

“Warrah”

Warrah Rd,

Tottenham.NSW.2873

26/2/18

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please accept this as our testimonies to the People's Tribunal into the Human Rights Impacts of Unconventional Gas.

We are landholders, west of Tottenham running 6000 acres of mixed cropping, sheep farming. We are currently in a battle with APA Pipeline Group for the proposed construction of the Western Slopes Pipeline to connect the proposed Santos Piliga CSG Project.

The Government have been deceptive by trying to approve this as 2 separate projects, rather than 1 whole project. Obviously you can't approve a pipeline first, without the gas field being approved, and yet that is exactly what is happening. APA are pushing ahead – now up to easement negotiations, before the Piliga project has been approved.

March, 2017 an APA Land Access Officer rang us to tell us a CSG pipeline was coming through the property, the Government had pretty much signed off on it and we didn't have any say about it. The proposed pipeline was coming right through the middle of our property, effectively cutting the property in two and going through the best of our cropping paddocks. We met with the APA Land Access Officer to ask questions about why this route had been chosen, potential problems with the route, pipeline problems, why they hadn't chosen stock routes /crown land or road reserves,etc. Any hard questions we asked, the APA employee just glossed over or didn't answer. When we asked what would happen if we refused, the employee stated” We always get them in the end.” APA were asking for Land Access Agreements to be signed with landholders- without landholders getting proper consultation for the long term implications of signing.

APA didn't hold a wider community meeting to inform our area. APA then started ringing and harassing individual landholders in our area. Landholders they particularly harassed and intimidated, into trying to get access agreements signed, were our elderly widows, who they possibly thought of as weaker targets.

It seems immoral that a State Significant Project was proposed on our property and we had had, no notification from the Government at all. No public meeting with the Government or APA and no consultation at all. It was incredibly intimidating to be told that we would be forced to comply with the pipeline group. It seems incredibly unethical that they could ask for Access Agreements to be signed- without you fully comprehending your rights.

The proposed route appears to have had, no consideration of peoples income from cropping- with the proposed pipeline going straight through the middle of cropping paddocks. There appears to have been no consideration of dwellings, as the proposed pipeline comes within 200-400m of neighbours houses. There appears to have been no consideration of infrastructure- as it goes within 200m of yards,sheds, buildings,etc . There appears to have been no consideration of watercourses-

as the proposed route, follows a watercourse and is within 50m of a dam. The proposed route appears to have had no consideration of the 3 river crossings as it crosses through ephemeral wetlands and will cause potential irreversible environmental damage to significant remnant vegetation. The route appears to have not considered the highly unstable vertisol soils and massive areas of gilgai country that it is proposed to go through- thoroughly prone to cracking, sinking and exposure. (APA have never put a pipeline through such a huge area of vertisol soils)The proposed route appears to have not used stock routes/crown land/road reserves as it basically parallels an existing stock route in our area.The route chosen appears to be the shortest route by APA to keep costs down to get into the Moomba Sydney Pipeline

APA and Santos had an invitation only meeting at Tottenham in March, 2017. To the best of my knowledge- landholders in the Condobolin area- didn't receive any such meeting or information. We asked lots of the practical implications of putting a pipeline through our area.

We asked questions like- how safe are the chemicals in fracking? The Santos employee told us" They are simply sand and water and "chemical" to suspend the sand particles. It is so safe I would personally put it in my mouth." It seems incredible to be told a blatant lie to our faces- particularly when we investigated off the Santos Material Data Safety Sheets to find out the chemicals were hardly safe enough to put in your mouth. It seems immoral that the Government doesn't believe the chemicals are safe enough for use in the Sydney Water Catchment Area- and hence has put a ban in place, however has put no such protection in place for the Great Artesian Basin. The Government has acknowledged that fracking isn't safe and has put protections in place for the critical industry clusters like thoroughbred and winery industry, and yet has no protections in place for agriculture.

We asked Santos where the gas from this project was going? Santos replied " It could supply up to 50% of NSW gas demand needs." We asked where the current gas in the Moomba- Sydney Pipeline was going and Santos admitted it was currently all running North to QLD for export. It seems ridiculous that our Government has no stronger word on their Agreement with Santos than it "could" supply NSW gas. Maybe it " could not"? When the relevant Minister was asked in Parliament whether there was a guarantee NSW would get this gas- he sat down and refused to answer the question.

We asked APA about depth of the proposed pipeline. APA's response was "typically 900mm or greater, we can negotiate". It is immoral of APA to keep claiming that depth, when on APA's Government Submission they have applied for-" 900mm, minimum 750mm". There is nothing written about it going deeper. Other states have put high pressure pipelines in at 1200mm and high voltage power is in at 1200mm. How could you possibly trust this pipeline company?

We asked APA about heavy machinery traversing the pipeline. APA said " yes you can farm across it, but not a 30tonne excavator. I don't know the exact figures." As we run a cropping operation with multiple road trains, mother bins, chaser bins, headers,etc that are all such heavy machinery. It is ridiculous to have unclear and deceptive answers from APA about heavy machinery, when they own and maintain 15,000Km of pipelines in Australia. Other states have a 4tonne limit on high pressure pipelines.

The Community Consultative Committee(CCC) Meetings held by APA have been a farce and simply a 'tick the box' exercise from the Government. We believe the interim moderator can't be considered

independent, as he is being paid by APA and has family members that work for a coal mining company. He was Council Environment and Planning Director when a large coal project was approved. Our representative landholders on the Committee haven't been able to get their questions answered, or material they have requested by APA given to them(e.g the ARCHER report). The minutes take a very long time to become publicly available, as the landholders on the Committee have refused to sign off on the minutes as being a true and accurate record of what occurred at the meeting. Council representatives haven't attended all the meetings. Landholder representatives were asked if they would like any additional people on the CCC. They asked for independent legal representation and were refused. However APA and other parties have managed to bring more people onto the CCC- which appears completely biased and unbalanced.

There has been no proper Public Community Consultation from either the Government or APA. In December,2017 APA cancelled Community Drop in Sessions . Finally in February 2018- APA held an open Public Community Consultation Meeting, where landholders, stakeholders and the broader community could hopefully get some proper consultation about the project. APA refused to take on board any of the concerns that the community raised, and basically refuted every point that was brought up. APA were asked to sign an Agreed principles of Land Access, to allow farmers to say "No" without being bullied , harassed or intimidated by APA, however APA refused. A vote was taken at the meeting to see who opposed the pipeline. Over 90% of community members who attended voted " No" to the pipeline. APA have reported these meetings as being "successful".

APA were asked about easement width, as the Western Slopes Pipeline is proposed to have a 30m easement, which is much larger than other existing easements. APA claim it is due to clearing for topsoil retention and size of padding machines. When pressed APA finally acknowledged that the easement agreement would have the wording pipes and pipelines and that there could be a future possibility of extra pipelines in the easement, as they have done with other easements. Again- very non transparent answers from APA.

APA were asked whether any substantial, non refundable money been offered to landowners, that hadn't signed an access agreement, before the Environmental Impact Survey (EIS)had even been submitted or easement negotiations had taken place as way of an inducement to get landholders to sign. When asked if this was the case, APA Project Manager denied this had occurred. A landholder then produced an email document from APA offering a non-refundable \$150,000 when they hadn't signed an access agreement. We believe this is an open attempt by APA to divide and conquer the community, making it very difficult to trust them as a pipeline company.

APA also "neglected" their duty of care, to mention that there had been some problems with pipelines in the past. It has been up to us as landholders to discover all the potential problems with pipelines like:-

- Subsidence/slumping- both when the pipeline goes in and after every large rain event
- Erosion. The Central Ranges Pipeline had horrific pictures of massive erosion requiring 3000 tonnes of rock to remediate
- Notifiable Weeds. The Moomba pipeline 40 years later is still trying to control Khaki weed, Parthenium weed is rife in QLD

- Stress Corrosive Cracking and Rupture-Moomba Sydney Pipeline ruptured less than 6 years after installation. It also ruptured in 2015 from lack of maintenance on an ageing pipeline. APA manage this pipeline and were aware of the ageing defects.
- Notifiable Diseases- we live in the Anthrax belt and APA weren't even aware that it might be a problem

There has been issues with APA climbing padlocked fences, with trespass signs and biosecurity signs that appear to breach APA's Authority to Survey- that is "swept under the carpet", when raised to Department of Planning Officials. There has been issues of breaching property biosecurity without landholder notification or property induction, and bringing on uncertified bio matter. APA appear to be completely in breach and disregard of the trespass and new biosecurity laws.

There has been some proposed realignments of the pipeline- notably now missing all the cotton farmers of Warren. It appears that there has been some sort of deal struck- again appearing to divide the community.

It seems completely immoral that APA/Santos are allowed to be opaque in their dealings with people and above the law. It appears that the only word APA understand is "negotiate". It appears that no one seems to keep them accountable.

The Government haven't been accountable at all about this project. We have tried to get our State and Federal Members to come and attend Community Consultation about the process, however neither have attended. As elected public officials their duty of care is to listen to their electorates concerns and fairly represent them. Our State member no longer lives in our electorate and refuses to discuss the issue or represent the issue in Parliament for us. (Our State member didn't sit in Parliament whilst it was sitting but instead went for holidays). Our State member has stated on radio that landholders are basically antiquated farmers and holding the States energy reserves to ransom, so farmers " should get on board". Our Federal member has also rubbished farmers as brainwashed trouble makers. There appears to be collusion between the Government and the pipeline company.

There appears to be discrepancy from the Government in land usage deemed significant. It appears the Government is favouring mining to the detriment of existing agriculture usage, despite the fact that agriculture is a generationally sustainable industry. It appears landholders are discriminated by their lifestyle and not able to live a peaceful existence, without intrusion of pipeline or gas companies.

It appears the Government is doing no independent work to compare against APA's Environmental Impact Survey and will only look at what APA submits. This is immoral to only view what a vested party submits to the Government. The Department of Planning has refused to meet for Community Consultation and instead chose to go to small landholder forums run by APA- which is surely a non independent method of consulting.

APA is currently preparing to lodge it's EIS despite the fact that it hasn't surveyed 2 of the major river crossings the Macquarie and Castlereagh. This appears to be a very inappropriate and flimsy EIS submission.

There are no benefits to our community by having this pipeline and only burdens on our Shire. Burdens on the road usage with extra traffic. Burdens with man camps requiring water , sewage,etc

We have tried to get our issue raised in the media, but it appears that APA can control the media as well. Prime News was forced to remove it's coverage of the Coal Seam Gas Forum, off it's Facebook page, under APA pressure. APA is happy to print that they are satisfied they have kept the Community informed- which is a blatant lie.

This process, so far has caused a huge amount of mental stress on our family, with a realistic fear for sustainable farming on our property in the future. We have had to do all our own research on trying to find out the truthful facts about the industry, to sort through the lies we are continued to be told. We have had to find independent legal advice, to find out our property rights. We have had neighbours doing independent environmental surveys, to be able to prove our environmental concerns. Worryingly we are only in the early stages of a proposed pipeline- with no foreseeable resolution at this point. We can see the effects of the CSG industry in QLD and can see it is an industry of destruction and corruption. As pipelines are caveats on our titles- we are potentially looking at loss of property value and maybe questionable economic viability.

Where are landowners to turn to for help, if they have followed all the correct paths for raising their fears and concerns, including the Government, but their voices are not being heard ?

Yours Sincerely,

Philip & Melinda Mills