

**Media Release, 21st April 2011**

## **MASSIVE COAL SEAM GAS DEVELOPMENT PLANNED IN THE PILLIGA SCRUB**

Eastern Star Gas has applied for approval from the Federal Government under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act to develop a massive coal seam gas field in the Pilliga Scrub, near Narrabri in northern NSW.

Applications have also been placed for two major regional gas pipelines and an LNG export processing facility at Kooragang Island at Newcastle.

“Last week Eastern Star Gas put forward a proposal to place 550 gas wells, over 1,000km of local pipelines, and a large gas processing and compression plant in the Pilliga Scrub” said Carmel Flint, spokesperson for the Northern Inland Council for the Environment.

“This is the first time that a major coal seam gas production proposal has targeted bushland in NSW and it will have massive environmental impacts.

“The Pilliga Scrub is a vital recharge area for the Great Artesian Basin and coal seam gas drilling will put those precious water resources at risk” said Warrick Jordan, campaigns manager with The Wilderness Society, Newcastle.

“The Pilliga is also the largest and most intact temperate woodland in eastern Australia, it is a national icon, with outstanding conservation and recreational values. The area proposed for gas development includes an area subject to wilderness assessment.

“Coal seam gas production would clear at least 2,400 hectares of native vegetation and threaten the future of nationally important wildlife such as the Pilliga Mouse and South-eastern Long-eared Bat” said Pepe Clarke, Chief Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW

“The coal seam gas production plan even extends into the Pilliga East State Conservation Area which is a protected area under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

“A major gas production operation in the Pilliga will severely increase fire risks and real questions should be asked about it's placement in such a fire prone area.

“This latest application represents a massive increase from the proposal lodged last year by Eastern Star Gas with the NSW Government for 60 gas wells, which is still going through the planning process” said Keith Muir, Director of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

“We are calling on both State and Federal governments to reject the application and ensure that the Pilliga Scrub is protected for all to enjoy for untold generations to come” he said.

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