

## Actions from GISERA NSW Regional Research Advisory Committee Meeting 18 June 2019

Key

Action Open
Action Due/overdue
Action complete/in train

	Item	Action	Owner	Due	Status
1.	18-06-19 Item 2A	<a href="#">Action 1</a> : The research proponent to make clearer the base in which this work is coming from (i.e. specifying findings of previous results)	Research proponent	27 June 2019	
2.	18-06-19 Item 2A	<a href="#">Action 2</a> : The research proponent to contextualise this proposed project's research results, clearly stating that this work will not determine whether or not approval of the Narrabri Gas Project will happen.	Research proponent	27 June 2019	
3.	18-06-19 Item 2A	<a href="#">Action 3</a> : The research proponent to be more explicit about community engagement and measures.	Research proponent	27 June 2019	
4.	18-06-19 Item 2B	<a href="#">Action 4</a> : The research proponent will revise the project proposal to look at broader economics and productivity outcomes of the region (taking into account all comments raised in these minutes).	Research proponent	27 June 2019	
5.	18-06-19 Item 3	<a href="#">Action 5</a> : The GISERA Director to contact the EPA to ascertain whether there is value in GISERA undertaking a risk based study on alternative sources of water.	GISERA Director	31 July 2019	

**Minutes**  
**GISERA NSW Regional Research Advisory Committee Meeting No. 3**  
**Tuesday, 18 June 2019**  
**Exhibition Room, The Crossing Theatre, 117 Tibbereena Street, Narrabri**

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**OPENING**

The meeting of the GISERA NSW Regional Research Advisory Committee (RRAC) was called to order at 9.00 am (AEST) on Tuesday, 18 June 2019.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Damian Barrett: GISERA Director (*CSIRO*)  
Ken Flower: General Manager (*Caputar Motors*) and Chief Flight Instructor (*Namoi Aviation*)  
Alison Sheridan: Professor of Management, UNE Business School (*University of New England*)  
Jack Warnock: Lower Namoi Cotton Growers' Association and Managing Director (*Warnock Agronomics P/L*)  
Deborah Hailstones: Manager Science Strategy (*NSW Department of Primary Industries*) – for Philip Wright  
Stephanie Stanhope: State President (*Country Women's Association of NSW*)  
Neale House: Manager Environment and Water ENSW (*Santos*)

**Other attendees:**

Dan O'Sullivan: GISERA Deputy Director (*CSIRO*)  
Jizelle Khoury: GISERA Executive Officer (*CSIRO*)

**Apologies:**

Michael Bange: Senior Principal Research Scientist Cropping Systems – Agriculture & Food (*CSIRO*)  
Philip Wright: Chief Scientific Officer (*NSW Department of Primary Industries*)  
Jock Laurie: NSW Land and Water Commissioner (*NSW Department of Industry*)  
Peter Wallbrink: Senior Principal Research Scientist – Land and Water (*CSIRO*)

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### ITEM 1. Welcome, Introductions, overview of GISERA

The GISERA Director welcomed all members to the meeting.

It was noted that comments on each of the proposals had been provided out-of-session from Jock Laurie, Peter Wallbrink and Michael Bange.

### ITEM 2A. PROJECT PROPOSAL

#### Assessment of faults as potential connectivity pathways

The GISERA Director provided a summary of the project proposal.

Key points raised:

- Previous work undertaken as part of the GISERA project on the 'Impacts of CSG depressurisation on the Great Artesian Basin flux' has indicated the possible presence of a fault in the Namoi region.
- This project will look at the implications of a fault being present if that is found to be the case. What is the likely effect around groundwater dynamics? Is there any natural flow across the fault and how great is that flow? How close is it to the surface and does it intersect with alluvium?
- The proposal will need to make clearer the base in which this work is coming from (specify finding from previous results).
- The outcome of this research is independent of the EIS process, however the results could be taken into account resulting in modification to some future approval conditions (should the EIS be approved). It is important that the project order document contextualises the results and explicitly states that this work will not determine whether or not approval of the Narrabri Gas Project will happen.
- The communications plan should be more explicit about the number of community workshops and presentations. It should include some measure about community engagement (who attends, what are the measures of success, what did they understand initially and how has that changed).

Outcome: The NSW RRAC approved this project, subject to the actions below being addressed to their satisfaction. The revisions made to the proposal will be forwarded to the NSW RRAC via email out of session.

Action 1: The research proponent to make clearer the base in which this work is coming from (i.e. specifying findings of previous results)

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Action 2: The research proponent to contextualise this proposed project's research results, clearly stating that this work will not determine whether or not approval of the Narrabri Gas Project will happen.

Action 3: The research proponent to be more explicit about community engagement and measures.

## **ITEM 2B. PROJECT PROPOSAL**

### **Assessing and forecasting on-shore gas effects on agricultural economic and productivity outcomes**

The GISERA Director provided a summary of the project proposal.

Key points raised:

- The key objectives of this project is to look at the economic productivity and the outcomes of expansion of the industry in the Narrabri area.
- This builds on previous work done by GISERA that looked at some indicators of economic performance in statistical local areas throughout NSW that have had the gas industry operating in either production or exploration.
- It is proposed this project will look at potential for the impacts and benefits of the industry operating in an agricultural region. It will include components of economic modelling as well as a component that looks at the spatial distribution of land uses and land use activities and the location of wells in the region.
- This project will lay a baseline for further work in understanding the impact to date and the potential benefits to date and then what might be the benefits of impact down the road in production (on income and flow on effect in the region).
- It was noted that most wells would be located within in the Pilliga. There is a MOU between industry groups that any future development will avoid any prime agricultural land and alluvial aquifer systems, so that may constrain any impact on agricultural activities, but there are other potential benefits e.g. beneficial use of water and the potential for industries to develop around the gas project that would be of benefit to agriculture. This project seems to avoid those other potential gains that may come from the industry in the region.
- The possible future local offtake of gas in the region is important and of benefit.
- The proposal contains too much reference to Surat in Queensland and farms. Future development in NSW would be different given the majority of wells would be within the Pilliga. The agreements between Santos and the farming community are completely different and the impacts are constrained, but the possible impacts are bigger than has been in the past as it is domestic gas. Proposal may need recognition that we cannot take what is happening in Queensland as a guide here.
- Would prefer broader economic work done. Do not just focus project analysis on the agriculture sector. Look at broader economics and productivity outcomes of the region (benefits to other industries with gas industry operating in the region, opportunities to the broader community)

- Are there other potential benefits of having gas in the region e.g. more skilled local populations?
- Factor in drought condition as part of economic analysis.
- Consider looking at Pilliga native title economic benefits.
- Objective 3 in project proposal is no longer an appropriate/relevant objective (different to Surat because agreements in place regarding placement of wells).
- Nature of analysis in this proposal to change from focus on agriculture to broader economic effects (use GISERA South Australia project baseline). Emphasis to be on potential impact of gas project (if 800 wells go ahead).
- Hold over scenario based analysis post announcement

Outcome: The NSW RRAC would like to research proponent to revise the proposal taking to account all the points raised, and submit a revised proposal to the RRAC for consideration via email out of session.

Action 4: The research proponent will revise the project proposal to look at broader economics and productivity outcomes of the region (taking into account all comments raised in these minutes).

## **ITEM 2C. PROJECT PROPOSAL**

### **Monitoring changes in community wellbeing and local attitudes to CSG development in Narrabri, NSW**

The GISERA Director provided a summary of the project proposal.

Key points raised:

- A previous study was conducted in Narrabri Shire in 2017 as part of a GISERA project 'Social baseline assessment of the Narrabri region of New South Wales in relation to CSG development'. This provided a baseline for future measurement and assessment of community wellbeing in the event that gas development proceeded in the region.
- The key objectives of this project proposal are twofold:
  - To regularly monitor a key set of indicators for community wellbeing, resilience, and perceptions of gas development, identified as important to stakeholders, over a 6-12 month period of the construction phase (conducted using pulse surveys of approximately 100-150 randomly selected residents) and
  - To measure any changes in community wellbeing and attitudes to CSG development between the pre-approval phase in 2017 and any construction phase in 2020-21 (conducted after the pulse surveys via telephone with over 400 residents and asking over 180 questions).
- This research proposal is subject to future gas development in the Narrabri Shire being approved. It is contingent on the commencement of gas development would be conducted during the construction phase of gas development.

- There was unanimous agreement that this research project should proceed and that these surveys be conducted.

Outcome: The NSW RRAC approved this project without amendment.

### **ITEM 3. OTHER BUSINESS**

The NSW RRAC discussed future project ideas which included:

- A third community wellbeing survey (to be conducted during operations phase of development)
- A scenario based economic study (post announcement) similar to that conducted by GISERA in South Australia.
- Alternative uses of treated water. At the moment, there are constraints to only use water on Leewood. This treated water is deemed as effluent under current law. Could this be a risk based study (for EPA to consider)? Will be necessary to speak to EPA first to determine if they are interested in obtaining results of such a study. If so, we will proceed with project proposal development.
- Research Development and Extension (RD&E) – What have we learnt? What is the story? What do we now know? Where are we really at? What are the risks? (Information communicated to the community and to other scientists).

Action 5: The GISERA Director to contact the EPA to ascertain whether there is value in GISERA undertaking a risk based study on alternative sources of water.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the NSW Regional Research Advisory Committee is yet to be scheduled. It is anticipated that a meeting will occur once further proposals are established.

The GISERA Director adjourned the meeting at 12.10 pm (AEST).

Minutes submitted by: **Jizelle Khoury**

Minutes approved by: **Damian Barrett**