

APRIL 2017

The following is a monthly update for the Narrabri Community Consultative Committee (CCC) regarding activities undertaken by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) relating to PEL 238, PAL 2 and PPL 3 (Narrabri Gas Project).

It includes activities relating to the regulation of Environment Protection Licence (EPL) 20350 and the EPA's functions conducted under the NSW Gas Plan.

Attachments to this month's update:

- Running Log – Old Investigations of PEL 238 Outcomes
- Inspections undertaken by EPA – April 2017
- EPA Site Inspection Map – April 2017
- Feature Article – Seeking ideas for upcoming articles

Would you like to subscribe to our newsletter?

Readers can now subscribe to the monthly NCCC newsletter, and have it conveniently delivered to your email inbox each month.

To sign-up, visit the [Community Involvement page](#) of the NSW EPA website and click on the subscription form link.

EPA ACTION ITEMS SINCE LAST NCCC

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) commissioned the CSIRO to undertake a wide-ranging study of fugitive methane emissions from a variety of land uses across NSW. You can now view the report on our website by clicking the link below. You can find a link to our methane fact sheet on the [Fugitive methane emissions study webpage](#).

INVESTIGATIONS

Background

On 19 February 2013 the EPA became responsible for investigating environmental incidents that occur during coal seam gas activities under the provisions of the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (POEO) and issuing Environment Protection Licences (EPL).

On 1 July 2015 the EPA commenced its new role as the lead regulator for compliance with, and enforcement of, conditions of approval for gas activities in NSW. This includes regulating consent conditions and activity approvals issued by other agencies (excluding work health and safety). In carrying out this role the EPA works with the relevant experts and NSW Government agencies.

Gas activities must comply with a broad range of regulatory controls, including Acts, regulations, codes of practice, titles, approvals and other controls.

The prioritisation of investigations is determined using a risk assessment for investigations that considers the level of environmental impact and the likelihood of environmental harm occurring.

Current Investigations

Tintsfield Flare - update

On 24 February 2017, the EPA was notified by Santos of an incident relating to unauthorised access to Wilga Park, resulting in damage to the Tintsfield Flare.

The EPA has confirmed that the gas pipe had not been ruptured, and that there was no environmental impact. The flare was manually isolated by Santos after the incident was reported, with the site secured.

The EPA has investigated this matter, and all reports have been received. The EPA is satisfied that the matter was an act of vandalism, and there was no environmental harm. We will not be taking further action in this investigation, however the police are still investigating the vandalism.

Running Log – Old Investigations PEL 238 Outcomes

Incident	Outcome
<p>December 2016 <u>Leewood Northern Sediment Dam</u> EPA Officers Investigated Leewood Northern Sediment Dam following an Environment Line call alleging an overflow incident from Leewood Ponds Water Treatment Facility.</p>	<p>Incident was investigated and samples taken, with lab results confirming no BTEX present and the materials classed as organic; dried sun bleached algae; and a naturally occurring protozoa. Investigation finalised, with no issues identified.</p>
<p>November 2016 <u>Bohena Creek</u> Report alleging that Bohena Creek was impacted by the Bibblewindi Water Treatment Plant and gas wells.</p>	<p>EPA officers visited the area of Bohena Creek that the reporter referenced. There was no evidence that environmental harm has occurred.</p>
<p>September 2016 <u>Leewood (PAL002)</u> Report alleging Leewood produced water dams were overflowing.</p>	<p>The EPA officers visited the site and all ponds were observed to be operating with adequate freeboard. There was no evidence of any overflow or spill from the ponds.</p>
<p>September 2016 <u>Bohena 2</u> Report alleging Santos were using produced water from Leewood for watering program at Bohena 2 salinity site.</p>	<p>Environment Line complaint alleging Santos were using produced water from Leewood for the watering program at Bohena 2 salinity site following a Namoi Waste truck seen leaving Leewood and heading to Bohena 2 salinity site. EPA Officers attended the site, investigated and took water samples. Lab results indicate that the source of water is not consistent with produced water. The EPA sent a response letter to complainant advising this.</p>
<p>April 2016 <u>Bohena Creek Road</u> Methanol Drum on road.</p>	<p>Santos staff located a 44 gallon drum labelled "Methanol" dumped on Bohena Creek Road near the Leewood Water Treatment Facility. Police and HAZMAT attended and secured the item. The drum was not on the Santos site, nor related to its activities as per media Tweet by the EPA.</p>
<p>March 2016 <u>Leewood Pond</u> Alleged leaking.</p>	<p>EPA officer inspected storage ponds and met with Santos staff. No evidence that produced water was leaking. No further action was required.</p>

<p>March 2016 <u>Bohena Creek Road</u> Report that a vent had been left open, unattended and emitting methane gas.</p>	<p>Santos has approval to vent gas from high and low point vents along the water gathering lines for safety and operational purposes – this is performed manually by a field operator. Santos has amended the manual venting operating procedure. The procedure clearly notes that a high point vent is not operated without an operator present.</p>
<p>March 2016 <u>Santos Pilliga</u> Report received that there was a ‘foamy residue’ left along Beehive Road. The complainant returned to the site some days later with a Geiger counter and recorded a reading allegedly linked to the high and low point vents.</p>	<p>An EPA Officer spoke to the complainant who advised that the location they took the Geiger counter reading was a few kilometres away from the area of concern and there was no evidence to support the initial claim. No further action required.</p>
<p>March 2016 <u>Leewood Water Treatment Facility</u> Report alleging a truck was spraying produced water between the internal fence and the property boundary fence for dust mitigation.</p>	<p>An EPA Officer viewed available data confirming raw water from an on-site bore was used for dust suppression at the time of the allegation. The EPA supports dust suppression which is a requirement of the Santos EPL. No further action required as at 15 March 2016.</p>
<p>February 2016 <u>Santos Pilliga</u> Report of 35,000 litre spill at unmanned Santos facility.</p>	<p>Investigations proved minor water run off with no environmental or health risks. Media release: Water Run-off From Leewood Water Treatment Facility in Narrabri Cleaned Up</p>
<p>January 2016 <u>Leewood Water Treatment Facility</u> Alleged discharge of sediment laden water.</p>	<p>The rainwater discharge followed heavy rain. Santos undertook immediate works to prevent further discharge from the site installing coir mats and construction of bunding. The EPA inspected site and determined no environmental harm had occurred and that no regulatory action was required.</p>
<p>January 2016 <u>Santos Pilliga</u> Report a ‘foamy caramel coloured’ material on the roadside near operation site.</p>	<p>The EPA inspected the site and collected samples. Analysis determined it was a natural event, likely due to the decomposition of organic material. No further action was required.</p>
<p>September 2015 <u>Bohena Creek</u> Piezometer located in creek.</p>	<p>No regulatory action required.</p>
<p>January 2015 <u>Santos Dewhurst Southern</u> Water flow line.</p>	<p>No breach of EPL 20350 identified. Santos varied operational practices for high point vents following negotiations with the EPA. Media release: No environmental harm but improvements needed</p>

<p>February 2014 <u>Namoi Waste</u> Storage of Santos drilling mud onsite.</p>	<p>6 May 2014 The EPA issued Namoi Waste Corp with a Penalty Notice for breach of s145 of the POEO Act. Note - The Penalty Notice issued was not related to the original compliant regarding waste from coal seam gas, rather other waste material identified during the course of the investigation. Media release: EPA issues Naracor and Namoi Wastecorp with penalty notices for unlawful waste transport and storage</p>
<p>March 2013 <u>Biblewindi Water Treatment Facility</u> Pond liner failure.</p>	<p>11 Feb 2014 The EPA issued a Penalty Notice for s120 Pollution of Waters. A Pollution Reduction Program (PRP) was added to EPL 20350 (Environment Protection Licence) requiring the development of a Remediation and Monitoring Plan and the implementation of this plan.</p>
<p>March 2013 <u>Tintfield Ponds</u> Detection of elevated levels salinity and metals.</p>	<p>Insufficient evidence to determine if the changes detected in groundwater were the result of leaks from the Tintfield ponds or were from natural factors. A PRP was added to EPL 20350. Media release: No environmental harm but improvements needed</p>

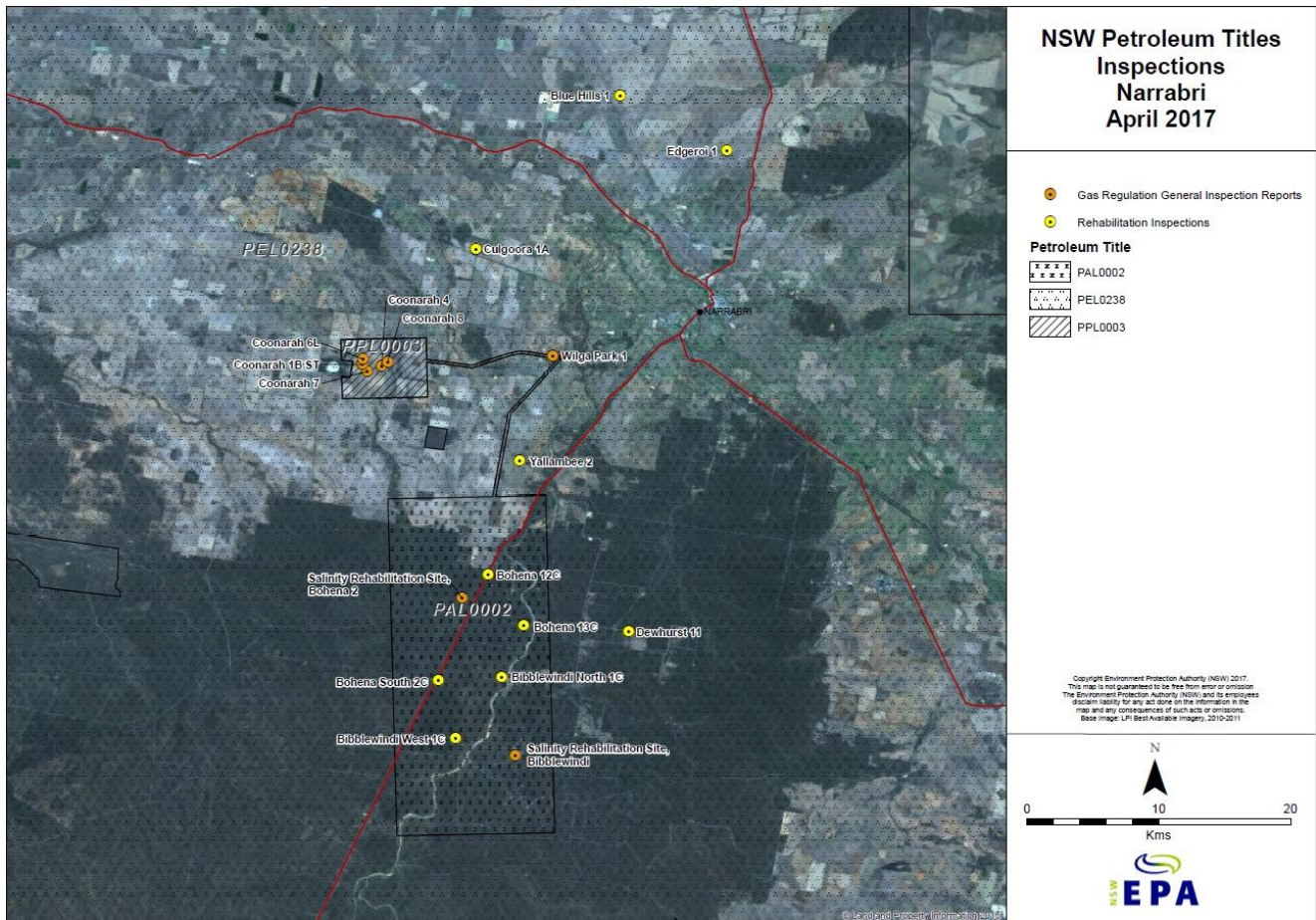
Inspections undertaken by the EPA – April 2017

Inspections					
Site ID	Date Inspected	Reasons	Action/Outcome	Site Status	Statutory Document
Culgoora 1/1A	07/04/2017	Rehabilitation Inspection	Compliant – No further action	Rehabilitated	PEL 238
Edgeroi 1	07/04/2017	Rehabilitation Inspection	Compliant – No further action	Rehabilitated	PEL 238
Blue Hills 1	20/04/2017	Rehabilitation Inspection	Compliant – No further action	Rehabilitated	PEL 238
Dewhurst 11	20/04/2017	Rehabilitation Inspection	Compliant – No further action	Rehabilitated	PEL 238
Yallabee 2	20/04/2017	Rehabilitation Inspection	Compliant – No further action	Rehabilitated	PEL 238
Biblewindi North 1C	21/04/2017	Rehabilitation Inspection	Compliant – No further action	Rehabilitated	PAL 2
Biblewindi West 1C	21/04/2017	Rehabilitation Inspection	Compliant – No further action	Rehabilitated	PAL 2
Bohena 12C	21/04/2017	Rehabilitation Inspection	Compliant – No further action	Rehabilitated	PAL 2
Bohena 13C	21/04/2017	Rehabilitation Inspection	Compliant – No further action	Rehabilitated	PAL 2
Bohena South 2C	21/04/2017	Rehabilitation Inspection	Compliant – No further action	Rehabilitated	PAL 2
Coonarah 7	06/04/2017	General Site Inspection	No issues identified	Suspended	PPL 3
Coonarah 1B ST	06/04/2017	General Site Inspection	No issues identified	Suspended	PPL 3
Coonarah 4	06/04/2017	General Site Inspection	No issues identified	Suspended	PPL 3

Inspections					
Coonarah 6L	06/04/2017	General Site Inspection	No issues identified	Suspended	PPL 3
Coonarah 8	06/04/2017	General Site Inspection	No issues identified	Suspended	PPL 3
Wilga Park 1	06/04/2017	General Site Inspection	No issues identified	Suspended	PPL 3
Bohena 2 Legacy Salinity Site	13/04/2017	General Site Inspection	Rehabilitating	Rehabilitating	PAL 2
Biblewindi Legacy Salinity Site	13/04/2017	General Site Inspection	Rehabilitating	Rehabilitating </td <td>PAL 2</td>	PAL 2

SITE INSPECTION MAP

EPA site inspections undertaken at Narrabri during April 2017



FEATURE ARTICLES

Want to know more about what the EPA does? Want to understand a process used by the gas industry in a bit more detail? ...

...Tell us what you would like discussed in a Feature Article!

The feature article in this newsletter each month is an opportunity for the EPA to provide additional information and address any questions you have. Your feedback is key to ensuring we are providing the sort of information the community would like to see, and so, we would like to hear from you all.

Previous editions of this newsletter have included articles on 'who we are and what we do', groundwater quality monitoring, specific EPA projects and decommissioning and rehabilitation of gas well sites – these examples may give you an idea of a question you would like to ask.

Please send us any activities, processes, questions or information you would like to see in a feature article to gas.reg@epa.nsw.gov.au.

We look forward to hearing from you!

NSW EPA has set up Australia's first mobile virtual reality training facility

The NSW Environment Protection Authority has collaborated with Aspect Studios from Australia and UK-based tech company, Igloo, to set up Australia's first mobile virtual reality training facility. This state-of-the-art technology was showcased to the Narrabri Community Consultative Committee and other stakeholders in regional NSW in early May this year.

The 6m x 2.6m igloo will be used to provide an interactive virtual training experience in a wide range of areas including incident management, environmental pollution scenarios and gas regulation. It allows safer, more effective training in dangerous or otherwise inaccessible scenarios such as hazardous chemical incidents and groundwater pollution pathways.

The first modules that the EPA has developed for the training theatre are in gas regulation. The modules cover topics including an introduction to coal seam gas regulation, well construction and basic groundwater hydrogeology.

The EPA officers trained using this theatre, will be virtually transported many kilometres away and hundreds of metres below the surface of the earth at the click of a button. It immerses trainees in subsurface environments and allows them to visualise things like the movement of groundwater and the well construction process.

The training theatre can be packed up and transported. The theatre will travel around the state to train EPA officers and the EPA will be able to share this training tool with the EPA's partners; including other government agencies, other industries and community stakeholders.



Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. However, as appropriate, readers should obtain independent advice before making any decision based on this information.

Published by:
Environment Protection Authority
59 Goulburn Street, Sydney NSW 2000
PO Box A290, Sydney South NSW 1232
Phone: +61 2 9995 5000 (switchboard)
Phone: 131 555 (NSW only – environment information and publications requests)
Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.epa.nsw.gov.au

ISSN 2206-3234

EPA 2017/ 0228
May 2017