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28 June 2013

Santos seeks approval for Pilliga exploration program

Santos is seeking approval for a more focussed exploration and appraisal program targeting areas in and around the Pilliga Forest in north-west NSW.

The more narrow Narrabri focus is designed to ascertain the commercial and technical viability of a gas development project to develop the resources in the Pilliga Forest.

Santos believes the proposed Narrabri Gas Project could supply over 25% of the natural gas used by NSW homes, small businesses, major industries and electricity generators, and is anticipating additional data gathered by the planned exploration program will confirm this.

Santos has chosen to refer the proposed exploration program to the Commonwealth Government for assessment under the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

The referred exploration activity includes the recommencement of two existing pilots shut in when Santos took over the Narrabri operations from Eastern Star Gas, the drilling of one additional corehole, 12 additional pilot wells and the re-entry of three other existing wells. Associated flow lines to transport gas and water between the pilots and facilities will also be referred.

The exploration program also requires various State Government approvals.

The exploration program outlined in the referral does not impact on Strategic Agricultural Land. It has a footprint of about 43 hectares which includes clearing of 36 additional hectares in and around the Pilliga, most of which will be adjacent to existing roads and tracks in the forest. All cleared sites would be fully rehabilitated after use.

“This exploration work will allow us to gather more data about the quantities, composition and flow rates of gas in the area and some additional technical information around the most effective drilling techniques, said Santos Manager for Community and Government Relations, Sam Crafter.

Santos will also continue to increase its understanding of the local area by continuing to undertake environmental studies including air and water monitoring programs

“Santos’ increased focus on Narrabri will mean further investment and ongoing community engagement in the area and we look forward to continued support from the local community,” Mr Crafter said.

Ends.