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NSW Labor puts politics ahead of jobs and cleaner energy

NSW Labor's plan to stop the Narrabri Natural Gas Project would forgo the creation of 1400 jobs in the state's North West, royalties, significant income for farmers and the chance to supply up to half of the state's gas needs, Australia's peak oil and gas industry body said today.

APPEA Acting Chief Executive Paul Fennelly said: "Plagiarising the policies of the NSW Greens will not deliver an affordable natural gas supply for 1.3 million commercial and domestic gas users.

"The continued politicisation of the state's gas supply by the ALP sends a very loud message to anyone wanting to invest in NSW and an even louder message to the people of regional NSW wanting to grow their economies and support small businesses.

"It's time for political leaders to focus on the looming threats to the NSW economy from a transitioning eastern Australian gas market.

"The ALP must recognise the fact NSW imports 95 per cent of its gas from interstate without the need to do so."

Last year, the NSW Chief Scientist released a report that found that the industry's technical challenges and risks can be safely managed and noted the high standards of engineering and professionalism in natural gas companies.

Mr Fennelly said: "This is a far cry from the alarmist and misinformed claims that have too often characterised debate about natural gas projects in NSW."

NSW consumes around a quarter of the gas used in the eastern Australia gas market, yet supplies only about one per cent of the gas production for that market.

The Narrabri Natural Gas Project proponents, Australian company Santos, would site operations on about 1000 hectares – far less than one per cent of the Pilliga – to supply up to 50 per cent of NSW's gas needs.

The project area is largely dry scrub land in the State Forest outside the part of the Pilliga protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The project area does not include Strategic Agricultural Land.

In fact, the part of the Pilliga in which the project is located was set aside by the NSW Government for forestry and extractive industries following a thorough ecological assessment.

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