

SIA: How early is too early?

Post-Construction Review of CSG to LNG, Queensland Australia

IAIA19 BRISBANE

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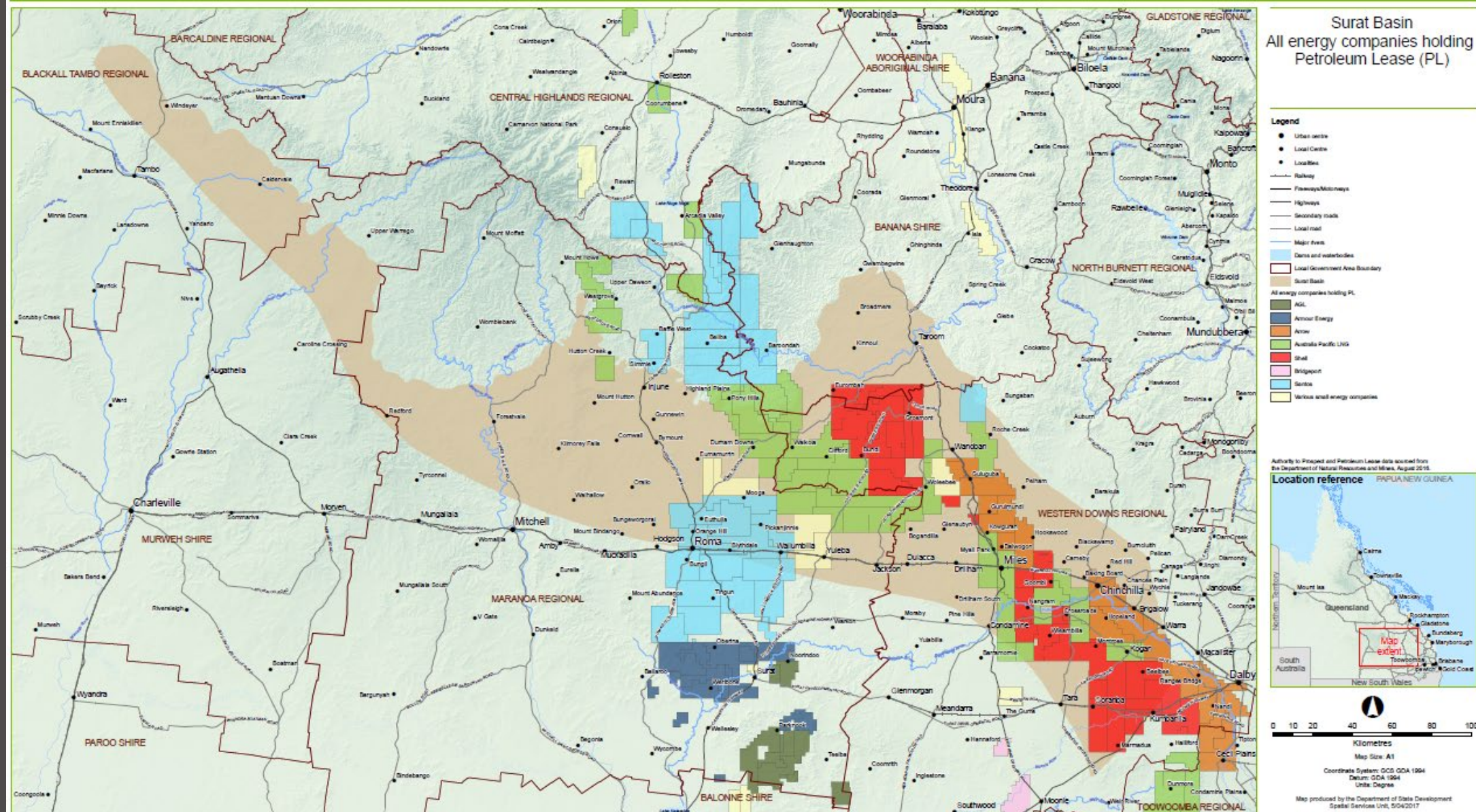
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- Relevant high-level opportunities and impacts
- Solutions for future developments from lessons learned
- Implications for future SIA - ideally

Context

The Coal Seam Gas (CSG) to Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) industry was new

- Full scale environmental assessment of four major projects (~>\$10B USD each) 2008-2012 + one minor





Context

The Coal Seam Gas (CSG) to Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) industry was new

- Full scale environmental assessment of four major projects (>\$10B USD each) 2008-2012 + one minor
- New industry in a well established agriculture area (upstream) and industrial port (downstream)
- Limited understanding / communication of technical details of projects and how they would be develop

Low Trust + Low Understanding = Resistance

When people are rushed to make a decision with limited information,
trust decreases and resistance increases

Opportunities and Impacts

Opportunities

- Direct (company), indirect (contractor/supplier) and induced (services) business and employment
- Economic diversification of local and State economies
- Reversal of population decline / stagnation in some regional rural areas

Impact Context

- During the construction phases there was also a mining boom
- Construction boom coincided with breaking of prolonged drought with major flood events (typical)

Key impacts and outcomes associated with early SIA

- Speculative housing boom in some communities – extremely high impact to house prices and rents
- Grassroots anti-industry movement from directly affected areas partnered with coordinated anti-industry movement from cities
- Over capitalisation of companies resulted in cost saving measures, acquisitions, and some near defaults

Solutions

- On mega-projects SIA is better suited as an options assessment rather than strictly an assessment of a fixed project
- Ensure stakeholders are sufficiently informed to engage in meaningful conversation
- Ensure the development plan aims to achieve the best possible result and the proponent supports this
- Use SIA to identify gaps in local procurement / employment and then develop skills / capacity to maximise opportunities
- Operations managers should be present during approvals and design phases

The best projects are adequately funded, supported by the proponent and work in collaboration with affected stakeholders

Implications for Future SIA - Ideally

- SIA is an excellent tool for influencing the Project description and design
Need to better communicate on the value of SIA as a design and impact assessment tool
- SIA assesses the human implications of a project, including how we perceive environmental impacts
Need to identify socioeconomic risks across the whole EIS and address accordingly
- SIA can assess positive opportunities and negative impacts
Need to identify the positive and negative of each project effect and identify trade-offs
- Social impacts should not be the catch all for dissatisfaction or resistance to projects
Need to separate actual impacts from political or ideological opinions

Thank You

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