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## Santos partners with Natural Soda to create jobs and investment

In an Australian first, Santos has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Natural Soda to use salt removed from produced water as part of the Narrabri Gas Project.

The two companies have been working together for more than 12 months on a commercially-viable model that could create a new sodium bicarbonate industry for Narrabri and Australia, bringing more local jobs to the region. Sodium bicarbonate is commonly known as 'baking soda'.

Santos Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Kevin Gallagher said the MOU is a commitment from both Santos and Natural Soda to complete a concept study that will inform a Final Investment Decision to produce sodium bicarbonate in Narrabri.

"Australia doesn't have a bicarbonate industry, so we import it for use in food, pharmaceuticals and a wide range of industrial uses. These are the benefits that would come from the Narrabri Gas Project – new industries, more jobs, business opportunities and regional development," Mr Gallagher said.

"The partnership with Natural Soda demonstrates how our industry continues to evolve and explore new ways of beneficial use for products that previously would have been considered waste.

"The water Santos extracts is of no use to farmers because of the salt content, so we treat the water to a very high standard that is suitable for irrigation, stock watering and other purposes. The salt removed from the water is a natural product and, if our concept study is successful, could be converted into valuable sodium bicarbonate.

"That's a win-win. It creates a new industry, more jobs, it's good for the environment and good for farming.

"However, if things don't work out as we hope, the water will still be able to be used for irrigation and the salt removed from the water will be disposed of in accordance with all waste laws.

"As we come out of COVID-19, every new industry and job is more important than ever. The Narrabri Gas Project means more jobs and more investment in New South Wales and lower gas and electricity prices for customers in New South Wales."

Natural Soda produces pure, natural sodium bicarbonate at its facility in the Piceance Basin in Colorado, using energy efficient and environmentally friendly processes. Natural Soda is the second largest producer in North America and its sodium bicarbonate is imported into Australia and around the world for use in a range of commercial products including food, pharmaceuticals, swimming pool chemicals, industrial chemicals and animal feed.

### Media enquiries

James Murphy  
+61 (0) 478 333 974  
james.murphy@santos.com

### Investor enquiries

Andrew Nairn  
+61 8 8116 5314 / +61 (0) 437 166 497  
andrew.nairn@santos.com

### Santos Limited ABN 80 007 550 923

GPO Box 2455, Adelaide SA 5001  
+61 8 8116 5000  
www.santos.com

Natural Soda President Kirk Daehling sees this as a great opportunity for both companies.

“Unlike other producers, Natural Soda has been processing natural sodium bicarbonate-rich brine into finished product for nearly 30 years. Salt removed from produced water from Santos’ Narrabri Project appears to be very similar to our facilities’ feedstock. Processing this material into a valuable end-product will be good for industry and good for the environment. It will also bring an Australian-based source of supply to our customers in the region,” Mr Daehling said.

A decision on the Narrabri Gas Project is currently before the New South Wales Independent Planning Commission following the Department of Planning’s assessment which found the project would not adversely affect the region’s significant water resources, is unlikely to result in any significant impacts on the local community or the environment, is in the public interest and is capable of approval with strict conditions.

Santos has committed 100 per cent of Narrabri gas to the domestic market. The Narrabri Gas Project has the potential to supply enough natural gas to meet up to half of NSW’s natural gas demand where more than one million family homes, ~33,000 businesses and ~300,000 jobs rely on natural gas as a source of energy.

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## **About Santos Ltd**

*A proudly Australian company, Santos is a leading supplier of natural gas, a fuel for the future providing clean energy to improve the lives of people in Australia and Asia. Santos is already Australia’s biggest domestic gas supplier and aims to be a leading Asia-Pacific LNG supplier. For more than 65 years, Santos has been working in partnership with local communities, providing Australian jobs and business opportunities, safely and sustainably developing Australia’s natural gas resources, and powering Australian industries and households. For more information visit [www.santos.com](http://www.santos.com)*

## **About Natural Soda LLC**

*Natural Soda is a wholly owned subsidiary of Rincon Ltd, headquartered in Melbourne, Australia. In addition to Natural Soda, Rincon owns a globally significant undeveloped lithium brine project in Argentina at the Salar del Rincon. Natural Soda is an operational solution mine in Piceance Basin, Colorado and produces and sells approximately 240,000 tons of bicarbonate of soda a year. For more information visit [www.naturalsoda.com](http://www.naturalsoda.com)*