

Narrabri Gas Project Annual Report 2022 -23

Community Consultative Committee Details

CCC / Project Name:	Narrabri Gas Project	Reporting Period:	2022 - 2023
Independent Chairperson:	Garry West	Proponent Contact:	Carlee Miller – Santos External Affairs Manager NSW

1. Executive Summary

Australian energy company Santos is the proponent of the approved Narrabri Gas Project (NGP) which is planned to drill up to 850 wells on 425 sites in the Project area in and around the Pilliga State Forest. The Project area is mostly (around 60%) on state land in a section of the Pilliga State Forest set aside by the NSW Government for uses including logging and extractive industries.

The Independent Planning Commission approved the Narrabri Gas Project on 30 September 2020 with conditions including the establishment of a Community Consultative Committee (CCC) in accordance with then Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (DPIE) *Community Consultative Committee Guidelines; State Significant Projects*. The consent conditions additionally required the establishment of Advisory Groups for Aboriginal Cultural heritage, Biodiversity, Water Technical and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The advisory groups and the CCC have been consulted in the development of the various Management Plans required for the project over the past two years.

All Management Plans were submitted to the Department of Planning for approval during 2021 and 2022 were approved during 2022.

On 18 October 2021, the NSW Land and Environment Court dismissed the appeal lodged by the Murrumbidgee Gas and Pipeline Accord, represented by the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO), to overturn the approval of the Narrabri Gas Project. This legal process pushed the timelines for the project back approximately 12 months. In January 2022, the EDO notified Santos that an appeal of the above decision would not be proceeding.

Santos acquired Hunter Gas Pipeline Pty Ltd which owns an approved underground gas pipeline route from Wallumbilla in Queensland to Newcastle in New South Wales in August 2022. The underground route passes close to Santos' Narrabri Gas Project. Santos is working with infrastructure developers and landowners to construct the pipeline from Narrabri to Newcastle which will also consider the requirements to transport hydrogen as customer demand evolves during the energy transition. During 2023 Santos continued engagement with landholders to finalise the alignment, progress survey agreements as well as progress management plans to commence the development of preliminary works sites to support the pipeline during construction.

In December 2022 Santos lodged a Scoping Report as part of its application for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the development of a lateral gas transmission pipeline to link the Narrabri Gas Project and the Hunter Gas Pipeline, south of Narrabri, New South Wales. The project would extend for about 50-60 kilometres from the approved gas processing facility at Leewood to the Hunter Gas

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Pipeline east of Baan Baa. The SEARs have been issued and the Environmental Impact Statement is currently being prepared.

In February 2023, Phase 1 of the NGP commenced which included a program of drilling monitoring water bores. A 12 to 18 month appraisal program is underway ahead of a final investment decision for the next phase of the project development. The final investment decision is subject to receiving all required approvals to support the development including the supporting pipelines.

In December 2022 the National Native Title Tribunal determination was handed down. The determination proposed future acts, being the granting of Petroleum Production Lease Applications 13, 14, 15 and 16 for the NGP, may be done. This decision was appealed, a hearing was conducted late 2023, with a decision anticipated early 2024.

CCC activities for 2022 and 2023

- The CCC met four times during 2022 and the same number of times during 2023.
- Each meeting was well attended, and stakeholders actively engaged in discussion of issues of concern.
- Draft minutes were circulated to CCC members to review 7-10 days following the meeting and the minutes are finalised after a further 7 days and uploaded to the project website together with the meeting presentation given by the project team.
- There were changes in the stakeholder membership over the period, including the CWA withdrawing its member representative.

2. Key issues

A summary of the key issues raised by the CCC are as follows:

- Community Benefits Fund (CBF) detailed which will support major initiatives and infrastructure projects in the area.
- Clarification of references to the exporting of gas from the Narrabri Gas Project. Santos confirmed use of the term “exported” means from Narrabri to the domestic market.
- Clarification of statement by former Deputy Premier (John Barilaro) that there would be no more mining on the Liverpool Plains. Santos explained the NSW Government published its “Future of Gas Statement” that outlined the government’s support for the Narrabri Gas Project as well as a limited number of petroleum Exploration Licenses to support the Narrabri project. The government reduced the area where gas exploration and production can occur by 77 percent.
- Produced water spill at Bibblewindi when the project site was owned and operated by Eastern Star Gas. What was the extent of the area impacted? Why did Santos enter guilty pleas and fined \$52,000? Santos clarified the produced water spill occurred approximately six months prior to Santos’ acquisition of Eastern Star Gas in December 2011. Santos reported the incident in February 2012 and commenced rehabilitation of the site in consultation with the regulator. From the assessment undertaken, the ‘Impacted Area’, which was identified as

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the area directly impacted by the spill, had an area of approximately 16,700 square metres. The 'Affected Area' which was not directly impacted by the water spill but was an area down gradient of the spill site, was assessed to have an area of approximately 16,600 square metres. The vegetation in this area did not appear to be directly affected. The combination of both the Impacted and Affected Area were shown to have a total approximate area of 3.4 hectares. When Santos acquired the asset from Eastern Star Gas in 2011, it also acquired the liabilities associated with the asset.

- Proposed route of the Narrabri Lateral Pipeline in the Pilliga and provision in case of fire? Santos explained the proposed route is from Leewood down the X-Line Road and then a combination of forest and private land. The pipeline will be buried so there is no exposure to fire. Santos also advised that its water resources are available to the Rural Fire Service and Forestry Corporation NSW in the event of a fire.
- Bushfire management and preparedness emphasised.

The Project team responds to each issue raised either directly in the meeting or at the subsequent meeting. All the issues and the response are included in the minutes.

3. Focus for next 12 months

- Monitor preparation for Phase 2 works.
- Provide updates on the Hunter Gas Pipeline and the Narrabri Lateral Pipeline projects.
- Review independent audits and management plan modifications / updates.

Signature of Chair:	
Date:	8 January 2024