

Submission for Shoalhaven Hydro Expansion Project - Main Works
SSI-10033

The benchmark for this project should not be to return the site to the same state as before the project started. Given the disruption to the Kangaroo Valley community during the construction phase, significant benefit needs to be made available. The target for Origin should be to substantially improve the lives and amenity of people living in the Valley.

Businesses – during construction, there should be a firm commitment to patronise local food outlets as much as possible, for breakfast, lunch dinner and tea/coffee. Social events for the workforce and community should be organised at venues like The Friendly Inn, Golf Club and outdoor activity businesses. After construction, community and business consultation should be undertaken to determine how the streetscape of the main street can be improved. When implemented, the look of main street should be significantly enhanced. The post-project target should be to improve businesses in the Valley.

Community – during construction, the community is going to be negatively impacted by noise and heavy traffic. This all comes at a cost, on many levels. There needs to be plans in place to improve the community. Investment for example, in our schools, sporting and social amenities. There needs to be true engagement with the community throughout the project. The project should sponsor social events to help keep the community together, rather than divide it. The post-project target should be to improve the cohesiveness of the community in the Valley.

Wildlife – before construction, workforce training should be undertaken to ensure that all drivers are aware of how the wildlife in Kangaroo Valley react to cars both during the day and at night. Given the increased chance of animals being hit, the training should include how to care for the injured and how to report the incident to Wildlife Rescue South Coast. Extra funding should be provided in advance to local wildlife support groups to ensure that proper ongoing care can be provided. There is only one place in the Valley that injured wombats can be taken for care and there are no support groups for kangaroos. Time, effort and money should be invested in improving the ongoing wildlife support services in the Valley, including the creation of a kangaroo support service. The post-project target should be to improve wildlife support in the Valley.

Roads – during construction, a large increase in traffic volume will occur. Extra funding needs to be made available to Shoalhaven City Council and Transport for NSW so that prompt repairs can be made to the road pavement, caused by heavy and continuous traffic. The Kangaroo Valley community is only too aware of the danger that bad roads create and the safety of all road users should be paramount. After construction, there should be a plan in place to significantly improve Moss Vale Road, Bendeela Road and Jacks Corner Road. Restoring the roads to the way they were before the project is not good enough. They need to be better than before the project started. The post-project target should be to improve transport infrastructure in the Valley.

Amenity – you are asking people to put up with disruption to their very peaceful environment for five years, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There should be no blasting at night – ever. That is a step too far and too much to ask of the community. Blasting should be restricted to business hours, Monday to Friday only. During construction, there needs to be a published schedule of “Significant Noise Events” (eg. blasting) so that people can be

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aware in advance of when the peace will be impacted. This unavoidable part of the project should be executed with the utmost compassion for the community. Support services need to be made available in advance of the project for community members who may struggle with the continued impact on their lives. A complaints process needs to be agreed and published so that the community can be heard and adequately responded to, when events occur that are outside of the stated parameters of the project. The post-project target should be to improve the amenity of the Valley (although it is already pretty good!).

Environment – during construction, 715,000 tonnes of material will be excavated to create the tunnels and turbine room. This can be nothing but a problem. A “spoil emplacement area” (ie. dumping ground) has been identified to the south-east of the Bendeela Pondage. This is currently a vegetated area and wildlife habitat. Significant work needs to be done to ensure that this is maintained and improved. Whilst it is good that the spoil is travelling the least distance possible and on as few roads as possible, the flora and fauna of the Valley cannot be negatively impacted. Plans need to be in place to create an improved wildlife habitat, perhaps even a sanctuary, planned in conjunction with Wildlife Rescue South Coast. The post-project target should be to improve the state of the flora and lives of the fauna in the Valley.

The NSW State Government and Origin Energy need to understand that they are asking a lot of the Kangaroo Valley Community during this project. There needs to be consideration and recompense for the duress under which we will need to live, for the 5+ year duration of the project. Please leave the Valley a better place.

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