

NO to gas-fired dispossession: We stand with Gomeroi against Santos

We demand Santos immediately withdraw the four “Future Acts Determination Applications” lodged with the Native Title Tribunal. These applications seek to destroy Gomeroi rights in order to establish the major climate-wrecking Narrabri coal seam gas mining operation on Gomeroi lands in the Pillaga forest.

Gomeroi have never ceded sovereignty and given no consent to coal seam gas. The only remaining legal barrier to Santos’ establishing 850 coal seam gas wells is Gomeroi Native Title rights. The current Native Title Act (NTA) provides very weak protection for First Nations seeking to stop unwanted developments on their lands and Santos are trying to exploit this weakness.

The NTA says that Tribunal approval of any project that conflicts with Native Title interests must be in the “public interest”. The Commonwealth and NSW governments are supporting Santos’ claim that coal seam gas will bring economic prosperity. In reality, this project will create profits for a tiny few while unleashing a carbon and methane bomb, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions in the order of 127 million tonnes (CO2 equivalent). The project will also destroy precious local ecologies and threatens to pollute the Great Artesian Basin, waters which are so crucial for sustaining life.

The “gas-fired recovery” policy, initiated by Scott Morrison, has provided millions of dollars of public money to fuel climate disaster, including \$600 million alone towards new gas-fired power plant at Kurri Kurri to burn gas from the Santos Narrabri project.

Instead of gas-fired dispossession, we urgently need to be strengthening First Nations rights and investing heavily in a just transition away from fossil fuels, with large-scale employment in renewable energy and sustainable development.

This project cannot be allowed to proceed. If the Native Title Tribunal will not defend Gomeroi rights, we pledge to support a fight that will stop Santos on the ground.

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