the Board having made this decision and was concerned that it might have been a unilateral decision of another Board member. I spoke to Stacey Shields, the Club's Acting Manager, and she informed me that she had received a phone call from Annie Moodie of Santos, which had precipitated the decision to retract the availability of the Club's auditorium. This was after she had spoken to Richard Stokes, the Club's Manager, who was in Sydney on sick leave following a major operation.

I rang Annie Moodie but before I had explained my purpose in ringing, she asked me "Are you calling about the Golf Club", which I confirmed. She explained that Santos could not tolerate a "protest meeting" directed at Santos and the coal seam gas (CSG) industry. I suggested that it was not a protest meeting, but an orderly meeting of the North West Alliance (NWA), where people would be coming to hear Senator Glen Lazarus and others speak. She asked if I had seen the flyers being distributed on social media. I said that I hadn't, as I don't subscribe to social media. I asked her to forward a flyer to me, which she subsequently did.

Annie explained that The Wilderness Society had held a meeting at the Golf Club last year. Richard Stokes had rung her to ask if Santos, as the Club's major sponsor, had any concerns. She told him she was not worried about it. However, she told me "This time it is different". She explained that the NWA marketing on social media was targeting CSG and Santos, with a red bar through the Santos logo, etc. She explained that the "social media people" in Adelaide head office had picked up the NWA marketing and had rung her to ask if Santos was sponsoring the Narrabri Golf Club. Annie said that she then rang the Club and spoke to Stacey, explaining that the Club's renewal application for sponsorship was on her desk at the moment, that Santos was the Club's major sponsor, and that "we can't turn a blind eye". She told me that she didn't ask Stacey to cancel the event, but asked "what are you going to do"?

I then rang Naomi Hodgson and advised her of Santos' influence in the Golf Club's decision and suggested she look for an alternative venue. She suggested that a press release would be prepared about Santos' intercession in the arrangements. I asked to see a copy before release. She rang me back shortly after 1 pm and asked if she could read out the press release to me, as they were hoping to release it imminently. I said that I wanted to see it in writing.

Naomi subsequently attached the document to a text message, asking for a response ASAP. I responded by text "Nope, not happy. Will get back to you". She then texted to ask if the story would be OK if the quotes attributed to me were attributed to Rohan Boehm. I replied:

"No, not unless Rohan rings Annie Moodie and gets the story, as I have a conflict of interest, being a director of the club. Santos would undoubtedly pull its sponsorship based on the story, which puts me in conflict with the board".

Naomi then asked if she should get Rohan to ring Annie. I responded:

"That would be Ok, but I think the language needs to be toned down so as not to cause grief to the golf club".

When I saw the media release online, I was very unhappy about it as I knew that it would draw opprobrium to the Golf Club. I rang Annie Moodie on the morning of Friday 26th February and told her that the press release had nothing to do with the Golf Club. She thanked me for letting her know and said that she had entirely expected a press release along those lines and was aware that the Golf Club was not involved in it.

At 10:30 am Tuesday 1st March, Annie Moodie rang me to ask if I would prepare a letter for publication in Thursday's Courier, stating that Santos did not bully the Golf Club and did not threaten to withdraw sponsorship. She asked that I say that "Santos did not bully them into withdrawing the venue".

Annie said that she had spoken to Richard on Friday and that they had agreed to "let it go." She said that she had then received a call from Adelaide to "ask someone to put a letter to the Editor" of The Courier, and that the request had come down "from the CEO".

When I asked why she had rung the Golf Club the previous week, Annie expressed surprise that the Golf Club had reacted by cancelling the booking. I asked "what was the alternative" and she thought perhaps a sandwich board at the entrance would have been suitable, asking that respect be shown to Santos as a sponsor of the Club.

I told Annie that I had spoken to Richard yesterday and that we agreed that we would wait to see if there was any adverse comment in Tuesday's (1st March) Courier before reacting. I explained that Richard and I had agreed that it was not worth giving oxygen to the issue if not necessary. I then terminated the conversation, in which Annie had done most of the talking, at 10:45 am, as I was due at another meeting.

This did not go down well with many Golf Club members and other club users, many who considered boycotting the club and to not renew their membership. Our membership was due so we seriously considered not renewing as we were only social members. We reluctantly rejoined not wanting to be responsible for putting another nail in the Narrabri Golf Club coffin. As we were involved in this unfortunate saga I made the point of asking why the Club had cancelled the booking when I renewed our membership. I was told I should go and ask Santos. To the best of my knowledge our organisations have not tried to book the Golf Club since. This is a good example of an adverse social impact as a result of an organisation accepting sponsorship from Santos. For some the anti Santos sentiment is so strong they would prefer not to receive sponsorship from Santos. The Newcastle Uni report, Changing Land Use-Narrabri Shire Dec 2016, gives another example.

Ref 3. Appropriate Gifts or Failed Gifts? Page 72. This page follows.

the company has invested money in the local community through a range of sponsorships and community development projects, and a Community Benefit Fund estimated at \$160 million for infrastructure and regional development programs has been promised (Santos 2015).

APPROPRIATE GIFTS OR FAILED GIFTS?

Despite the stated company ethos and the significant investments that Santos has made, there is limited acceptance of the company and the proposed project within certain sections of the community. The nature of the project, the perceived environmental risks associated with CSG, and the local, national and global campaign against CSG and fossil fuels form part of community animosity and resistance. More acutely, however, opposition reflects the participants' sense of bearing the cost of the Narrabri Gas Project and receiving limited benefits in return. Many of the research participants are sceptical to Santos' community engagement and their contribution to the local community, arguing that these strategies in themselves result in negative social and cultural impacts. Bettina, one of the key stakeholders interviewed for the study, argued that Santos' investment in the local community is creating a 'welfare mentality'. Instead of gathering together and raising funds for local activities and needs, organisations will turn to 'easy money' provided by industry sponsorships. Similarly, another key stakeholder, Arthur, explained that:

the 'cargo cult' is really hooked in here because all the organisations, when they need to raise money, the first thing they will do is go to Santos. Instead of doing it the old-fashioned way of graft [...], really trying to get yourself going in all those different ways that country people have always done it in a very resilient sort of fashion, we'll just go to Santos and get some money from them.

Bettina and Caitlin both noted a cultural change within the community, whereby previously self-sufficient community groups transformed into groups expecting and relying on hand outs from coal and gas companies:

I think that it's a negative impact because [the organisations] were quite self-reliant and quite self-sufficient and they were actually only funded within their means. So they only had activities that were in their capacity to afford, whereas now you have Whitehaven, previously, and Santos, you know, and they funded a lot of things beyond what was necessary. So it creates a different level of expectation around what should happen (Bettina, key stakeholder).

In terms of the local sporting clubs, where once upon a time they'd say: 'we need to raise x amount of dollars. How are we going to do that? Cake stall?', which all serves to bring the community together, the first thing people say [now] is, 'let's go to the local mining company,' or, 'let's go to Santos', because that's considered the easy way out, but that does nothing for the community (Caitlin, farmer).

Harvey (2014) argues that transactional SLO approaches will often place an emphasis on 'outreach' and delivery of 'cargo'. This points to CSR policies that prioritise donations, direct funding or delivery of welfare programmes, unilateral construction of civic infrastructure, and community trusts, funds and foundations. The community engagement programs that the participants mention are examples of such outreach approaches, with a particular emphasis on sponsorships and donations. According to the participants, there is a general perception within the community of Santos as a simple one-stop shop for funding; if a community organisation needs money, all it has to do, they claim, is to approach Santos. Local farmer Nathan, for example, stated that: 'what we're seeing out at Santos at the moment is that if you want to sponsor an event, if you want cash, you go and see Santos. They'll cough up a coin for anything'. These sponsorships are, however, not straightforward, and might in themselves cause tension. Sarah, a farmer who remains undecided in her attitude to CSG, explained how Santos' investment in the local junior rugby club is a cause of contestation. She said that:

Santos sponsored our junior rugby [club] but we can't have their name on the jersey because so many people don't like them. So they won't allow their name to be written on the jerseys anywhere so we have it on their training shirts but it's not to be on their jersey that they wear when they play. That's because probably half the club don't want their sponsorship, so there you go (Sarah, farmer).

Whilst the community benefit schemes might be benevolent, within a contentious environment such outreach programs might, in fact, cause more opposition and concern. Some participants explain that, rather than leading to approval and acceptance of the company and the Pilliga project, these corporate contributions are fuelling scepticism and cynicism about the corporation's presence and activities. Nathan, cited above, perceives Santos' outreach practices as two-faced and argues that beside the sponsorships, the company 'does not spend a lot of money locally'. Rather than being seen as a sincere effort to compensate the community for negative

On another occasion, we had booked the Narrabri Primary School Assembly Hall for, two public information presentations outside of school hours. The school rang and cancelled these bookings so we had to again organise alternative venues. Our enquiries as to why the bookings had been cancelled led to Rebecca Langdon the Director of the Barwon Network of Public Schools based in Moree. The reasons for the cancellation were discussed with her over the phone. We were advised that our event did not comply with the Use of School Facilities Policy, but she could not describe which part of the policy. As a result of further correspondence we did receive a written reply from Rebecca Langdon, giving the reason why the events were cancelled. I quote (Concerns were raised at the local level that if the school showed the film, it may have incorrectly led to a perception that the school was supporting a political view. Because of this, the event was relocated.) She should have said (events were cancelled.) This over ruled the decision made by the local school principal.

Ref 4. Is some of the correspondence generated as a result of this cancelation and subsequent phone conversation. Please read and draw your own conclusion as to why the venue was cancelled. It could not have been due to the content of these presentations. This reference follows.

Ref 4



People For The Plains

August 20, 2014

Here's the true story!

As you all know we have had to find a new venue for both the "Community Film Night with Michael Caton" and "The Health Forum."

I think it is really important to put the truth out as to why we have been forced to do this.

According to representatives of the DEC a complaint from the community was received at their office in Sydney. After consultation with the relevant people and legal advice it was decided at a regional level to refuse the use of the Narrabri Public School Hall for our booked functions. I also have credible information that this directive has come from as high as the Minister for Education, Adrian Piccolli's, office.

The "Community Use of School Facilities Policy" states:

"In this policy schools are encouraged to make their facilities available for use by their community outside of school hours for appropriate purposes, provided this does not interfere with the school's provision of quality learning programs for its students."

Here is a link for those of you wanting to read the full document:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/.../faci.../comm_use/PD20090400.shtml

I have read this document and can't find any points where we may have breached the guidelines that would force the DEC to take this action. We have been told that the "Code of Conduct" has been breached, but I can't find a copy of it, nor could the DEC spokesperson give the exact clause/s that has been breached.

I understand that this decision has not been made at the local level so I want to make it quite clear that Narrabri Public School staff and students DO NOT and SHOULD NOT bear any responsibility for this decision.

This is quite simply a case of "Big Brother" looking after its own interests and those of Goliath by silencing the Davids.

There are positives we can gain from this blatant suppression of free speech

ahead with CSG Mining. This incident and the latest report from Crec
Sulsee prove that Santos is suffering
questioning of the CSG Industry and t
negative publicity associated with the

Well guess what Santos? This isn't th
supporters has convinced the powers
venue, doesn't mean we are going to
suppression of one of our basic rights
make me and my colleagues fight har
industry.



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mmunity
going to
this

I don't know who made the complaint and it doesn't really matter who did,
but I do know that we weren't consulted, asked to supply any documentation
supporting our request to use the facilities, or for that matter even given a
satisfactory reason for being locked out of the venue.

Is NSW turning into a police state whenever the CSG industry is
questioned? Is this the way we want to live? This decision could set a
precedent for all organisations that voice opposition or question the
decisions made by our so-called elected representatives. This is the issue
here, how many more of our rights are going to be mined away, so the
government and mining companies can make a lot of money?

The residents of Narrabri Shire have no representation at any level of
government. Our local council has a National Party Member as its leader,
Kevin Humphries and Mark Coulton are both National Party Members. We
don't even have a voice in the guise of opposition candidates. Who can we
go to for help? Who will listen to us when we speak out? We are looking
out for us don't want to know about our rights to look
the "Party Line?" against

This incident is really worrying me, it is a very serious breach of the
"Australian Code of Conduct." People from all the other
organisations out there that share our concerns, must be giving Santos,
Narrabri Shire Council, the NSW State Government and the Australian
Federal Government the biggest scare they have ever had. Have we got
something that could shut this whole project down? Are they hiding
something? Is there more to this project than they are letting on? These are
the only reasons I can think of that would make someone stoop to the lowest
of lows to ensure that we don't have a voice in this contentious issue. What
do you think?

Community Use of School Facilities Policy

Schools are valuable community assets which should be available for community use
when not required for school purposes.

DET.NSW.EDU.AU

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You, John Charles Hollis and 15 others

Top Comments

2 shares

6 Comments



Write a comment...



Rohan Boehm One thing I did want to correct though is that throughout this
post, the writer continues to mistake the National Party that was voted for at the
last election has indeed changed it name to the 'National Coal Seam Gas

Chat

Ref 4

22 August 2014

Dear Minister Piccoli

My name is Sarah Ciesiolka. I am a concerned parent of 3 children that attend Narrabri Public School in North West NSW. I have learnt this week that the Department of Education has received a complaint or complaints about the use of the school facilities outside of school hours by a local, not-for-profit organisation. As a result, the Department of Education will no longer be permitting Narrabri Public School to be the host venue for the 2 upcoming local community events designed to inform residents about the potential impacts of the CSG industry on the Narrabri Shire. This over rules the decision made by the local Principal in good faith, and seems to directly contradict the language of the much touted Local Schools, Local Decisions framework.

The decision taken by your Department this week denies one of the cornerstones of our democracy – the right to freedom of speech, and seems to be a thinly veiled attempt to silence those questioning the CSG industry in this region. The hypocrisy behind this decision is also apparent. It has for some time concerned me that the extractive industries within our Shire, and Santos in particular, are very keen to market their brand to impressionable children through our school system, with the implied permission of the Department. The recent visit to our school by Wallaby legend Tim Horan sponsored by Santos, and wearing a Santos branded shirt, was one example of this. I suspect that had he been sponsored by Lock the Gate Alliance, for instance, that this would not have been permitted by the Department.

This decision also appears to be a breach of the Department's own "Community Use of School Facilities Policy". As an active member of the school community, I would like a response from your Department outlining specifically which part of the Department's Policy has been breached. As I'm sure you will understand and appreciate, such a decision could have far reaching consequences for other local community organisations seeking the use of the facilities at Narrabri Public School.

I look forward to your response.

Kind Regards

Sarah Ciesiolka

cc. Minister Kevin Humphries, Minister Anthony Roberts



image001.png
16K

Ref 4



Education &
Communities

Public Schools NSW

Ms Sarah Ciesiolka
msciesiolka@bigpond.com

RML14/3340

Dear Ms Ciesiolka

I write in response to your email of 22 August 2014, to the Hon Adrian Picoli MP, Minister for Education, the Hon Kevin Humphries MP, Minister for Natural Resources, Lands and Water, and Minister for Western NSW, and the Hon Anthony Roberts, Minister for Resources and Energy, and Special Minister of State, regarding your concerns about the use of the Narrabri Public School Hall. The Ministers have asked me to respond on their behalf.

The Community Use of School Facilities Policy sets out the general principle that schools are encouraged to make their facilities available for use by their community outside of school hours for appropriate purposes. Section 16.2 of the Community Use of School Facilities Implementation Procedures states that I am responsible for monitoring the effective implementation of policy and procedures relating to community use of school facilities.

I must ensure that the proposed use of a school's facilities is appropriate. This is reinforced by the objectives of the Controversial Issues in Schools Policy which support the general approach by schools not to undertake any activities which would advance any particularly political or contentious view.

Concerns were raised at the local level that if the school showed the film, it may have incorrectly led to a perception that the school was supporting a political view. Because of this, the event was relocated.

I have noted your concerns and assure you that school facilities will continue to be available to the community for appropriate purposes.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Langdon
Acting Director
Public Schools NSW
Barwon Network

4 September 2014

Moree Office
66-68 Frome Street, Moree NSW 2400
Telephone: 6757 3000

PO Box 207 Moree NSW 2400
Fax: 6757 3043 www.schools.nsw.edu.au

Ref 4

Dear Michael

It was with disappointment, although not surprise, that we became aware that the Department of Education will no longer be permitting Narrabri Public School to be the host venue for the 2 upcoming local community events designed to inform local residents about the potential impacts of the CSG industry on our Shire. You would no doubt be aware of some of the deep divisions within our local community surrounding this issue. Sadly, you and Narrabri Public School have now also been embroiled in the debate. It is for this reason that we feel compelled to write and lend our support for your initial decision in making the school facilities available to a local, not-for-profit community organisation as per the Department's own "Community Use of School Facilities Policy".

In the current climate, we think it is important to acknowledge the difficult line that local schools must now tread. We hope that the situation this has now given rise to will further inform the School Council as they consider the formulation of a Sponsorship and Donation Policy where commercial entities are involved. If an event such as those described above, held outside of school hours, is considered inappropriate to be held on school grounds, then surely it is also inappropriate for our school to accept funds, goods and/or services, from any commercial organisation in exchange for advertising and publicity, including mentions in the school newsletter.

It has for some time concerned us that the extractive industries within our Shire, and Santos in particular, are very keen to market their brand to impressionable children through our school system. The recent visit by Tim Horan wearing a Santos branded shirt was one example of this. We suspect that had he been sponsored by Lock the Gate Alliance, for instance, that this would not have been permitted by the Department. Another example is the awarding of prizes in the name of particular local businesses at Presentation Night.

I appreciate that you as Principal of Narrabri Public School have been placed in a difficult position, and we offer you nothing but our continued support.

It would be great to see you and your family at one or both of these local events. This may go some way to explaining why so many people in the Narrabri Shire are already strongly opposed to the CSG industry.

Kind Regards

Sarah and Matt Ciesiolka

As discussed in our telephone conversation on 19th August, we were extremely disappointed in your decision on behalf of the Department of Education to cancel our bookings of the Narrabri Public School hall for 22nd and 31st of August. However, I appreciated your courtesy in dealing with my query and accept your apology for the inconvenience caused.

Nonetheless, I would appreciate your answer in writing to the following questions:

1. What was the precise reason for cancelling the booking?
2. Would you please provide the relevant section of the Code of Conduct alleged to have been breached.
3. Would you please provide a copy of the original school newsletter, notifying our proposed function, so that we can compare it to the Code of Conduct. (The notification was absent from subsequent editions).
4. Our reading of the community Use of School Facilities Policy suggests that our event fell within the guidelines. Do you agree and if not can you please state where we were non compliant regarding this policy?
5. Would you please provide a copy of the Ministerial directing you to investigate our use of the hall, as we would like to direct our enquiries to the person responsible for initiating this investigation.
6. The anti-coal seam gas film *Gaslands* was screened at Narrabri High School hall in 2012 without incident (not that any incident was remotely contemplated). Why was that acceptable but a community film night screening *Fractured Country* and featuring iconic Australian actor Michael Caton as guest speaker was deemed unacceptable?
7. The newsletter referred to in 3 above reports Whitehaven Coal's sponsorship of and attendance at NAIDOC Week. Santos is mentioned in other newsletters, including the Term 1 2014 edition, where Santos is recorded as giving out hats to students for Clean Up Australia Day. On Science Day 2013, a number of scientists came to school, including a "scientist" from Santos, who told the children CSG was safe, etc. At a Presentation of School Leaders assembly in 2014, a former student and now Santos employee, dressed in Santos branded workwear, talked about the qualities of leadership, and then, at the end, went on for several minutes to extol the virtues of Santos.

Why are fossil-fuel companies allowed to interact with primary school students whereas our organisation cannot hold an film night or forum on the school premises, out of school hours, for adults to discuss issues concerning the exploitation of fossil fuels?

8. For your information, I have attached a short explanation of the role of our organisation. Why did you not contact us to discuss our role, and the program and purpose of the proposed functions, before cancelling our use of the school hall?

9. Will the policy be applied to other groups which might have a particular viewpoint, such as religious groups who have used the hall in the past? Will these groups be refused use of the hall in the future?

10. The film night and forum were open to the public and everyone was free to come and go as they wished. As you'll note from the attached, our purpose is the dissemination of information. A couple of Santos employees attended and stayed for the whole proceedings and were treated with utmost respect. We would hope to have the opportunity to use the hall in the future. I would be grateful if you would advise if this would be permissible.

Kind regards

Hugh Barrett, President
People for the Plains

The first of these public information evenings was transferred to the Narrabri Uniting Church Hall a short distance from the school hall. The night featured the film Fractured Country. A copy is enclosed so you can check its content. There were also three guest speakers. One was the Australian actor Michael Caton and two farmers' wives, Mrs Sarah Ciesiolka and Mrs Anne Kennedy.

The second of these public information evenings was transferred to the Narrabri Bowling Club. The guest speakers at this event were, Dr Geralyn McCarron speaking on the Health Impacts of CSG, Dr Marion Lloyd-Smith a Snr Advisor-National Toxics Network, and Dr Hugh Barrett, with a presentation on what to expect if the NGP is approved in the Narrabri area together with pictures gathered on a fact-finding tour of the Queensland CSG fields.

I know of two instances of (in my opinion relatively minor) violence and verbal abuse by CSG supporters towards protestors.

Ref 5. Is a video on Face Book- 'YES 2 GAS from The Pilliga-The Facts', where police eventually intervene. A copy of the video accompanies this submission on a DVD.

Another incident involved the Knitting Nanas who were protesting peacefully outside the Santos Office in Narrabri. A 'Yes to Gas' supporter abused them, reefered a chair from beneath one Knitting Nana and threw her chair into the street.

There was an incident involving the Police use of pepper spray on a defenceless woman protester locked to equipment.

Ref 6. Google, 'Pepper spray won't keep us away', will provide some information on this incident. Also attached is an article published in the Northern Daily Leader covering this event.

REF 6

The Northern Daily
LEADER (1)

Sergeant Grant Bell pleads not guilty to assault in Gunnedah Local Court after Pilliga protest

Sam Woods and Breanna Chillingworth

9 Feb 2017, 6:30 p.m.

<https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/4458628/cop-warned-protester-before-arrest/>

http://twitter.com/share?url=http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/4458628/cop-warned-protester-before-arrest/&text=Cop%20%E2%80%98warned%E2%80%99%20protester%20before%20arrest&via=The_NDL

<mailto:?subject=Cop 'warned' protester before arrest&body=Hi,I found this article - Cop 'warned' protester before arrest, and thought you might like it http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/4458628/cop-warned-protester-before-arrest/>



Charges denied: The hearing continues in Gunnedah Local Court.

A COURT has heard a police officer charged with assaulting a mining protester during an arrest warned the woman she would be removed with force if necessary.

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) alleges Sergeant Grant James Bell assaulted Kerrie Tomkins causing actual bodily harm during an arrest, as well as common assault, at the

Leewood facility in the Pilliga in February, last year.

• News • Business

Sergeant Bell, who is attached to the Barwon local area command, has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Gunnedah Local Court was played video of the arrest on Thursday morning on the first day of the hearing.

The court heard Ms Tomkins entered the Santos-operated site on the morning of February 1.

DPP solicitor Cassandra Hurford said Ms Tomkins entered with a group of protesters and "locked" onto a grader with a second woman.

She said the group of protesters were asked to leave by security, but when they refused, police were called.

Officers asked the group to leave the site but the two "locked-on" protesters remained.

When questioned in the witness box about the reason for her actions, Ms Tomkins said it was "because the environment doesn't have a voice".

"[I] felt strong penetration of aerosol, I couldn't breath, I was in shock ... I know it was Sergeant Bell that sprayed me," she told the court.

[I] felt strong penetration of aerosol, I couldn't breath, I was in shock ... I know it was Sergeant Bell that sprayed me.

- Kerrie Tomkins

But defence barrister Ray Hood said Sergeant Bell had warned the women.

"I've been more than fair to you ladies ... you've done your protest and you have your photos and video," he said reading a statement, adding that Sergeant Bell had warned that failing to comply with directions from police could result in further offences.

"I'm now going to arrest you. If you resist, sufficient force will be used to make you comply."

Mr Hood argued Ms Tomkins had "had tangled part of [her] body" around another protester during the incident.

"What you did was make it [the arrest] as difficult as you could?" he asked Ms Tomkins.

"Yes," she replied.

Under cross-examination about whether Ms Tomkins was thrown or lifted over the grader, Mr Hood questioned Ms Tomkins if she thought the video footage had been doctored.

Ms Tomkins told the court "anything is possible".

The hearing continues.

Depending on the person a level of anxiety or fear is not uncommon and many prefer to appear neutral when it comes to taking a side either for or against CSG. Many people will not display a yellow triangle in their front yard in fear of retribution. For some even getting yelled at can be intimidating. Recently during the night 8-9 March a friend had their Yellow triangle torn down from in front of their home.



Most businesses in Narrabri probably prefer to appear neutral as to be openly for or against the NGP could risk some level of boycott on their business by people who do not share their view.

The most notable example of this problem involved the local optometrist who at the time was also the President of the Chamber of commerce and a supporter of the NGP. He also had a sign (We Love Santos) in his shop window. A series of his public comments some of which were reported in the press were particularly offensive to many people including

farmers who did not share his view. Calling these people (a group of know-alls ready to put the clappers on that as well) meaning the Pilliga Gas Project, and (bugger of you guys!)

Ref 7. Newspaper articles follow.

Richard Orr's letters

REF 7

Narrabri Valley
Independent

January 7, 2012

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Pilliga pipeline is heating up

November 30, 2010

Chairman of Narrabri Chamber of Commerce, Richard Orr, has hit out at the "conservation movement and special interest groups" whom he claims are high-jacking the agenda on coal and gas development in the Gunnedah Coal Basin.

In an interview with The Narrabri Courier, Mr Orr said "enough is enough".

"When did common sense leave our community?" Mr Orr asked in the article.

"The conservation movement and the special interest groups have hijacked the agenda in some farce that seems to have no regard for facts or even reasonable science."

Mr Orr called on the Narrabri community to stand together and "grasp the initiative to challenge the absolute misconceptions of the Mullaley and Carcoona groups which are painting all environmental changes with their own slanted view of life".

"Coal and gas exploration and production in Narrabri is not unduly damaging the environment and is a necessary element in our progress as a community," he said.

"It is simply wrong to dump all operators in the basket of "environmental vandals" and not look at any of the facts about how responsible their operations are.

"The assaults as a community that we have received from the doubtful science and motives of the Murray Darling Basin Authority, which is apparently the expert on how much water the environment needs, is horrific enough, but now the scaremongering of the Hunter, Mullaley and Carcoona groups are being just as doubtful as they ignore even the basic geography of our region to try and hijack our coal and gas production."

The Carcoona Coal Action Committee has been locked in a long-running battle with mining giants Chinese Shenhua Group and BHP Billiton over mining exploration on the Liverpool Plains while the Mullaley Gas & Pipeline Accord is opposing Eastern Star Gas' plans to put a pipeline through the Mullaley, Tambar Springs, Coolah region to Wellington.

"These groups seem to forget that we need real jobs and real productivity to make our economy grow and prosper.

"The so-called "green" tinge to all this has very little to do with a healthy environment – which we are all interested in maintaining – but a political agenda to dominate and do deals to gain power.

"Do you remember when Bob Carr sold us out to the Greens by locking up the Pilliga Forest because of its high conservation value?

"Good export industries were closed down with real jobs gone and now the Pilliga is an ill-maintained fire hazard suitable for feral animals only.

"We finally get a chance at being productive using the underground resources of the Pilliga for clean fuel and once again there is a group of "know-alls" ready to put the clappers on that as well.

"Bugger off you guys!"

"We're sick to death of being told what we can and cannot do by Sydney and Canberra and now of all people, farmers at Mullaley!

"Roads, rail, irrigation channels, gas pipes and electricity lines are all infrastructure that is needed to allow productive use of resources – including food and fibre – for any region.

"What right do you have to limit our production?"

Mr Orr said Eastern Star Gas was a valued member of the business community providing work and security of future work for the Narrabri community.

"We are pro-agriculture and pro-mining in the Narrabri Shire and are right behind extending production for the economic well being of this region."

Time for a reality check on energy, environment

Narrabri Chamber of Commerce president, Mr. Richard Orr, has

called for reality to be re-introduced into the debate on the environ-

ment, farming and the development of regional energy resources.

Mr. Orr has urged the community to 'take a stand' as a 'green-driven' agenda threatens to overwhelm balanced discussion.

"We are used to Sydney and Canberra politicians, bureaucrats and greens telling us what we can and can't do, but now a handful of farm-

ers at Mullaley are setting out to dictate the future of NSW's project which will benefit regional Australia. When did common sense leave our community? The conservation movement and the special interest groups have hijacked the agenda to some force that seems to have no regard for facts or reasonable science."

To page 3

Energy projects vital for Narrabri region

From page 1

"Narrabri community, we need to stand together and grasp the initiative to challenge the absolute misconceptions of the Mullaley and Caroonia groups who are painting all environmental changes with their own view of life" said Mr Orr.

"Coal and gas exploration and production in Narrabri is not unduly damaging the environment and is a necessary element in our progress as a community.

"It is simply wrong to dump all operators in the basket of 'environmental vandals' and not look

at any of the facts about how responsible their operations are.

"The assaults as a community that we have received from the doubtful science and motives of the Murray Darling Basin Authority, who are apparently the experts on how much water the environment needs, is

horrific enough, but now the scaremongering of the Hunter, Mullaley and Caroonia groups are being just as doubtful as they ignore even the basic geography of our region to try and hijack our coal and gas production.

"They seem to forget that we need real jobs and real productivity to make our economy grow and prosper.

"We can't all sit around and live on social security.

"The so-called 'green' tinge to all this has very little to do with a healthy environment, which we are all interested in maintaining, but a political agenda to dominate and do deals to gain power.

"People will remember when former NSW Premier Bob Carr sold us out to the Greens by locking up the Pilliga Forest because of its high conservation value.

"Good export industries were closed down with real jobs gone and now the Pilliga is an ill-maintained fire hazard suitable only for feral animals.

"We finally get a chance of being productive using the underground resources of the Pilliga for clean fuel and once again there is a

group of 'know-nothings' ready to pin the clippings on that as well" Mr. Orr said.

"We're sick to death of being told what we can and cannot do by Sydney and Canberra and now, of all places a few farmers at Mullaley.

"Roads, rail, irrigation channels, gas pipes and electricity lines are all infrastructure that is needed to allow productive use of resources, including food and fibre, for any region.

"What right does this handful have to limit our production?

"Eastern Star (he is a valued member of our business community providing work and security of future work for our community.

"We are pro agriculture and pro mining in the Narrabri Shire and we right behind extending production for the economic well being of this region."

The result was an unknown number of people boycotting his business with some personally letting him know they were not going to do business with him anymore. When my husband went to advise him of our decision to take our business elsewhere the (We Love Santos) sign had already been taken down. Mr Orr defended his statements to my husband by saying he has a right to express his opinion. My husband agreed, adding so do we the farmers yet you want us to (bugger off). He later sold his business and stood down as the President of the Chamber of Commerce. This incident and subsequent downturn in his business may not have had any bearing on Mr Orr's decision to sell his business.

Not long after rumours were circulating that my husband had verbally abused Mr Orr at his shop in front of customers. The main source of the rumour was Mr Orr and the new President of the Chamber of Commerce. My husband approached them both and suggested they stop, which they agreed to do. However the damage was already done. Reference to this incident was made in a letter to the Editor of the Narrabri Courier 7/4/2014 which follows as [Ref 8](#).

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information on chemicals and health as "misinformation", yet she was criticised in subsequent letters from P4P supporters for ignoring "factual evidence".

No one disputes the facts, but what they are evidence of.

The Courier headline for the letter in response was "Only the Facts". Yes, they are 'only facts' until interpreted, and this requires either forensic cross examination in a court of law or peer review by scientists.



So here
am I still
left sitting on
the fence. I
don't want CSG
development (or
mining) in my
backyard, but
I deplore using
junk science and
intimidation to
oppose it.

What was presented at the Forum was spin, just like politicians'.

CSG opponents argue that methane emissions during CSG extraction negate the benefits of CSG as a cleaner fossil fuel than coal.

A CSIRO study showed this is not the case: 0.02% of the gas escapes as emissions, 1/200th of the amount needed to negate the benefits.

However there are also unmeasured losses during transmission.

Disposal of salt produced as a by-product is a major concern. At first Santos was evasive, but now says it will be trucked out of the district and disposed legally in a NSW EPA regulated facility.

Another concern is the risk of polluting water supplies, either by chemicals used in drilling or by the release of naturally occurring chemicals such as uranium as a result of geological disturbance during drilling.

Santos claims that its technology is safe, but opponents say it is not. Neither side has presented evidence based on a scientific study.

The banning late last year of CSG in the Sydney basin, and the recent ban on further CSG exploration in NSW are cause for concern. However the ban was not based on scientific evidence.

The Minister's press release cited 'community concerns'.

The political process is so poll-driven and corrupt, that a political decision is no guide to the scientific truth of a matter.

opportunities.
Social licence is community approval independent of the legislative regulatory system. Community attitudes are assessed in categories of people who totally reject, tolerate, accept, approve or embrace CSG, but there are no recognised numbers in each category to indicate that a community has granted a Social Licence.

Results of a recent CSIRO survey in the Queensland CSG fields are interesting: 9% reject; 69% tolerate or accept, 22% approve or embrace CSG.

The report does not indicate whether or not this means the community has granted a Social Licence. However it does put into perspective the health survey and the P4P tour of the Queensland gas fields reported at the Forum: residents in the gas fields do not find CSG as negative as either report painted it.

No comparable figures are available for Narrabri, but probably no more than 1% totally oppose CSG, and possibly only 0.1%, judging by numbers of "NO GAS" stickers and signs on cars and homes seen around town - scarcely enough to conclude that the community has not granted Social Licence.

Can a vocal and articulate minority claim by virtue of their protests that the community has not granted a Social Licence, and thereby veto the interests and wishes of the rest of the community?

Each side accuses the other of bullying and intimidation.

Visitors who inspect CSG sites complain of being videoed and followed by a Santos vehicle. CCTV surveillance by fixed cameras in public places is a regrettable fact of modern life, and is reasonable at a sensitive industrial site vulnerable to eco-terrorism.

But the scale and intensity of surveillance is unnecessarily aggressive and discourteous, with visitors shadowed and videoed long after leaving the vicinity of a site, and with the Santos employees involved refusing to answer questions or to give their names. On the other side, a local businessman working at a Santos site was videoed by a CSG opponent.

A resident wrote a letter to The Courier about misinformation presented at the Forum, and was harshly criticised by two P4P supporters for not voicing her concerns at the meeting.

In her own words, she would have been crucified if she had.

And she had grounds for her fear.

A Narrabri businessman was verbally abused on his premises by a P4P member and threatened with a boycott of his business for supporting Santos.

Friends, in a civilised community

CSG are always accompanied by an article requested by the Courier from Santos, but not visa versa. I find no evidence of this.

The Courier has just covered the NSW Chief Scientist's Final Report on CSG.

As well as its own brief neutral comment, The Courier printed the Executive Summary, and invited three comments - from P4P, Cotton Australia and Santos.

Given Cotton Australia has reservations, if there is any bias it is towards opponents rather than the industry.

Companies engaged in CSG extraction vary in their technological skill and in the professionalism of their business practices.

There have been 'cowboys' who gave the industry a bad name and contributed to the negative image. Some of the problems in the Narrabri district resulted from the flawed practices of the company that preceded Santos, and Santos has rectified their errors.

Is the community deeply divided over CSG?

Or is it only a small minority who oppose CSG?

Perhaps a more relevant question is do groups like P4P and Yes2Gas have licence to represent the community?

Each side in the debate needs to consider an exit strategy. Some in the community appear to regard CSG and Santos as unmitigated evil to be fought as fascism was opposed in WW2 and fought to the bitter end.

I do not see it that way, and there is no room for a Churchill-like 'we will never surrender' stance. Nevertheless it is a battle for the hearts and minds of the community. Compromise is impossible.

There is no win-win solution. One side will lose, and my concern is that it may leave a festering wound in the community that has been my home for 40 years.

Or worse, violence will erupt as it did recently at Croppa Creek when feelings ran high over a land issue. The NSW Chief Scientist concludes in the recently released Final Report on CSG that there are risks with CSG, as there are with any extractive or manufacturing industry, but these can be managed.

So here am I still left sitting on the fence.

I don't want CSG development (or mining) in my backyard, but I deplore using junk science and intimidation to oppose it.

Should my selfishness as a relatively comfortable retiree deprive the majority of the community of enjoying the economic benefits if they so choose?

Brian Hearn
Narrabri

Courier Letter to the Editor 7/10/2014

Ref 8.

This letter to the Editor of the Courier was written by a person who was a bushwalking friend of my husband and others at the time. His comments were made worse by the fact he linked the incident to People for the Plains who had nothing to do with the interaction with Mr Orr and his business. In the same letter to the Editor but in the paragraph, that precedes this comment he makes reference to a resident's letter to the editor claiming People For the Plains presented misinformation at a forum. She also claimed that she was harshly criticised by two People for the Plains supporters for not voicing her concerns at the meeting. In her own words, she would have been crucified if she had. This letter writer was at the time a Santos employee. The three speakers at this forum all had a Dr to their name so were well qualified to speak on their subject. It is unusual for Santos Narrabri employees to conduct a public smear campaign against People for the Plains, they leave this job to Gas Industry funded organisations such as The Energy Resource Information Centre.

Ref 9. Are examples of the smear campaign run by the gas industry funded Information Centre.

Court case 'waste of time and money', says reader

It was a dubious claim to begin with: People for the Plains taking Santos to court to try to stop construction of a water treatment plant which will produce 'new' irrigation water from otherwise unusable brine - a clear community benefit.

It gets worse when you understand that this failed court action is this week (October 28) going to a higher court appeal - again at taxpayer expense.

Why isn't People for the Plains paying?

Because the case is being run by the Environmental Defenders Office - an environmental lawyers group funded by Government grants to the tune of \$3 million a year.

And what does the EDO do with this public money?

Seems a fair whack is spent running court actions against resource companies at the behest of activist groups hell-bent on an immediate end to fossil fuel development.

These groups operate to the theme that any and every technique should be used to stop resource projects - regardless of whether they are properly licensed by the taxpayers' representatives - the government.

Such was the case in Queensland in September, when the Court of Appeal tossed out the EDO's third court-action seeking to stop the

approved Alpha coal project.

The use of legal challenges is one of the tactics documented by environmental activist groups in their published strategy document 'Stopping the Australian Coal Export Boom'.

It appears we are on a similar road in northern NSW.

The Land and Environment Court recently tossed out the People for the Plains/EDO case (filed in two separate actions) that the Leewood desalination plant was unlawful.

And the court was pretty plain with its conclusions:

The Leewood Project in part, is properly characterised as being for the purpose of the activity of petroleum exploration and is, thus, permitted by the provisions of clause 6(c) of the Mining SEPP without development consent; and The lucerne cropping activities proposed for PAL 2 are a separate and distinct use properly characterised as 'extensive agriculture' for the purposes of the Narrabri LEP and thus do not require consent under that instrument.

As a consequence, there is no need to consider the potential operation of either the Infrastructure SEPP or the assessment requirements of or consent processes under the Narrabri LEP.

It therefore follows that these proceedings, too, should be

dismissed.

But, like taxpayer money, the court judgement is no object for the EDO. It has launched an appeal, which will no doubt be expensive and time consuming for the company which has to defend it, ie Santos.

That after all, is the apparent intention of the litigation strategy: If you can't win the case, don't stop trying, because the taxpayer is paying and the company is copping the expense.

Happy days...

Of course this will not be the only waste of taxpayer funds.

'Delaying' claims are an abuse of process and a frustrating and costly drain on court time and therefore the public purse.

It is a perversion of the democratic process that we elect governments to responsibly assess, monitor and tax resource developments - only to see the same governments put our funds into groups which feel free to set about frustrating the process, adding an additional tax on the companies diligently following the required path.

Unfortunately, in this case, the additional 'tax' delivers no community benefit - it is simply money wasted on self-indulgent ideology.

And that does not benefit anyone.

Steve Wright
Energy Resource Information Centre
director

Gas Industry
funded

Part of the slow campaign against People For the Plains.

See People for the Plains reply next page with the truth.

Courier 1 Nov 2016

Court action no perversity, says People for the Plains

The letter from Steve Wright (The Courier, October 25) is so deceiving as to require a name change by this dubious organisation 'Steve Wright, Director of Energy Resources Misinformation Centre'.

The letter has deliberately misconstrued the following points:

1. If People for the Plains had won the court case (or do win the upcoming appeal) it would not have stopped the construction of the water treatment facility at Leewood. It would force Santos to submit an Environmental Impact Statement which allows for a greater level of scrutiny by locals and experts about the impacts. Santos has constructed a commercial water treatment plant at Leewood capable of treating 1.5 million litres of water from the coal seams every day. The key points in our legal challenge were around the scale of the facility indicating their intention to use it for their (as yet not approved) production phase,

not the exploration phase.

2. Steve Wright says People for the Plains are not paying for this court case because the EDO is running the case. This is blatant misinformation. The final cost of this court case to People for the Plains is not yet known but it is a significant sum of money that we have had to raise. For this reason the decision to take legal action against Santos was not taken lightly. Funds were raised from across the community and the two crowd funders were completed remarkably quickly, demonstrating the strong support across community for this legal action. Furthermore the bringing of this case has been strongly supported by the barristers (not EDO) who have largely undertaken the work pro-bono due to their strong belief that this is a miscarriage of justice.

3. Steve Wright incorrectly gives the impression that the EDO is only funded by Government grants and

therefore People for the Plains court action against Santos is being funded by the taxpayer. This is again misleading. The EDO also privately raises significant funds, willingly donated by people who believe in the need for the service they offer.

4. This leads to Steve's claim that this is all "a perversity of democratic process". The opposite is in fact true as the Government funds all sorts of legal aid, including a small amount through the EDO. This funding gives people access to the legal system they could not otherwise afford. Without this funding only the rich and powerful elite would have access to the justice system which is exactly what Steve Wright and the gas industry would prefer. Now that would be a "perversity of democratic process".

Sally Hunter
vice chair
People for the Plains

The truth

Reply to Energy Resource Information Centre

Industry presence on GISERA committee 'concerning'


Studies of industry-funded research in other industries has shown that research findings that benefit the industry are far more likely in industry-sponsored studies than in independently-funded studies.

For example, industry sponsored research into the effectiveness of artificial sweeteners in weight loss has been found to be 17 times more likely to deliver a favourable result for industry than non-industry funded research.

While this does not mean that all industry-funded research should be dismissed, it does mean that any industry-funded research that is produced should be closely scrutinised.

GISERA (The Courier editorial, October 27) receives the lion's share of its funding, over 15 million

dollars, from CSG companies including APLNG, Santos, QGC, AGL and Origin.

 These companies stand to gain enormously if they can allay concerns.

These companies stand to gain enormously if they can allay community concerns over the impacts of what is undeniably an industry with serious environmental and social impacts. It can be the difference between getting the green light as they did in Queensland or facing bans or moratoriums as they have in Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern

Territory. Even more concerning is the presence of CSG industry executives on all the research committees.

Gas industry executives make up half the National Research Management Committee and 20 per cent of the Queensland and NSW Committees.

Having any members of research management committees with such a clear conflict of interest is clearly problematic.

It is also unnecessary. There is no reason for any gas executives to be on these committees, and this is why The Australia Institute calls on them to vacate these positions to assist GISERA in earning the trust of the community.

Mark Ogge
The Australia Institute principal
adviser

Ref 9.

Courier 1 NOV 2016

↑
an example of why there is a lack of trust.

REF 9

Bruce Holland is another

gas industry mouth-piece.

More of the shut campaign

From Energy Resources Information Centre.

There's plenty of gas, but we're selling most of it overseas

I write in response to Bruce Holland's letter on Tuesday, March 14. He wrote about the current discussion surrounding the supposed 'gas shortage'.

He raised some interesting points, however, he also made one huge omission - exports.

You cannot have a serious, honest discussion about our domestic gas supply and prices without acknowledging the astounding

amount of gas we export as a nation. If you're going to export a large portion of the domestic production there will be supply issues for domestic customers.

Please - let's not pretend these supply issues are a result of lack of gas operations on the Australian east coast rather than the result of export contracts, global market forces and politics.

At present Australia is one of the world's largest suppliers of gas behind Qatar, in four years Australia will be the largest supplier of gas in the world.

The discussion of our local gas proposal aside, whether you are for or against, it's the dishonest PR messaging around this issue that I find most distressing.

Lynne Tapp
Narrabri

Another case of 'abusing the legal system'?

Lock The Gate affiliate People for the Plains has again been rebuffed in court - this time by the highest court in the state - in its long-running attempt to stop the Leewood water treatment plant. The NSW Court of Appeal last week tossed out the appeal brought by People for the Plains, with help from the activist lawyer organisation, the Environmental Defenders Office. People for the Plains/EDO had already had their expensive, time consuming action dismissed by the Land and Environment Court. Now their appeal has not only been tossed out, but the Court of Appeal has also ordered that People for the Plains pay costs. This may be alarming news for People for the Plains, which has had a cheap shout to date, because the EDO is taxpayer funded, by

virtue of millions of dollars in Government grants in the past few years - though it is doubtful the Queensland and NSW Governments anticipated how grant money would be spent when funding was allocated. EDO has used court actions to try to stop properly approved and licensed resources projects in Queensland and NSW. In the Leewood instance, costs could be as high as \$600,000 or more (excluding costs of the EDO legal team). It is unlikely People for the Plains will be able to pay this substantial bill, so the question is will they pay whatever cash they have to the court and declare bankruptcy? Or will they try to ignore the orders and hope it all goes away? Perhaps the multi-million-dollar Lock The Gate organisation might

stump up? The appeal case decided last week centres on the water treatment plant built by Santos in the preliminary stages of its proposed natural gas development at Leewood.

It is odd, to say the least, that environmental activists are protesting a plant built solely for the purpose of purifying water. What's more, this is water from deep underground, salty and unusable, which is then desalinated and purified.

The output is previously unavailable water which can be put to constructive use by local land owners.

Putting the merits of the People for the Plains/EDO case aside, the motivation behind the court action is questionable.

At least one Federal Minister.

Resources Minister Senator Matt Canavan, has described EDO activities as "deliberately obstructive".

In a recent speech to a resources industry gathering, Senator Canavan said EDO and other activist groups appeared to be "ideologically opposed to development - be it in mining, agriculture, housing developments or tourism infrastructure".

This approach was "a great threat" to economic dynamics in the States, Senator Canavan said.

"This debate is not about the environment. It is about the proper balance between protecting the environment and encouraging a strong economy that can create jobs and spur development."

What makes the situation more galling in the Narrabri sense is that a key claim of the case against

the Leewood plant was that the project was not subject to proper assessment.

Yet, environmental groups actually made submissions to the planning assessment process - a process which concluded long before the recent court case and appeal.

Does that sound like a winning legal strategy?

Perhaps it doesn't matter too much when taxpayers are footing the bill and there is pretty much nil financial risk in losing the case from the EDO standpoint.

But it does fit nicely with what the Queensland Resources Council calls the activist tactic of "abusing the legal system to try to frustrate and add costs to developments".

Steve Wright
Energy Resources Information Centre director
Sydney

Letter 29/3/2017

The Coal Seam Gas debate in Na

Ref 10

7/10/2014

Lourier Letter to the Editor

Ref 10

A robust debate on CSG has been going on in Narrabri for a year or more, with articles and letters in The Courier, and public meetings organised by both sides. The Shire Council and the Chamber of Commerce strongly support CSG development for its economic benefits.

People for the Plains (P4P) emerged as a community organisation opposed to CSG, followed by Yes2Gas on the other side.

The debate has intensified, but is no nearer resolution, if indeed resolution is possible.

And I have been sitting on the fence, leaning one way and then the other as I hear argument and counter argument, and I am no closer to being convinced than I was a year ago.

My gut reaction was to oppose CSG development, as I didn't want to see the landscape in my back yard disfigured by industrialisation, nor risk having water supplies polluted. I support P4P in their purported purpose of providing information, and as a tool for keeping the industry honest.

Reviewing what I have heard and read so far, I reluctantly conclude that a better case has been made for CSG than against.

It is painful to say this, not least as it will test my friendship with some of the leading opponents of CSG, but my integrity demands that I do so.

Though my head says yes to CSG, my heart still says no.

CSG provides cheaper, cleaner energy at a time when energy costs are rising.

Opponents say cheaper renewables are just round the corner.

But as long as they are still just round the corner we cannot use them.

Some local businesses benefit greatly from the CSG development at a time when the going is tough as a result of the economic downturn and drought, and they risk having to close.

Local business proprietors are the unsung heroes of the community.

CSG also creates jobs as well as income for landowners

whose properties Santos uses.

Opponents say the economic negatives far outweigh the benefits. Both sides are making assertions, but neither side has presented any numbers.

We need a cost-benefit analysis and a balance sheet. Without numbers we have no means of judging who is right. Of course even then, economic benefit is not everything: man shall not live by bread alone!

It is rarely mentioned that a gas-fuelled power station was built 30 years ago at Wilga Park near

CSG is at least as safe as conventional gas, and probably safer, provided fracking is not used (and fracking is not needed, and cannot be legally used).

CSG is safer because it is not so deep, and therefore not under as much pressure and drilling involves less geological disturbance.

The power station now uses gas from the local CSG assessment program, with the power being fed into the grid.

Though P4P are an information group, their public face is opposition and protest.

Speakers at their meetings are always vehemently against CSG.

A genuine commitment to information would include information in favour.

Stalls at their meetings and markets have only protest materials.

There are a few grains of genuine doubt in the chaff of alarmist rhetoric peddled by celebrity activists and pseudo scientists, but they are lost.

What is presented is junk science at best.

At the recent P4P Forum a speaker whose credentials were a PhD in Law and an adviser to a toxins protest group, talked about the massive quantities of toxic chemicals used in drilling.

Santos acknowledges this, but says the chemicals are no more toxic than chemicals found in most kitchen cupboards; if you drink them they'll kill you, but they are safe if used according to the label.

The speaker did not present any information about the concentration of these chemicals in the air of residential area or in water supplies, much less whether they were at toxic concentrations. It is all a matter of the dose.

It is the same with medications; if you exceed the dose you will suffer.

As others have already noted, the concern over chemicals is repeating concern in the early days of cotton in the district.

Just using the word 'chemical' sends some people into a panic.

Add 'toxic' and you have paranoia.

To put the toxic chemical issue into perspective, naturally occurring carcinogens in food are more abundant than pesticide residues.

A single cup of coffee contains more natural carcinogens than consumed in a year from pesticide residues in regular food.

Also at the Forum a GP listed health problems in 38 households in a community in a Queensland gas field.

But there was no control community for comparison, and in any case correlation does not prove cause and effect.

Again it is a reminder of the early days in cotton when claims were

miles".

Of course it got a laugh, but taken literally it means nowhere on the planet.

It was rhetorical hyperbole to hide ignorance.

In a letter to The Courier a Santos employee correctly labelled the information on chemicals and health as "misinformation", yet she was criticised in subsequent letters from P4P supporters for ignoring "factual evidence".

No one disputes the facts, but what they are evidence of.

The Courier headline for the letter in response was "Only the Facts".

Yes, they are 'only facts' until interpreted, and this requires either forensic cross examination in a court of law or peer review by scientists.



So here am I still left sitting on the fence. I don't want CSG development (or mining) in my backyard, but I deplore using junk science and intimidation to oppose it.

What was presented at the Forum was spin, just like politicians'.

CSG opponents argue that methane emissions during CSG extraction negate the benefits of CSG as a cleaner fossil fuel than coal.

A CSIRO study showed this is not the case: 0.02% of the gas escapes as emissions, 1/200th of the amount needed to negate the benefits.

However there are also unmeasured losses during transmission.

Disposal of salt produced as a by-product is a major concern. At first Santos was evasive, but now says it will be trucked out of the district and disposed legally in a NSW EPA regulated facility.

Another concern is the risk of polluting water supplies, either by chemicals used in drilling or by the release of naturally occurring chemicals such as uranium as a result of geological disturbance during drilling.

Santos claims that its technology is safe, but opponents say it is not. Neither side has presented evidence based on a scientific study.

The banning late last year of CGS in the Sydney basin, and the

At this point the question 'Social Licence' enters. Opponents say Santos have a Social Licence. 'Social Licence' is a real weapon in the conflict gas and mining industry opponents.

Social licence is community approval independent of legislative regulatory support. Community attitudes are in categories of people totally reject, tolerate, approve or embrace CSG. There are no recognisers in each category to indicate a community has granted Licence.

Results of a recent CSII in the Queensland CSG are interesting: 9% reject, 22% tolerate or accept, 22% embrace CSG.

The report does not indicate whether or not this means community has granted Licence. However from the perspective of the health of the P4P tour of the Queensland gas fields reported at the residents in the gas field find CSG as negative as report painted it.

No comparable figures exist for Narrabri, but probably less than 1% totally oppose CSG, possibly only 0.1%. Judging numbers of "NO GAS" signs on cars and homes around town - scarcely conclude that the community has not granted Social Licence. Can a vocal and articulate claim by virtue of their perspective that the community has a Social Licence, and the interests and wishes of the community?

Each side accuses the other of bullying and intimidation. Visitors who inspect CSG complain of being videoed followed by a Santos van CCTV surveillance by fixed in public places is a regret of modern life, and is really a sensitive industrial site to eco-terrorism.

But the scale and intensity of surveillance is unnecessary aggressive and discourages visitors shadowed and vilified after leaving the vicinity and with the Santos employees involved refusing to answer questions or to give their names. On the other side, a local businessman working at the site was videoed by a CS opponent.

A resident wrote a letter to The Courier about misinformation presented at the Forum, and harshly criticised by two

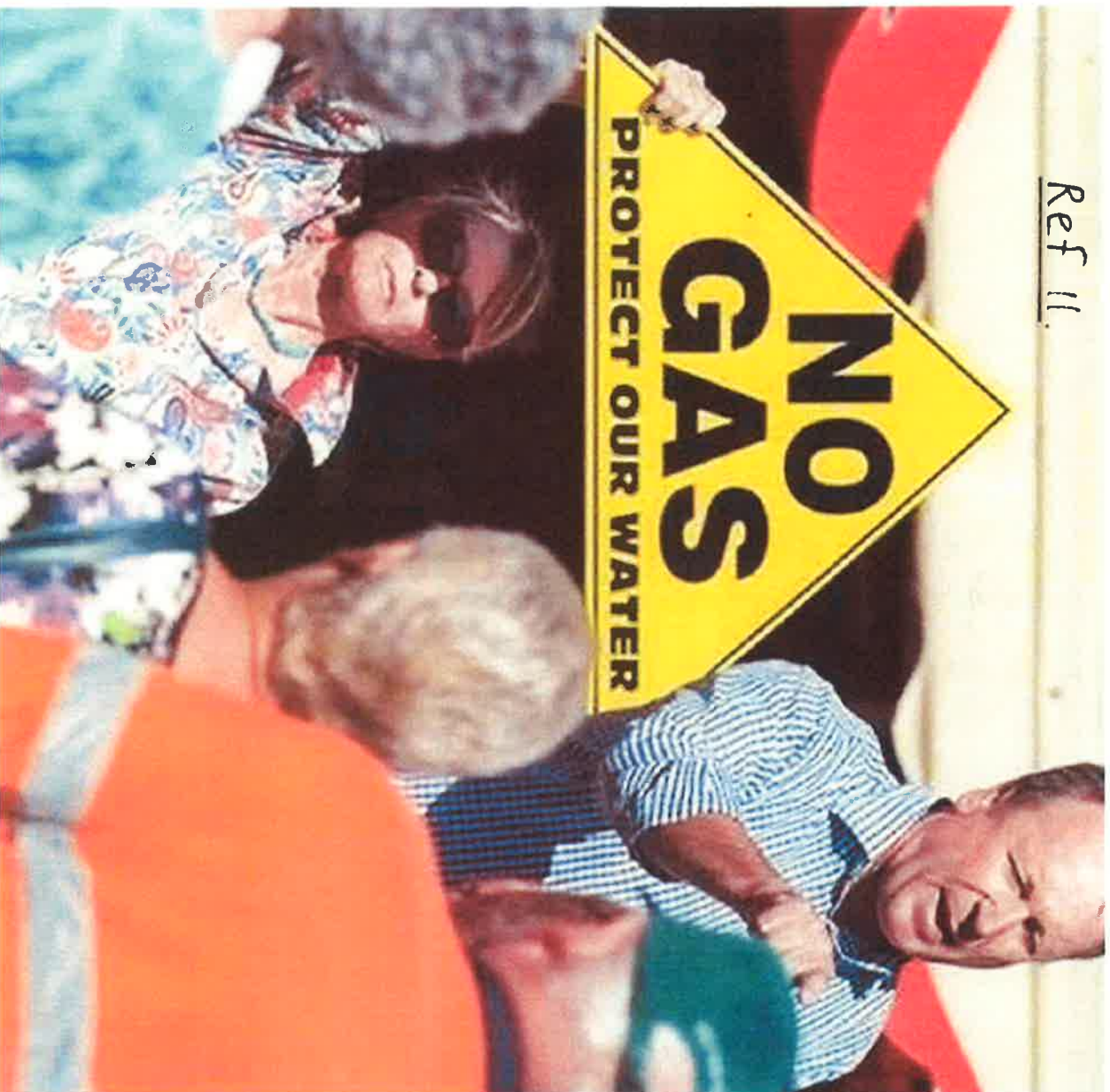
The writer near the beginning of this letter states, (it is painful to say this, not the least as it will test my friendship with some of the leading opponents of CSG, but my integrity demands that I do so). He was right these friendships will never be the same. What made the incident worse was the fact that the writer sent this letter to his friends before it was published asking if they wanted to comment. They did want to comment asking the writer to wait so the content could be discussed before he had it published. They were not given a chance as the letter was published in the next addition of the Courier Paper. So much for integrity.

Some people were particularly upset by this action and the very sad aspect is the writer and his friends were all members of the Narrabri Bushwalking Club. This has driven a wedge through the 43 year old Narrabri Bushwalking Club. A full copy of the letter to the Editor referred to in Ref 8 and Ref 10, is attached to this submission. It will give more insight into how the adverse social impact is fuelled.

The social impacts have also been exacerbated by the one-sided attitude of most of our politicians particularly those in power at present. During the last NSW State Election candidates were being interviewed by ABC radio at Watsons Kitchen in Narrabri. Outside on the footpath was a gathering of approximately 25 Yes to Gas supporters made up mostly of contractors to Santos and their employees. There were also approximately 25 opponents of the NGP who were local residents and farmers from in and around Narrabri. During a break in the interviews our local State MP Kevin Humphries came down, stood on a chair and addressed only the Yes to Gas supporters. His final comment was (and don't take any notice of those outsiders). My husband corrected Kevin Humphries statement announcing we were locals even if some were farmers in the district surrounding Narrabri. Mr Humphries yelled back to us (you can go back to what you had before-nothing).

Ref 11. Is a transcript of part of the Dubbo ABC Radio interview with Kevin Humphries follows.

Ref 11.



*Barwon - Nationals
Kevin Humphries.*

addressing a Narrabri
crowd of farmers who
disagree with the position
the National Party have
taken with CSG.

**"You can go
back to what
you had before -
nothing!"**

Mon 23rd March 2015

So agriculture and farming
have given nothing to
Australians and deserve no
protection?

Is this the Party you want
representation from?

Ref 11.

Interview with Kevin Humphries, today Nationals candidate, Barwon with Dugald Saunders Dubbo ABC Radio.

Ref 11.

Yesterday after he spoke to the people in Narrabri.

23/3/2015

23/3/2015

Monday

Humphries discusses his feelings over a rumbling in the electorate. He talks about respecting people's view by taking it on board. Humphries says the general consensus is the Government started a good job that needs to continue to deal with jobs.

Saunders notes one of the big issues spoken about is there seems to be a lot of rumblings in coal seam gas, exploration and the future. Humphries shares his position on this, noting they put some regulation around.

Kevin Humphries yelled at Farmers opposing CSG yesterday in Narrabri saying "You can go back to what you had before! Nothing!"

Saunders says one of the things people have a problem with is the idea that they can be told that something is safe and yet there is a speculation that something could go wrong, particularly affecting water supplies. Saunders notes other candidates are specifically saying it is a no for coal and gas and the Nationals are saying it is a more controlled process.

Humphries notes they have significant monitoring in that industry which amounts to \$25m program. Humphries discusses how they know who gets impacted by the water supply.

Humphries says this one particular issue could have a marginal affect on voters

Late in February 2017, Mr Kevin Humphries was interviewed on ABC Radio and stated as he was talking about the NGP, that (at the end of the day the project will go ahead),(the environmental impact statement is really the final tick), and (the pipeline will be built as well).

Ref 12. Is a short transcript of this interview, or listen to the interview at the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/277639159098272/videos/586362784892573/>



Ref 12.

Narrabri coal seam gas proposal 'will go ahead' says confident National Party MP

ABC New England By Kerin Thomas and Caitlin Furlong

Posted Thu 23 Feb 2017, 2:38pm

The Nationals MP representing the area covered by the proposed Narrabri Gas Project has expressed confidence that coal seam gas company Santos will pass the relevant checks.

The 7,000 page environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed gas field has been released and Barwon MP Kevin Humphries said he was confident the project would get approval.

"The environmental impact statement that Santos have worked up has taken several years and certainly relevant groups have had the ability to be able to comment on this as it's progressed," he said.

"There might be a little bit of grandstanding but at the end of the day the project will go ahead and I'm highly supportive of it."

The New South Wales Environmental Defenders Office has requested an extra 30 days to review the document and appendices, but Mr Humphries said its already been reviewed "ad nauseum".

"I'd be very surprised if anything comes to the fore of any consequence," he said.

"I think the work that's been done to date, not just by the company but it's been peer reviewed by pretty much anybody that's had experience within the gas industry, in the extractive industry, from the environmentalists through to the hydrologists, through to the local community and industry groups.

"I don't think there's going to be any surprises in there at all.

"The EIS to me really should be the final tick. There may be some sort of tweaking in response to it by various departments but in the main it's really there to give summary to what's happened to date."



PHOTO: Barwon MP Kevin Humphries said he supports the Narrabri Gas Project.
(ABC News: Gavin Coole)

RELATED STORY: Concerns raised over Santos' Narrabri environmental impact statement

RELATED STORY: Business community welcomes progress on Narrabri Gas Project

RELATED STORY: Environmental concerns raised over NSW coal seam gas water plant

MAP: Narrabri 2360



This interview raises several questions put very well in a post by Yes2Gas from the Pilliga The Facts, see below.



Yes2Gas From The Pilliga - the FACTS

28 February · 🌐

DID KEVIN HUMPHRIES SPILL THE BEANS TOO EARLY?

Here is a link to an ABC article commenting on an interview done with Kevin Humphries late last week. We have also uploaded the actual interview recorded from the ABC, with 5 to 10 seconds missing from the front end. Is the written report a true reflection of what was actually said? Read and listen to both and decide for yourself.

Something else of importance is Mr Humphries actual comments. Why is it that Mr Humphries continues to state to anyone who will listen that the Narrabri Gas Project (NGP) and the APA Gas Pipeline will be approved and go ahead "at the end of the day?" Is he privy to information that the rest of us are not?

It raises questions about the EIS process too. Is the approval of the NGP a forgone conclusion? Will those taking the time to research, comment and submit be wasting their time? Will submissions be taken seriously and will the concerns of the public be acted upon? Mr Humphries comments are casting doubts in the minds of those who question this industry in regards to the validity and transparency of the EIS process. The faith in government departments and processes is already at an all time low, based mainly on the inactions of the relevant government departments and the people that run and oversee them, their lack of empathy and our frustrations that our voices are not being heard. Previous submissions and interviews seem to have fallen on deaf ears and our concerns have been brushed aside in favour of the almighty dollar. We live here, this is our home. Would Kevin Humphries like a gas well in Port Macquarie?

<http://www.abc.net.au/.../narrabri-coal-seam-gas-prop.../8296794>

One other question raised as a result of this interview with Kevin Humphries is. What relevance does the Department of Planning have in the approval process? Given what Kevin Humphries has to say about the NGP being a done deal.

As mentioned the lack of trust in our Government and members of Parliament is at an all time low, with some of the reasons being mentioned above. In 2016 the lack of trust declined sharply when the NSW Government increased the penalties for mining and CSG protesters from \$500 to \$5500. Amazingly at the same time it was proposed that the maximum penalty that could be imposed on a CSG company be reduced from \$1.1 million to \$5000 when they broke the rules. Ref 13 follows. How can the punishment for a minor disruption to mining activities be penalized more than illegal mining that could have a permanent negative impact to our water and environment?

☎ 24 Hours 02 9261 8881 (tel:0292618881)

📅 Book a Lawyer Online Now

Ref 13



NSW Anti-Protest Laws: Taking Care of Big Business (<http://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/nsw-anti-protest-laws-taking-care-of-big-business/>)

By Kieran Adair (<http://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/author/kieran-adair/>) | 14/03/2016 | No Comments

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In 2014, Premier Mike Baird told a mining industry dinner (<http://www.newmining.com.au/menu/media/news/2014/november/premier-s-address-at-nsw-mining-industry-suppliers>) that his government would "crack down" on civil disobedience and "throw the book" at people who "unlawfully enter mining sites". This week, he appears to have made good on that promise, with the announcement of a new set of penalties for mining protesters, alongside a raft of new powers for police.

The announcement comes just weeks after a group of three UN Special Rapporteurs issued a warning about similar laws passed recently in Western Australia (<http://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/wa-introduces-tough-laws-against-protestors/>). The Baird Government appears to be following their example, claiming the new laws are being put in place to protect the safety of protesters and workers in demonstrations at mining sites and coal-seam gas plants.

"Unlawful activities put the safety of protesters and workers at risk and are costly for businesses and the public," Anthony Roberts, Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, said.

"Communities also suffer, with the deployment of Police resources reducing the capacity to respond to critical incidents."

However, critics have their doubts. They claim the reforms are part of a renewed attempt by the Government to block protests against

the fossil fuel industry, by drastically increasing penalties for protesters who use 'lock-on' devices to disrupt their business. In NSW, courts have been loath to impose heavy penalties for protesters that use these devices, instead tending to impose small fines or section 10 dismissals (<http://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/criminal/resources/section-10-dismissal/>).

Environmental groups have a long history of using objects such as 'thumb locks' and 'arm-locks' to disrupt mining activities. The tactic has also been adopted recently by farmers in Northern NSW who want to protect their land from coal-seam gas exploration.

Under the proposed amendments (http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/597073/New-laws-protect-workers-and-communities-from-illegal-protests.pdf), protesters who are caught entering a mining facility will face a new 'aggravated unlawful entry on inclosed lands' offence, which carries a maximum penalty of \$5,500. The new laws also extend the meaning of 'mine' to include petroleum worksites.

Police will also be given additional "search and seizure powers to deal with people who intend to 'lock-on' to equipment or interfere with business," and further discretionary use to issues "move-on" orders in public areas, in situations where protesters are blocking people or traffic.

New laws "draconian," "unconstitutional" say critics

The changes have already been met with significant opposition from a range of groups, who've labelled the new laws a "draconian" attack (http://davidshoebridge.org.au/2016/03/07/media-release-greens-defend-right-to-protest/?doing_wp_cron=1457413620.5762410163879394531250) on the right to protest. They say the laws are being introduced to please the fossil fuel industry and increase police powers generally. They believe the expansion of police 'move-on' powers will be used not just against fossil fuel protesters, but activists across the state.

"This is part of a pattern from the Coalition of evermore aggressive policing and constantly expanding police powers to crack down on protest and attack our civil liberties. NSW must not become a police state." David Shoebridge, a Greens MP, told the media.

"These expanded police powers go well beyond coal seam gas protests and will extend across the state to clamp down on protests as diverse as WestConnex, recreational hunting and Forestry."

Mark Morey, the Secretary of Unions NSW, has also joined the fray (<http://www.unionsnsw.org.au/unions-warn-of-constitutional-challenge-if-nsw-government-tries-to-silence-peaceful-protest>). "The State Government's proposed anti-protest laws are deeply concerning and unions will consider a constitutional challenge to the bill if it goes ahead," he said.

Mr Morey announced on Thursday that Unions NSW would challenge the new laws if they are passed later this year. The group are particularly concerned about the impact an expansion of police 'move-on' powers would have on the right to protest outside workplaces and on roads.

"Public protesting has been a socially important and influential part of New South Wales' history for over 200 years and is a crucial element of democracy and ensuring collective voices can be heard," Morey said.

Government accused of hypocrisy

Within hours of announcing these changes, the Government also announced it would be reducing the penalties imposed on coal seam gas companies (<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/emails/penalties-for-csg-companies-amid-crack-down-on-protesters-20160307-gnckbk.html>) found to be illegally exploring or mining land without permission.

Penalties for mining without authority currently attract a potential fine of \$1.1 million dollars, plus an additional \$110,000 for each day the mine is in operation, if successfully prosecuted in court. The Government's new scheme would see this reduced to just \$5000.

Jeremy Buckingham, another Greens MP, has been particularly vocal in his opposition to the proposed change, accusing the Baird Government of acting as the lackey of the minerals resource industry (http://davidshoebridge.org.au/2016/03/07/media-release-greens-defend-right-to-protest/?doing_wp_cron=1457413620.5762410163879394531250).

"This is the action of a government determined to make life easy for their mates in the mining industry, while they introduce draconian penalties for those protesting to protect farms or the environment," he said.

"Does Mike Baird care more about paying back his political donors in the mining industry... than he does about farmers and communities in regional NSW?"

However, Mr Roberts said the changes were designed to align the enforcement regimes in the Mining Act (<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/viewtop/inforce/act+29+1992+FIRST+0+N>) with the Petroleum (Onshore) Act (<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/xref/inforce/?xref=Type%3Dact+AND+Year%3D1991+AND+no%3D84&nohits=y>), which covers CSG operations.

The Government says it still reserves the right of a full prosecution, under the current regulatory scheme, but will allow the regulator to "choose the most appropriate action based on what has taken place ..."

Fines for miners who break rules reduced

Jamieson Murphy
17 Mar 2016, 9 p.m.

<https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/3798738/fines-for-miners-who-break-rules-reduced/>

http://twitter.com/share?url=http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/3798738/fines-for-miners-who-break-rules-reduced/&text=Fines%20for%20miners%20who%20break%20rules%20reduced&via=The_NDL

<mailto:?subject=Fines for miners who break rules reduced&body=Hi,I found this article - Fines for miners who break rules reduced, and thought you might like it http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/3798738/fines-for-miners-who-break-rules-reduced/>

| Proposed changes to illegal mining penalties | | |
|---|-----------------------------|----------|
| Schedule of penalties NSW Petroleum Act | Current penalty | Proposed |
| Mining without authority | \$1.1m + \$110,000 a day | \$5000 |
| Not comply with notice issued | \$1.1m + \$110,000 a day | \$5000 |
| Failure to pay royalty | \$1.1m + \$110,000 a day | \$5000 |
| Failure to provide inspector with information | \$1.1m + \$110,000 a day | \$2500 |
| Prospect without authority | \$550,000 + \$110,000 a day | \$5000 |
| Providing false information | \$550,000 + \$110,000 a day | \$2500 |

AT THE same time the NSW government is upping the penalties for mining and coal seam gas protesters, it is drastically reducing the penalty for mining companies who break the rules.

Under proposed changes to the NSW Petroleum Act, the state government could choose to give mining companies ignoring notices or directions a \$5000 penalty infringement notice (PIN) instead of a \$1.1 million fine.

The Greens said the gulf between the PIN and the legislative penalty is so massive it undermines the force of the act.

Greens mining spokesman, Jeremy Buckingham, said the government was essentially providing itself the option to give mining companies a tiny slap on the wrist rather than significant fines and court proceedings. Business

"It makes no sense to have such low fines," Mr Buckingham said.

"It does not create a disincentive for mining companies – it actually creates an incentive to do the wrong thing.

"There needs to be significant penalties in place to deter companies from breaking the law."

The Leader asked the Division of Resource and Energy (DRE) why there was such a large gap between the PIN and the currently penalties, but it did not give a direct answer.

A DRE spokesperson said the "changes do not restrict DRE from bringing a full prosecution".

"However, under the previous legislative framework, when DRE believed an illegal incident had taken place, the division would need to launch a full prosecution on these issues, regardless of the size or impact of the offence," the spokesperson said.

"Under the new regime, the introduction of PINS and enforceable undertakings allows DRE to take more immediate action. The changes provide the regulators DRE with a wider range of enforcement powers ... and now allows DRE to choose the most appropriate action in response to any breach."

Local members voted for changes

ON WEDNESDAY night the NSW parliament passed legislation for heavier penalties against mine and coal seam gas protesters who break the law, with both Tamworth MP Kevin Anderson and Northern Tablelands MP Adam Marshall voting in favour of the bill.

The new laws will see protesters caught trespassing on mining sites face a \$5500 fine, up from \$550.

It also amends the state's Crimes Act to extend the crime of "interfering with a mine site" to CSG extraction and exploration sites instead of an existing focus on coal mines, which means anyone locking themselves to equipment could get a maximum jail sentence of seven years.

The Coalition backed the bill, with the support of Shooters and Fishers Party. The proposal also had the backing of Christian Democratic Fred Niles, despite Mr Niles attending a rally against the changes just hours before the vote.



Ref 13.

Since 2010, Santos has donated \$568,857 to the LNP.¹ Yesterday, the NSW Government announced that they'll introduce laws that will make Santos' life easier. This is the toxic influence of mining companies over our politicians at its very worst.

The #SantosLaw will increase the penalty for protesting at coal seam gas sites by over ten times, from \$500 to \$5500. Worse, protesters could be thrown in jail for seven years for peacefully defending their land and water.² At the same time CSG companies who drill illegally are now likely to dodge the maximum penalty of \$1.1 million and instead be let off with a fine of \$5000.³

In other words, a coal seam gas mining company can be fined less for endangering land and water than you can for protecting that land and water.

And it gets worse -- these new laws could also restrict the right to free assembly -- giving police extra powers to move people on, even if they are on public land.⁴

Can you sign the petition demanding NSW Premier Mike Baird abandon these undemocratic changes immediately?

References

[1] [ABC Political Donations](#)

[2] [Mining protesters could face seven years' jail under Baird government CSG plans](#), Sydney Morning Herald, 11 March 2016

[3] [Smaller penalties for CSG companies amid crack down on protesters](#), Sydney Morning Herald, 7 March 2016

[4] [EXPLAINER: Mike Baird's Anti-Protest Laws - What Are They And Who Hates Them](#), New Matilda, 7 March 2016

[What are the proposed law changes?](#)

The NSW state government is increasing the current penalty for protesting at coal seam gas sites by over ten times, from \$500 to \$5500. At the same time they've introduced a pathetic new penalty regime for CSG companies that could see companies fined just \$5000 for prospecting or mining without authority. That's down from existing laws, which say a court could prosecute companies up to \$1.1 million.¹

A CSG company can now be fined less for endangering land and water than you would be for protecting that land and water.

And it gets worse -- these new laws give police extra search and seizure powers and extra power to move people on -- restricting the right to free assembly. Even if protesters are on public land.²

References

[1] [Smaller penalties for CSG companies amid crack down on protesters](#), Sydney Morning Herald, 7 March 2016

[2] [EXPLAINER: Mike Baird's Anti-Protest Laws - What Are They And Who Hates Them](#), New Matilda, 7 March 2016

SIGN THE PETITION AGAINST THE SANTOS LAWS!

To NSW Premier Mike Baird and Energy Minister Anthony Roberts,

We reject any proposed law changes that will make life easier for mining companies at the expense of our civil liberties.

Immediately abandon your undemocratic #SantosLaw changes to increase penalties for protesting at mining sites, give police extra search and seizure powers, and restrict our rights to free assembly.

Email Address

you@email.com

Sign the petition!

15,621 signatures

Resource industry political donations are disturbing enough, but we also have a situation where we have Police vehicles in Queensland sponsored by Santos.

Ref 14. Are photos of two Queensland police vehicles at what looks like the NSW Queensland border? If this can happen in Queensland it would be reasonable to assume Santos may have some influence with the NSW police. The community can now ask if the police have been compromised when they show up at a protest or gathering aimed at protecting their home and their land.



Ref 15



Get on board... Big Summer Features

| NOVEMBER | ISSUE | AD COPY DEADLINES |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| November | All month | Call us for details |
| Spring Guide | Tuesday 12 November | Friday 8 November |
| Christmas Celebrating | Thursday 14 November | Monday 11 November |
| 100 Year Centenary Edition of The Courier | Thursday 28 November | Thursday 21 November |
| DECEMBER | ISSUE | AD COPY DEADLINES |
| Summer Cooling | Tuesday 3 December | Friday 29 November |
| National Life Magazine (special 5th anniversary edition) | Thursday 5 December | Monday 25 November |
| Christmas Catalogues | Thursday 5 December | Monday 2 December |
| Annual Review | Thursday 12 December | Monday 9 December |
| Last Minute Shopping Fliers | Tuesday 17 and Thursday 19 December | Friday 13 December |
| Christmas Greetings | Thursday 19 December | Monday 12 December |
| Holiday Shopping | Monday 23 December | Monday 16 December |

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THE COURIER

Astonished a police officer would visit our private gas meeting

On Thursday, October 24, an organised meeting was in place on our property to discuss the concerns about the coal seam industry working in our area. The meeting was very well represented by landholders, Elders from the Gamilaroi people and visitors.

People had travelled from Gilgandra, northern rivers, Gunnedah and the Narrabri shires, including Burren, Waa Waa and beyond.

Around 12.30 the meeting was interrupted by a visit from a senior ranking police officer from Narrabri, who we were informed that he was acting on a complaint from a rumour (going around town).

We were informed that the visit was a formal one and he was acting on orders from above.

He was invited to address the meeting but declined.

Since when did the police force travel more than 40 kilometres (one way) to investigate a rumour?

We have no complaint about the police officer who attended he was extremely courteous and respectful at all times and was only doing his job. However we are astonished by the tactics the coal seam gas industry resort to.

Who controls the police force?

The meeting was held on private property, was not illegal, no drugs, alcohol or loud music was involved so what was the complaint about?

The people attending the meeting were invited either by email or phone call, nothing was posted on social media, so how did the rumour generate?

The whole incident was a complete waste of police time and resources not to mention the unbelievable bullying tactics.

An apology should be forthcoming from the complainant but that is not going to happen.

Carol Pickard
Narrabri

Economic significance of mining should not override the environment

1. The economic significance of the mining resource will override all other considerations. Is the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure's amendment to the states Environmental Planning Policy which governs mining.
2. The corporate elected state and federal representatives who have not had any constitutional authority since 1973 have obviously not known the following facts, or heeded them:
3. Your term, your business and your lifestyle may be adversely changed for decades.
4. Your property value may fall (or has fallen).
5. You may be subjected to unreasonable noise from hundreds of vehicle movements and heavy machinery operating around the clock seven days a week.
6. You may lose control of your day to day property management.
7. Your soil could be at risk of permanent damage from salt or chemicals.
8. Your water will be at risk from contamination.
9. Your groundwater supply may be diminished.
10. Your property a risk from new weeds.

Joy Cunningham
Moree

It is a letter to the Narrabri Courier Paper, called Astonished a police officer would visit our private gas meeting. Please read and again draw your own conclusion as to where the request for this police officer to investigate this private meeting came from.

At the time of writing this submission our group People for the Plains and North West Alliance have booked the Narrabri Bowling Club for yet another community information forum. It will feature the Narrabri Premier of the film called The Bentley Effect. There will also be an address by Dr Wayne Somerville who is a clinical psychologist with expertise in the mental health impacts of the CSG industry.

Touch wood, at this stage we have not received a phone call to advise us that our booking has been cancelled.

Part of this submission includes three DVD's.

1. The film, Fractured Country, An Unconventional Invasion. This is included so the content can be checked for its suitability to be part of a public information forum which was to be held at the assembly hall of the Narrabri Primary School. It also is relevant for its contribution to why the CSG industry has an adverse social impact.
2. Jenny York, Talks about her experience dealing with the CSG industry.
3. Helen Bender's presentation on her families fight against the Gas Companies. Part of this DVD deals with Coal Seam Gasification which is a process different to CSG.

In Conclusion.

This is only a small sample of the social impacts that have been caused by the arrival of the CSG industry in the Narrabri and surrounding districts. It highlights the depths of the divide that it has caused to our community. Even without considering the other reasons why the NGP should not go ahead the adverse social impacts alone should be enough to not give this project approval to proceed. This is especially so as the project is not needed except to save the skin of Santos who have made some poor decisions. Let them suffer the consequences of these poor decisions, not us.

If the Department of Planning does have any power to not approve the NGP then we recommend that it says NO to this project, for the greater good.

I know that this is a sceptical comment however that is where we are at, in this Country.

Denise Murray.

EDITORIAL

YOUR SAY



POST
60 Macabane Street,
Narrabri, NSW, 2390



EMAIL
editorial@narrabri.com.au



PHONE
Phone 61 61 2390
Fax 61 61 2390



SMS
0433 63705
(0433 664 867)



TWEET
@NarrabriCourier
#Narrabri



FACEBOOK
Facebook: Narrabri Courier

The Coal Seam Gas debate in Narrabri Shire

A robust debate on CSG has been going on in Narrabri for a year or more, with articles and letters in The Courier, and public meetings organised by both sides.

The Shire Council and the Chamber of Commerce strongly support CSG development for its economic benefits.

People for the Plains (P4P) emerged as a community organisation opposed to CSG, followed by Yes2Gas on the other side.

The debate has intensified, but is no nearer resolution, if indeed resolution is possible.

And I have been sitting on the fence, leaning one way and then the other as I hear argument and counter argument, and I am no closer to being convinced than I was a year ago.

My gut reaction was to oppose CSG development, as I didn't want to see the landscape in my back yard disfigured by industrialisation, nor risk having water supplies polluted. I support P4P in their purported purpose of providing information, and as a tool for keeping the industry honest.

Reviewing what I have heard and read so far, I reluctantly conclude that a better case has been made for CSG than against. It is painful to say this, not least as it will test my friendship with some

CSG is at least as safe as conventional gas, and probably safer, provided fracking is not used (and fracking is not needed, and cannot be legally used).

CSG is safer because it is not so deep, and therefore not under as much pressure and drilling involves less geological disturbance.

The power station now uses gas from the local CSG assessment program, with the power being fed into the grid.

Though P4P are an information group, their public face is opposition and protest.

Speakers at their meetings are always vehemently against CSG. A genuine commitment to information would include Stats at their meetings and markets have only protest materials.

There are a few grains of genuine rhetoric in the chaff of alarmist activists and pseudo scientists, but they are lost.

What is presented is junk science at best.

At the recent P4P Forum a speaker whose credentials were a PhD in Law and an adviser to a toxins protest group, talked about the massive quantities of toxic chemicals used in drilling. Santos acknowledges this, but

makes. Of course it got a laugh, but taken literally it means nowhere on the planet.

It was rhetorical hyperbole to hide ignorance.

In a letter to The Courier a Santos employee correctly labelled the information on chemicals and health as "misinformation", yet she was criticised in subsequent letters from P4P supporters for ignoring "factual evidence".

No one disputes the facts, but what they are evidence of.

The Courier headline for the latter in response was "Only the Facts". Yes, they are 'only facts' until interpreted, and this requires either forensic cross examination in a court of law or peer review by scientists.



So here am I still

left sitting on the fence. I don't want CSG development (or

mining) in my backyard, but I deplore using

At this point the question of 'Social Licence' enters the debate. Opponents say Santos does not have a Social Licence.

Social Licence is a relatively new weapon in the conflict between the gas and mining industries and their opponents.

Social licence is community approval independent of the legislative regulatory system. Community attitudes are assessed in categories of people who totally reject, tolerate, accept, approve or embrace CSG, but there are no recognised numbers in each category to indicate that a community has granted a Social Licence.

Results of a recent CSIRO survey in the Queensland CSG fields are interesting: 9% reject, 69% tolerate or accept, 22% approve or embrace CSG.

The report does not indicate whether or not this means the community has granted a Social Licence. However it does put into perspective the health survey and the P4P tour of the Queensland gas fields reported at the forum: residents in the gas fields do not find CSG as negative as either report painted it.

No comparable figures are available for Narrabri, but probably no more than 1% totally oppose CSG, and

this ought not to be. Some accuse The Courier of bias toward Santos, cynically labelling it the 'Santos Times' and asserting there are more articles in favour than against. CSG opponents complain that articles opposing CSG are always accompanied by an article requested by the Courier from Santos, but not visa versa.

I find no evidence of this. The Courier has just covered the NSW Chief Scientist's Final Report on CSG.

As well as its own brief neutral comment, The Courier printed the Executive Summary, and invited three comments - from P4P, Cotton Australia and Santos.

Given Cotton Australia has reservations, if there is any bias it is towards opponents rather than the industry.

Companies engaged in CSG extraction vary in their technological skill and in the professionalism of their business protocols.

There have been 'cowboys' who gave the industry a bad name and contributed to the negative image. Some of the problems in the Narrabri district resulted from the flawed practices of the company that preceded Santos, and Santos has rectified their errors.

It is the community deeply divided

I suspect PAP in their purported purpose of providing information, and as a tool for keeping the industry honest.

Reviewing what I have heard and read so far, I reluctantly conclude that a better case has been made for CSG than against. It is painful to say this, not least as it will test my friendship with some of the leading opponents of CSG. But, my integrity demands that I do so.

Though my head says yes to CSG, my heart still says no. CSG provides cheaper, cleaner energy at a time when energy costs are rising. Opponents say cheaper renewables are just round the corner. But as long as they are still just round the corner we cannot use them.

Some local businesses benefit greatly from the CSG development at a time when the going is tough as a result of the economic downturn and drought, and they risk having to close.

Local business proprietors are the unsung heroes of the community. CSG also creates jobs as well as income for landowners. Whose properties Santos uses. Opponents say the economic negatives far outweigh the benefits. Both sides are making assertions, but neither side has presented any numbers.

We need a cost-benefit analysis and a balance sheet. Without numbers we have no means of judging who is right. Of course even then, economic benefit is not everything; man shall not live by bread alone!

It is rarely mentioned that a gas-fuelled power station was built 30 years ago at Milpa Park near Narrabri, and generated electricity for several years, using gas from the local Cooperate conventional gas field until it was exhausted. It passed without protest unnoticed by the community. Amazingly the Milpa Park power station and conventional wells that supplied it were not on the scale

they are lost. What is presented is junk science at best. At the recent PAP Forum a speaker whose credentials were a PhD in Law and an adviser to a toxins protest group, talked about the massive quantities of toxic chemicals used in drilling. Santos acknowledges this, but says the chemicals are no more toxic than chemicals found in most kitchen cupboards. If you drink them they'll kill you, but they are safe if used according to the label.

The speaker did not present any information about the concentration of these chemicals in the air of residential area or in water supplies, much less whether they were at toxic concentrations. It is all a matter of the dose. It is the same with medications: if you exceed the dose you will suffer. As others have already noted, the concern over chemicals is repeating concern in the early days of cotton in the district. Just using the word 'chemical' sends some people into a panic. Add 'toxic' and you have paranoia. To put the toxic chemical issue into perspective, naturally occurring carcinogens in food are more abundant than pesticide residues. A single cup of coffee contains more natural carcinogens than consumed in a year from pesticide residues in regular food.

Also at the Forum a GP listed health problems in 38 households in a community in a Queensland gas field. But there was no control community for comparison, and in any case correlation does not prove cause and effect. Again it is a reminder of the early days in cotton when claims were made that chemical sprays caused the high incidence of asthma in Narrabri. A more broadly based study showed that asthma was associated with the wheat and sheep industry, not cotton. In answer to a question about how far from a gas field is safe, the

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What was presented at the Forum was spun, just like politicians. CSG opponents argue that methane emissions during CSG extraction negate the benefits of CSG as a cleaner fossil fuel than coal. A CSIRO study showed this is not the case; 0.02% of the gas escapes as emissions, 1/200th of the amount needed to negate the benefits. However there are also unmeasured losses during transmission.

Disposal of salt produced as a by-product is a major concern. At first Santos was evasive, but now says it will be trucked out of the district and disposed legally in a NSW EPA regulated facility. Another concern is the risk of polluting water supplies, either by chemicals used in drilling or by the release of naturally occurring chemicals such as uranium as a result of geological disturbance during drilling. Santos claims that its technology is safe, but opponents say it is not. Neither side has presented evidence based on a scientific study.

The banning late last year of CSG in the Sydney basin, and the recent ban on further CSG exploration in NSW are cause for concern. However the ban was not based on scientific evidence. The Minister's press releases cited community concerns. The political process is so polluted and corrupt, that a political decision is no guide to the scientific

usage. However, it does put into perspective the health survey and the PAP tour of the Queensland gas fields reported at the Forum: residents in the gas fields do not find CSG as negative as either report painted it. No comparable figures are available for Narrabri, but probably no more than 1% totally oppose CSG, and possibly only 0.1%, judging by numbers of "NO GAS" stickers and signs on cars and homes seen around town - scarcely enough to conclude that the community has not granted Social Licence. Can a vocal and articulate minority claim by virtue of their protests that the community has not granted a Social Licence, and thereby veto the interests and wishes of the rest of the community?

Each side accuses the other of bullying and intimidation. Visitors who inspect CSG sites complain of being videoed and followed by a Santos vehicle. CCTV surveillance by fixed cameras in public places is a regrettable fact of modern life, and is responsible for a sensitive industrial site vulnerable to eco-terrorism. But the scale and intensity of surveillance is unnecessary. My aggressive and discourteous, with visitors shadowed and videoed long after leaving the vicinity of a site, and with the Santos employees involved refusing to answer questions or to give their names. On the other side, a local businessman working at a Santos site was videoed by a CSG opponent.

A resident wrote a letter to The Courier about misinformation presented at the Forum, and was harshly criticised by two PAP supporters for not voicing her concerns at the meeting. In her own words, she would have been crucified if she had. And she had grounds for her fear. A Narrabri businessman was verbally abused on his premises by a PAP member and threatened with a boycott of his business for supporting Santos.

There have been cowboys who gave the industry a bad name and contributed to the negative image. Santos of the problems in the Narrabri district resulted from the flawed practices of the company that preceded Santos, and Santos has rectified their errors. Is the community deeply divided over CSG? Or is it only a small minority who oppose CSG?

Perhaps a more relevant question is do groups like PAP and Yes2Gas have licence to represent the community? Each side in the debate needs to consider an exit strategy. Some in the community appear to regard CSG and Santos as unmitigated evil to be fought as fascism was opposed in WW2 and fought to the bitter end. I do not see it that way, and there is no room for a Churchill-like 'We will never surrender' stance. Nevertheless it is a battle for the hearts and minds of the community. Compromise is impossible. There is no win-win solution. One side will lose, and my concern is that it may leave a festering wound in the community that has been my home for 40 years.

Or worse, violence will erupt as it did recently at Croppa Creek when feelings ran high over a land issue. The NSW Chief Scientist concludes in the recently released Final Report on CSG that there are risks with CSG, as there are with any extractive or manufacturing industry, but these can be managed. So here am I still left sitting on the fence. I don't want CSG development (or mining) in my backyard, but I deplore using junk science and intimidation to oppose it. Should my selfishness as a relatively comfortable retiree deprive the majority of the community of enjoying the economic benefits if they so choose?

Brian Haarm Narrabri

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