

As a final year environmental science student, I, Breana Macpherson-Rice, object to the Narrabri coal seam gas project.

Realistically, a project to extract more gas for consumption should not even be on the table. With the 2015 Paris Agreement, world leaders agreed on what the scientific community have known for a long time – that we need to limit drastically the global warming caused by fossil fuel emissions if we are to survive on this planet. This agreement, to which Australia is committed, sets the ambitious target of no more than 1.5°C warming. **It has been made clear, time and time again, that there must be no new extractive fossil fuel projects if we are to reach this goal.**

And so, as a young person who will have to live in a climate changed world and deal with the mess that the current generation of decision makers are wreaking, it is insulting to realise that Santos, the proponent of this project, have in their business plan factored in up to *four degrees of warming*. Such a stance belies a contempt for humanity and the planet that, combined with the dangers and uncertainty embedded in fracking and unconventional gas to start with, makes me resolute in my understanding that to approve this project would be a disaster.

I have visited the Pilliga many times and can barely express the awe I have experienced in the beautiful forest. Knowing that 1000 ha of this forest would be cleared for this project makes me feel sick. I have listened to and worked alongside the Gamilaraay community of the area, learning about their deep connection to this country even through over 200 years of settler-colonialism seeking to eliminate them from their rightful land. So many wrongs have already been committed against the Gamilaraay and Gomeroi people of North West NSW, and I think that taking seriously their opposition to this project is an important step toward making amends for these wrongs – rather than further perpetuating them.

I have also visited, in my trips to the Pilliga, the spill sites at Bibblewindi and elsewhere. Walking across this barren earth that has not a skerrick of native vegetation in sight, it is chillingly clear the kinds of dangers we are dealing with in the decision to approve this project. The toxic chemicals used in this process will waste precious water resources, and have a poor track record for staying put. By my application of the precautionary principle enshrined in Australian legislation, the potential for serious and irreversible environmental damage here should be a signal to put the brakes on this project.

To liken this to a job interview; coal seam gas extraction has left a devastating legacy in Queensland and in the US, and has quite seriously messed up its exploration stage here in NSW. I would not employ a candidate who has such a legacy of disaster and who has performed poorly in their probation period. We must take this history of the industry into account in this decision.

Furthermore, I object to this project on account of:

- The serious and not yet fully understood impacts of CSG on health

- The large-scale disruption this industry will cause to existing livelihoods in the area, including agriculture and astronomy
- The role this development would play in further displacing endangered species that are on the brink of extinction
- The negative effect that the gas supplied from this project would have for Australia's energy market
- The huge amounts of salt waste that will be generated through the life of this project
- The waste of police and other resources that will presumably ensue if this development gets approved and is predictably met by mass community resistance

Climate change is already killing people in other countries. To approve a gas project in such a time, cognisant of the impacts of human-induced climate change, is nothing short of violent.

NSW should be following Victoria's lead and banning fracking – not allowing this destructive industry to continue to tear apart our country, communities and climate.