

To:
Executive Director,
Resource Assessments
Dept of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Submission to EIS on the Narrabri Coal Seam Gas Project: OBJECTION

Essentially, I am TOTALLY AGAINST the development of Coal Seam Gas in the Pilliga.

My objections to the Santos proposal are based on the following points:

1. **Climate Change** is here to stay, so allowing any expansion of an industry that contributes to and exacerbates the effects of Climate Change is grossly irresponsible, perhaps even *criminally negligent*. Don't allow this project to go ahead!
2. **Toxic effects:** these are well known and proven by numerous examples in the US and Australia – the chemicals used in fracking are highly toxic to aquifers, groundwater and surface water. Why would we allow an industry to spread toxic chemicals around with gay abandon in the driest continent on earth? Why would we allow the CSG industry to make private profits from our gas resources at the expense of our farmers who rely on ground water? Why would we allow ~35bn litres of highly saline and highly toxic “produced water” from the gas wells to lie around in surface ponds which will spill in the next flood into the surrounding landscape? This would be madness of the worst sort. Do not allow Santos to go ahead with this project and poison our water and landscape.

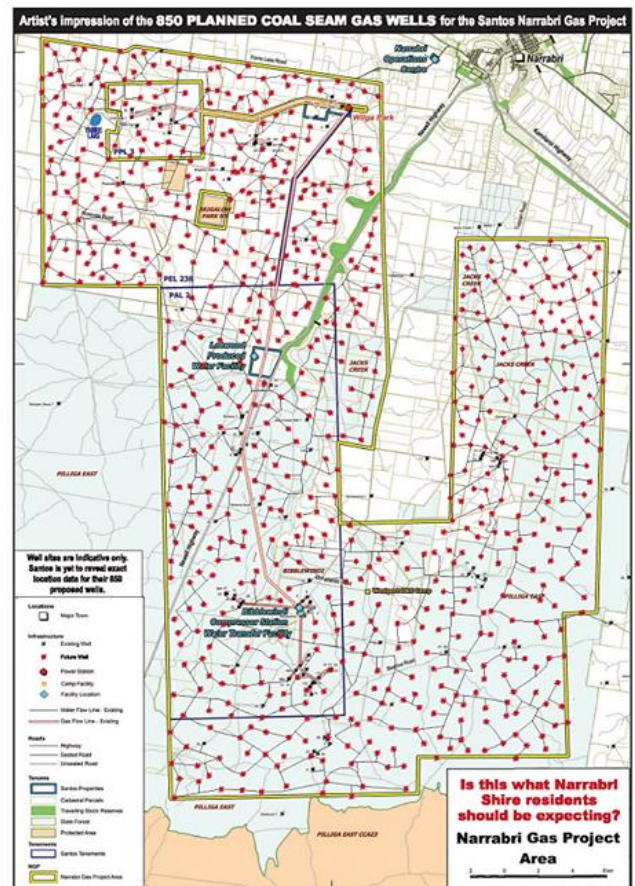
3. **Land Clearing:** In these days of Climate Change, the last thing we should be doing is clearing more land of trees which are a carbon sink. The proposed ~850 gas wells will cover a huge area of land – 95,000 hectares, much of it in the Pilliga temperate woodland, home of many unique species of flora and fauna.

There are no detailed maps of the proposed well locations and pipelines in the EIS. How can a project be approved without knowing these details? It could look like this artist's impression (graphic at right).

Any other land use is severely compromised by such activity, and a great deal of land has to be cleared of native vegetation for the wells, the access roads, the pipelines, work compounds, machinery storage areas, the gas processing works and the vast “produced water” storage dams.

This is a major industry, no doubt about it, and a major change of land use with on going consequences – see point 2 above.

All for short term private profit while the gas extraction takes place for 20 years at the most. Please, do not approve this project!



- 4. Private profits, public loses:** Not only will the Australian people be losing an asset which could be reserved or used slowly for domestic purposes, they will also be losing the right to uncontaminated ground water and possible contamination of the Great Artesian Basin aquifers, upon which a major part of the Australian economy relies. Why risk it for the private profit of one company? Santos are clearly not interested in the common good. Many of their shareholders are offshore, with no emotional or spiritual connection to the land this project will devastate; and the gas is intended for export not for domestic use, so hardly anyone in Australia will benefit from this project in any way.

Instead, we will suffer the loses: the loss of our resource, the loss of profits, the loss of our trees, the loss of our water, the poisoning of our water by chemicals and salt; and we will probably bear the costs of cleaning up the mess which will result.

We will also suffer the loss of any other use to which we want to put the land in question: tourism for example, or scientific studies of our unique flora and fauna; species will undoubtedly be lost.

We won't even be getting royalties due to clever accounting and tax structures implemented by such profit-hungry private companies such as Santos.

It is a lose-lose situation for everyone except Santos and their shareholders.

Why would any responsible government allow such a project to go ahead? Please disallow it.
- 5. Fugitive emissions:** It is well known by now that gas fracking wells leak, and most leak badly over time. The fact that it is methane that is leaking should cause alarm bells to ring in any responsible government. Methane is a 32-times more potent Greenhouse Gas than CO₂, thus greatly exacerbating Climate Change in an era when we should be making great efforts to reverse actions which we know are contributing to it. It is grossly irresponsible to allow 850 gas fracking wells to be constructed at this time in history, and I beg you not to allow it.
- 6. Aboriginal sites:** The Gamilaraay people have given no licence to this industry which will trample on and destroy many sacred and cultural sites, which are found in virtually all parts of Australia. Thousands of years of use, occupation, and stewardship of the land will be desecrated and discounted by the Santos carpetbaggers – yet another invasion by the interests of western capital. Haven't Aboriginal people suffered enough already? Please don't approve this culturally destructive project.
- 7. Renewables are the way to go:** It is time for our governments to catch up to the 21st Century and get into renewable energy, and fast! It is the only responsible thing to do. Forget fracking for CSG as a "transitional" fuel between dirty coal and renewables. The time is past for that, we want a clean, green renewable energy future NOW! On this basis alone, the Santos project should be rejected. Please reject it.
- 8. Siding Spring Observatory:** I have read that the internationally famous Siding Spring Observatory near Coonabarabran is Australia's premier optical and infrared observatory, situated in Australia's first official Dark-Sky Park. Why compromise their operations by allowing the inevitable burn-off gas flares at night, which are visible for hundreds of kilometres in the dark? There are 50 telescopes there, many owned by other countries, a long-term investment worth over \$100 million – why would you risk the future of such an investment for short term private profit of one company? It doesn't make sense. Please do not allow the Santos Pilliga project to go ahead.
- 9. Economics don't stack up:** Private profits from our commonly-owned resources will only return a paltry amount of royalties to the people, if any. This is daylight robbery and carpetbaggery of the worst sort, and no government should allow this let alone enable and encourage it! Government should be regulating the excesses of private industry, not abetting them. The few jobs generated will disrupt local economies, not help them, as has been proven elsewhere with FI-FO operations. There will be no jobs for locals. The only benefit will be to the local pubs and the brothels for the short term as with other short-lived extractive industries. Do not allow Santos to go ahead with this project!

Conclusion:

The Santos Pilliga project **MUST NOT** go ahead for so many reasons. The overarching guiding principle should be that we should be planning for a better future for the world in this era of Climate Change. That future does not include fracked gas.

Fracked gas is the “stupidest industry ever invented” (David Suzuki) as there are far too many dreadful effects and consequences as explained above in point after point.

Knowing what we know now, it would be extremely irresponsible of the NSW government to allow this project to go ahead, and if you do, there will be a massive public response in the form of protests and civil disobedience. We do not want this project in NSW, and our reasons are legion, reasonable and sound. We will not allow this.

Please, do not approve this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Yours very sincerely,

Claire Bettington
Maroubra NSW 2035