

Narrabri Gas Project Community Consultative Committee

Meeting 41 – November 2019

Action Item 41.1_Response to CWA Questions to Santos received out of session on 14 October 2019

Question:

These questions on notice to the NGP CCC should be provided to the CWA of NSW's representative on the CCC Mrs Jocelyn Cameron to be submitted to Santos. Danica Leys has requested that the questions be cc'd to her.

Questions as follows:

“Our organization and other organizations has been told many times that the NSW coal seam gas industry will not be the same as in Queensland because of the lessons learned. Dr Damien Barrett, Director of GISERA the Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance, also stated at the June meeting of GISERA NSW Regional Research Advisory Committee in Narrabri that we cannot take what is happening in Queensland as a guide here.

Can Santos please provide an explanation for this proposition. Can Santos please provide some reasons why the following aspects of coal seam gas are so different in NSW than Queensland?

- The risks of groundwater pressure loss and gasification, widely reported, and well-documented by the Qld Government in their Surat Basin Underground Water Impact Report <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/resources/landholders/csg/surat-cma/uwir> Why is this not a concern in NSW?
- No waste disposal solution for the toxic solid waste resulting from reverse osmosis processing of produced water. Isn't the same problem also prevailing in NSW?
- Air emissions. Why would air emissions be so different in Queensland than NSW that the Qld experience not worth studying?

As these are 3 (among numerous) of the most concerning aspects of coal seam gas mining, if they are unable to be answered it is not possible to state with any confidence that the Queensland experience of the coal seam gas industry is different to what can be expected in NSW.

Therefore, can you please explain what were the lessons learned from the Queensland industry that have been game changers to such an extent that we, in NSW, should not study the impacts of the coal seam gas industry in that State?”

Response:

In Queensland some landholder bores were completed in coal seams. The most recent Qld Underground Water Impact Report (UWIR) identifies that, of the landholder bores predicted to be impacted by the gas industry, 80% are completed in the target coal formations. While these issues are being managed by make-good arrangements in Queensland, the target coal seams for the Narrabri Gas Project are hundreds of metres (generally 500 metres or more) below landholder bores. The risk of the Narrabri Gas Project impacting on landholder bores is low.

Santos' priority is to identify a beneficial reuse for the brine. If a beneficial reuse can't be secured, the salt will be disposed of off-site at an appropriately licensed facility in accordance with regulatory requirements. Analysis of the produced water shows it would classify as general solid waste, with contaminants significantly below relevant thresholds.

Santos has collected baseline air quality data for the Narrabri Gas Project area prior to production commencing. The CSIRO and GISERA have also studied emissions from wells in both Queensland and New South Wales, including wells in the Narrabri Gas Project area. The CSIRO reported around 3 grams of methane per minute from wells. Emissions from wells are minor, a very low risk to health, and significantly smaller than methane emissions from other land uses.

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