

Darwin Pipeline Duplication Project

Submission to the NT Environment Protection Authority from Redacted

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Darwin Pipeline Duplication Project (DPDP).

I have lived, worked and travelled in the NT for more than thirty years. Like many Territorians I value the waters and land surrounding Darwin Harbour very highly. I understand the need for economic development but am sure this is possible without putting the environment at risk.

Santos has prepared a case for the DPDP which it describes as a 'robust self-assessment' and concluded that 'most impacts during the construction phase would be temporary and localised and can be readily managed with little to no environmental impact' (Darwin Pipeline Duplication (DPD) Project NT EPA Referral, page 190).

Santos' DPDP is an integral part of a much larger project, the development of the Barossa gas field. My strong view is that large projects such as this should be considered as a whole. They should not be assessed in small segments as presented by this proponent, under some misapprehension that the environment is made up of discrete, unrelated elements and with cumulative effects that have minimal impact on the environment. A terrestrial example of this principle is the loss of habitat. Recent news that koalas are officially endangered is not because of a single land-clearing event. Instead, it is due to many land-clearing events, fire, water mismanagement, and degradation of habitat along with many other factors that result in poor health or death of animals. The stark outcome is the status of the koala today. Similarly, marine and coastal environments are being assaulted by piecemeal development approvals and the water quality of our seas and rivers is at risk.

I believe that the entire Barossa gas field plan should be the focus of a public inquiry.

Darwin Harbour is a Northern Territory Site of Conservation Significance and home to a number of endangered species of marine life. Santos contends that with good management, the proposed DPDP will not adversely impact on these values or species. While the risks associated with marine-related hydrocarbon spills, high levels of underwater noise and acid sulphate soils may be low, if the Barossa gas field does not go ahead then there is no risk at all.

The project proposal refers to the possibility of re-purposing the existing Santos Bayu-Undan pipeline for offshore Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) (page 3); however, the technology for such a strategy is still in the early stages. As CCS is part of the reason for the DPDP, the whole project should be carefully examined considering the environmental values that are at stake.

The estimates of carbon dioxide emissions from the proposed Barossa gas field are very high. As the DPDP is part of the Barossa gas field the emissions need to be considered in line with principles of ecologically sustainable development. New industry should enhance rather than undermine the Northern Territory's ability to meet its commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It is in the long-term interests of the Territory's economy and environment that Santos' Barossa gas field, including its DPDP be considered at a public inquiry. The community should be satisfied that a major project such as this will proceed only on the basis that there is minimal environmental impact and risk and that it is ecologically sustainable.

I appreciate your consideration of my comments.

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