

Residents raise Pipeline concerns

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Madam.

On Wednesday 7th February, approximately 40 landowners, stakeholders and broader community from Condobolin, Bobadah, Tottenham, Warren and Coonamble attended a Community Consultation meeting at Tottenham War Memorial Hall, with APA, the company contracted to construct the proposed Western Slopes Pipeline project.

The proposed Western Slopes Pipeline Project is a 450Km pipeline to carry coal seam gas from the controversial Pilliga Coal Seam Gas Project (CSG), to the Moomba Sydney Pipeline, and then for export. Santos' Pilliga CSG project, has had a record of almost 23,000 submissions, with only around 300 submissions in support. Farmers and community felt the project is creating great concern for the future sustainability of underground water supplies.

APA cancelled Community Drop-In meetings 5th/6th December, 2017. However, approximately 420 landowners, stakeholders and broader community still attended the Coonamble 6th meeting and passed unanimously 3 motions:

Motion 1:- The rural communities including the towns, villages and farming communities totally reject the Santos CSG Pilliga project and all associated industries and will stand together to vehemently oppose this using all possible options to protect the water.

Motion 2:- There will be no individual meetings with affected landholders or the

Aboriginal community. We will only hold meetings in the presence of the community.

Motion 3:- The Coonamble and wider community, after holding a meeting on December 6, 2017, have unanimously shown support that the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) is too important to be put at risk and the APA pipeline will be blocked at any cost.

Landowners at the Tottenham meeting were hoping to be able to raise their concerns to APA representatives about what they see as foreseeable and serious problems along the proposed CSG pipeline route and that they feel remain unaddressed.

Landholders and a representative from the Wiradjuri tribe were disappointed at the consultation process. They felt that APA were there to just "tick the box".

Contentious issues such as APA's alleged trespassing and breaching farmers biosecurity plans were raised. APA had been caught allegedly trespassing, climbing padlocked, signed gates with biosecurity signs, and bringing uncertified bio matter onto peoples' properties in the Coonamble district without prior authority. It was landholders' belief that the Department of Planning had given APA strict guidelines to follow before APA were allowed to access properties under the Authority to Survey (ATS). Landholders allege that these guidelines have not been adhered to.

APA were asked specifically by a landholder how it defined trespass. APA

declined to answer and appears to rely on it's ATS as a free pass to enter land, regardless of landholder's views.

Landholders also allege that APA offered landholders sums of non-refundable money prior to the Environmental Impact Study submitted. When asked if this was the case, the APA Project Manager denied this had occurred.

Landholder attendee Brian Plummer then produced an email from an APA employee offering a landholder a non-refundable \$150,000. Brian expressed the view that this money was an attempt to divide the community, making it difficult for community members to trust APA.

Attendees noted that all the communities, townships and farmers along the proposed route rely on bore water for domestic water supply. Just like asbestos which was sold to the public as a safe household product, APA's assurances offer no guarantee that bore water will remain uncontaminated.

Meeting attendees stated they believe Australia has enough natural gas so there is no need to use Coal Seam Gas and take on any risk. Unlike APA, landholders do not have faith in the process.

APA was asked to sign an Agreed Principles of Land Access Agreement, to allow farmers to say "No" without being bullied, harassed or intimidated by APA, but APA refused. APA agreed landholders could cancel previously signed Access Agreements.

Landowners believe that APA was unprepared to take on board the issues raised by the community members in the two hour meeting, and attended only to refute every point that was brought up from the meeting. The

community's impression is that the meeting was a "rubber stamping" of the process.

One local landholder, who wishes to remain anonymous, was asked for a comment about the Tottenham meeting. He said "it showed a blatant disregard for genuine community concerns. APA showed a blatant disregard for the truth during the meeting. What was stated by APA representatives was very different to the information presented by members of the community. APA told the meeting it had the right to trespass on individual properties under Authority to Survey."

The overwhelming majority of the meeting voted informally that they were against the Santos Pilliga Coal Seam Gas project and the CSG pipeline going forward. They said the community would boycott the upcoming landholder forums, as they felt that APA's was attempting to get agreement by dividing landholder and community opinion and this would not be tolerated.

They noted that the major concerns of the environmental impacts on the Great Artesian Basin were addressed at the Great Artesian Basin Protection Group Coal Seam Gas Forum on the 10th February, Coonamble Bowling Club at 2pm. Everyone was invited to attend. APA was also invited to attend but declined.

Name and address supplied but withheld.

APA responds ...

Mr Jim Fjeldsoe, Manager Access and Approvals, Western Slopes Pipeline was contacted by the Argus for comments relating to community concerns raised in the consultation meeting at Tottenham.

APA is satisfied that people left last week's community meetings better informed about the pipeline Project and process than when they arrived, which is what we set out to achieve, and that everyone had the chance to

put their questions directly to APA. We certainly didn't expect to convert Project opponents to supporters in the course of a few hours, and we knew that not everyone would like or agree with the answers provided. But no question or issue was off the table or left unanswered, which was acknowledged by some attendees at both meetings.

MORE APA RESPONSE ON PAGE 6.



Lachlan Shire
Your Ultimate Bush Experience

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Email: council@lachlan.nsw.gov.au Website: www.lachlan.nsw.gov.au

PUBLIC NOTICE

Authorised officers will be conducting weed inspections of various properties along the Lachlan River, Goobang Creek and creeks south of the river during February and into March.

Council will be targeting Golden Dodder, Cockspur Coral Tree, Osage Orange Tree and Blackberry in order to identify the severity of their infestations; however other weeds will be documented.

Kindly contact Laurence Thompson from the Environment & Projects Department, on 02 6895 1950 if there is any reasonable situation that would result in our inspectors not entering a property.

Robert Hunt
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PUBLIC NOTICE

TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE NOTICE ACCESS ROAD TO CONDOBOLIN TIP

Residents and Visitors are advised the access road to Condobolin Tip via Maitland Street will be closed to all vehicular traffic from 6am Monday 12 February until 6pm Friday 16 February due to road upgrade works.

Condobolin tip can be accessed via Boona Road, Council apologises for any inconvenience that may result from these closures.



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Invitation for Tender T2018/02 Utes in the Paddock – Stage 1 Civil Works

Lachlan Shire Council is inviting Tenders from suitably qualified companies for the construction of the Utes in the Paddock - Stage 1 Civil Works near the intersection of Lachlan Valley Way & Gipps Way, Condobolin.

This Tender is for the construction of sealed access road, car and long vehicle parking area, drainage and utilities, concrete shared path, landscaping and barbecue facilities.

Documents can be downloaded through the E-tendering portal www.tenderlink.com/lachlan. Documents may also be collected from Council Administration Office:
58-64 Molong Street Condobolin NSW 2877.

For enquiries, please contact Council's Manager Recreation, Mr Adrian Milne on 02 6895 1900 during office hours.

Tenders close 4:00PM on Wednesday, 14 March 2018

Robert Hunt
General Manager

The 38th Annual

DON BROWN MEMORIAL MERINO EWE COMPETITION - Condobolin District

Monday 19 & Tuesday 20 February
Sixteen local commercial Merino flocks over two days

Tickets: \$40 per day (includes Programme, M Tea, Lunch, Refreshments and more)
Judges: Ross Ivey, Glentanner, Mt Cook, NZ and Peter Capel, Bungulla, Manilla



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"Don Brown" Dinner

Tuesday 20 February - Condobolin Sports Club
7.30 for 8.15 p.m. Tickets \$40

Bookings close Thursday 15 February - For further information and bookings, contact Carol-Ann Malouf, 0499 597 844 or carol-annmalouf@bigpond.com

