

Objection to proposed Shoalhaven Hydro Expansion Project



We live on the other side of the river, opposite the proposed project site and are opposed to the development.

You have received many compelling arguments against the expansion from residents directly impacted, so we will not repeat them here but will make the following points:

- In 2018 Origin reviewed the site and determined it was not economically viable to expand given the excessive construction costs and disruption that results in only 235 MW of power. This expansion can only go ahead because of large tax payer subsidies which could be much better spent on projects with greater power provision.
- We have had bushfires (our own property decimated) and floods that closed the town to the outside world for much of 2022, this combined with the pandemic has seen the town's businesses struggle to survive. This project will likely kill the amenity, profitability and habitability of Kangaroo Valley.
- The project reeks of 'greenwashing' as the effort, cost to the taxpayer and disruption of life to residents, businesses and local species is FAR FAR TOO HIGH for the benefit of 235MW. PLEASE SPEND OUR MONEY MORE WISELY ON PROJECTS THAT WILL DELIVER MORE COST EFFECTIVE GREEN ENERGY.
- The EIS is unacceptable and we shall borrow from other objectors below but most importantly we have many threatened and endangered species in Kangaroo Valley that are just hanging on – for instance the Brush Tailed Rock Wallaby that inhabits areas near the project. The 5 – 7 years of non stop 24/7 blasting, trucking, etc etc is a massive threat to species on the verge and all those just trying to live a natural life.

Inadequate assessment of impacts in the EIS

The US headquartered, global environmental consulting firm, Jacobs, have failed to complete an evidence-based, objective and complying assessment of the risks and impacts associated with the project. Their EIS lack current (up to date) information at almost every level and area considered:

- The maps are not current,
- the data used for soil, traffic, noise, water, and others are all out of date.

The discussion of mitigation across the various areas is wholly inadequate and, in most cases, merely suggests more communication with stakeholders, or further detailed work

needed, or bland language used to lull the reader into thinking all will be ok. This does not meet the standard of assessment required by the act, nor does it provide a stakeholder with factually correct and well-reasoned understanding of the issues and impacts.

Some examples include:

- **Surface Water and Ground Water** – notwithstanding that the project is within the Sydney

Drinking Water catchment, and without explaining the quantum and complexity of the risks involved, the EIS makes the questionable conclusion 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”. THIS IS INADEQUATE AND POTENTIALLY MISLEADING.

- **Traffic and Transport** – here again the language used is intended to reassure that impacts are either negligible or simple to manage. This shows how inadequate the assessment of risks and impact truly are. If we use the assumptions contained in the EIS just for vehicle movements, there are 40,000 truck movements, 13,700 bus movements and 41,000 light vehicle movements over the projected life of the project. The EIS then assumes this to be up to 100 heavy vehicle movements each day, up to 60 spoil truck movements, 16 bus movements and 20 light vehicle movement (likely an underestimation), and this is every day: 7 days a week. Yet the EIS states in its conclusion that, “...construction and operation of the project is expected to have a negligible impact on performance of key intersections...”. It further states that “The potential impacts to public transport, pedestrians and cyclists, road safety and parking ... are also expected to be manageable. We regularly ride our bicycles into the village along Jacks Corner Road. I don’t think the impact and risks will be negligible. THIS IS MISLEADING.
- **Noise and Vibration** – this whole section is full of jargon and under estimation of impact. The amount of blasting, drilling, tunnelling, lining, excavation, heavy vehicle movement and combined construction is both significant and complex. It is also 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and for a period of five years minimum. The EIS tries to explain this away, either by suggesting that further planning will be required or simply that it is expected that impacts will be within “Project operational noise limits”.
- **Air quality** – Again, the EIS has used modelling and provides no evidence to back up their conclusion that “Construction dust emissions are not expected to cause adverse air quality impacts”. How could they make this conclusion. There will be very large amount of particulate matter forced into the atmosphere from the range of extension disturbance during construction. Kangaroo Valley, and along Jacks Corner Road and Bendeela Road often are impacted by strong winds from either the west or the east. Particulate matter will be pushed kilometres in both directions and will cause a wide range of risks. Respiratory issues and pollution of drinking water are major concerns. All dwelling surrounding the project site use tank water that is captured from rooftops.

- **Social and economic impacts** – This is where the EIS is wholly inadequate and has failed to make a realistic assessment of the risks and impacts on people living in the Valley and surrounding area. The cumulative impacts of this project will decimate the tourism and local business community in the Valley. As a tourist destination, why would anyone want to come to a dusty, noisy, traffic congested place? It is hard enough navigating the road(s) into valley currently. Both roads remain damaged from heavy rain and over-use by heavy vehicle traffic. Add to this all the projected trucks and heavy vehicles and then 24/7 noise, dust, and workers being transported in and out all week, what a disaster! Property values will drop; **people's mental health and physical health will suffer; lives and livelihoods will be destroyed and take decades to recover if at all.** Yet the EIS merely proposes, "ongoing communication with affected stakeholders and monitoring of potential impacts". **TOTALLY INADEQUATE AND MISLEADING.**

The Kangaroo Valley community have been through a lot over recent years with fires, then heavy rains impacting life for us all. The last thing we need is the destruction of our peaceful valley by a proponent that has other options if they are truly committed to playing their role in Australia's clean energy transition.

There is no doubt Origin has a vested interest in getting this project on their books to help with their acquisition by foreign owned Brookfield Asset Management and EIG – they only care about profit – not the true viability of the project or the impact on all of us here in Kangaroo Valley.

Dear Minister it is not a project that should go ahead for the very many logical reasons listed here and with the other objectors. We haven't seen an analysis of any feasible alternatives to the carrying out of the development in relation to its objectives nor a full description of mitigation measures proposed.

The entire proposal is designed to get the tick of approval, not provide genuine feasibility which Origin already knows is not there.

Please don't put us, the taxpayers and our town and wildlife through this for the sake of such a small amount of power provision.

Yours sincerely

