

BREAKING: Tiwi Islander seeks urgent injunction to stop Santos from pushing ahead with imminent Barossa gas offshore drilling plans

[Pictures available for use here \(credit: Rebecca Parker\)](#)

The Tiwi Elder pursuing a Federal Court challenge to the approval, given by the offshore gas regulator NOPSEMA, of Santos' Barossa drilling plan is seeking an injunction to stop drilling from commencing until his case is heard, following concerns that the company plans to push ahead and begin drilling the ocean floor within days.

Last month, Munupi Senior Lawman Dennis Tipakalippa launched a Federal Court challenge, with the support of his community, to have Santos' Barossa gas drilling approvals set aside, saying he and his community were never consulted about the drilling plans - contrary to Santos' legal obligations.

The Federal Court has listed the matter for trial on August 22nd, 23rd, and 25th. However, Santos has refused to delay the drilling until the Federal Court can fully consider the case, requiring Dennis to seek an injunction from the Federal Court.

Lawyers from the Environmental Defenders Office will argue that Santos should not commence drilling until the Federal Court has decided if the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environment Management Authority (NOPSEMA) properly issued Santos' Barossa drilling approvals.

Plaintiff and Munupi Senior Lawman, Dennis Tipakalippa said:

"We are going to court because we have not been properly consulted about what is happening to our sea country, so for Santos to begin drilling at this moment shows disrespect for our culture and our interests."

"We are worried to hear about drilling going ahead soon, before the court has decided. That is why we want this injunction, to protect our sea country and our culture until the court decides what is right."

"We have cared for this sea country for millennia. Once those holes are drilled into the ocean floor, that cannot be undone. For that to happen when Santos has not consulted with us would be devastating to our culture and a huge betrayal."

"I am doing this for my ancestors and for future generations. We want to tell our children our traditional stories. If this drilling goes ahead now, it would be a very bad story to tell."

Alina Leikin, Special Counsel for the Environmental Defenders Office said:

"Dennis and his community should have been properly consulted about this drilling project in sacred sea country that they have protected for millennia. The Federal Court will hear their case in late August. All they are asking is that Santos wait until their case is heard before starting to drill into their sea floor."

"Tiwi people have a spiritual obligation to protect their sea country and there are serious spiritual and cultural ramifications for Tiwi people if the drilling starts. There is a cloud of

uncertainty surrounding the Barossa drilling plans, with a case before the Federal Court. Santos should respect Tiwi people and wait until a decision is made about the validity of the drilling approval.”

Marine scientist and energy campaigner for the Environment Centre NT, Jason Fowler said:

“We have satellite imagery of the drilling rig moving closer and closer to the Barossa site. We know that drilling is imminent. But proper consultation has not occurred, which is why this injunction is so important”

“The minute the Barossa drilling rig is turned on, the impacts begin. There is noise, air, water and chemical pollution, and an increase in heavy shipping traffic close to the Tiwi Islands.

“The Barossa gas field lies adjacent to the Oceanic Shoals Marine Park, which is a critical area for sea turtles. Not only is this an ecologically significant site, but we’ve been told that these sea turtles are integral to Tiwi culture.”

The solicitor with carriage of this matter is Jordina Rust, working with Alina Leikin, both under the supervision of Brendan Dobbie.

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Previous release about the court case [here](#).

Background to the case and Barossa gas project [here](#).