

Objections to Shoalhaven Expansion Project – Main Works SSI-10033

As residents and property owners on Jacks Corner Road Kangaroo Valley, we thank you in advance for consideration of the submission below.

We are strongly opposed to the Shoalhaven Expansion Project. Our objections and concerns are listed viz:

- The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) lodged on 9 November 2022 does not adequately address the true environmental damage and socio-economic impacts of the project and appears to lack scientific analysis, evidence-based conclusions and fails to meet current standards required by the act.
- There is substantial and significant risk to protected and endangered wildlife species and regional vegetation. The expansion will result in the direct removal of about 29.5 ha of native vegetation which includes about 0.23 ha of a threatened ecological community (TEC) which is listed under both the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2018 (BC Act) and Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). The removal of this vegetation will have direct impacts on 10 threatened species. This will only add to the devastation and precarious position of much of the wildlife and endangered and protected species following the recent bushfires.
- The social and economic impacts on the wider community of Kangaroo Valley will be significant and damaging with devastating cumulative effects on tourism and the local business community in the Valley. This project is unsuitable for a popular tourist destination renowned for its beautiful countryside, native vegetation, tranquillity, abundant wildlife, and many natural recreational activities.
- The project is within the Sydney Drinking Water catchment and considering the scale of the operation the EIS makes dubious conclusions that, “the project is expected to have a neutral effect on water quality”, and “No significant cumulative impacts with respect to groundwater are identified for the project” without adequately supporting these claims.
- Using assumptions contained in the EIS, there are 40,000 truck movements, 13,700 bus movements and 41,000 light vehicle movements over the projected life of the project, with up to 100 heavy vehicle movements each day, 7 days a week.
- The project involves a substantial amount of blasting, drilling, tunnelling, lining, excavation, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and for a period of five years minimum.
- There is a need for the EIS to provide evidence-based science to their questionable conclusion that “Construction dust emissions are not expected to cause adverse air quality impacts”, with consideration of the local weather patterns, flora, fauna, and the Kangaroo Valley people.
- Alternative solutions regarding the transition of electricity generation to scalable renewable sources which deliver diminished environmental repercussions need consideration and comparison.
- The proponent is also involved in formal takeover negotiations that are highly likely to proceed and result in the proponent and therefore this proposed project being owned by foreign investors.

As a veterinarian and veterinary nurse with over fifty combined years of experience in the veterinary industry we are greatly apprehensive regarding the devastating consequences on the local fauna. We have personally dealt with both sick and injured wildlife which have been victims to development and associated pressures of pollution, traffic, and fragmentation of natural resources. There is no question this expansion will irrevocably and adversely damage the environment, flora, fauna and wildlife as well as the lives, livelihoods, businesses and the mental health of the Kangaroo Valley residents.

The Shoalhaven Hydro Expansion Project should not have the support of either the NSW Government or the Commonwealth Government.

Regards

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