

Received 18/1/2023

NAME Clem Ogorman
ADDRESS Greenhills
aberbaldie road
Walcha NSW 2354

16 /01/2023

Director – Energy Assessments, Development Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Reference: Winterbourne Wind Farm SSD - 10471

I OBJECT to the Winterbourne Wind Farm development.

- I declare that I have not made any reportable political donations in the previous two years
- I acknowledge and accept the Department's disclaimer and declaration.


I am frightened by the decommissioning risk of this project. Vestas in the EIS have made no commitment to the decommissioning. They had said in a meeting with voice for Walcha they will do a cash flow analysis of decommissioning 6 years out from end of life. From current ownership performance, three owners before EIS approval Vestas won't be responsible, they won't be here.

Vestas have failed in every way to meaningfully engage with the Walcha community. We are a tight and prosperous rural community that this overseas developer has held in contempt by being dismissive in our questioning of the project. As referenced by a community survey 86% of walcha residents feel the same.

The list of my concerns and objections is many and certainly not limited to, but I would like to attach the document titled Wrong Place, wrong Size, wrong Developer. This certainly highlights a lot of my concerns.

The government should look for better alternatives, rather than enforcing the renewable energy zone upon us. An alternative is small scale nuclear power supplies. I am for renewable but the accumulated projects coming out of Walcha Energy (Mark Warring) of 4.2 gigawatts, including Winterbourne, is to much for a small town of 3000 people to bare.

As a keen bush walker, I am very concerned about the affects on our beautiful Oxley wild rivers national Park. There must be a better site for an industrial wind factory than on the edge of this UNESCO listed area. Paying a biodiversity fine (offset) is not good enough.

 -16/01/23

Wrong place. Wrong size. Wrong developer.

✗ **Poor Consultation Processes**

Both the Non-Indigenous and Indigenous Communities have been very poorly consulted with by the Developer. The Community has not been afforded sufficient information flow for what could be a game changing development for Walcha. A development that has potentially a 62 years project life.

✗ **Poor Site Selection**

The Developer has failed with statutory obligations to consider feasible alternatives to the site. The site selection and the proposed sizing of the site at 700MW unfairly intensifies impact on a small rural community like Walcha. It is totally inconsistent with any strategic land use planning and against the interests maintaining high quality agricultural land.

✗ **High Ecological Impact**

Due to construction against the unique and beautiful Oxley Wild Rivers National park, part of the World Heritage Gondwana Rain Forests. Concerns with this proximity relate to construction run-off directly impacting the Park and the Macleay Catchment and River itself. Diminished capacity to deploy aerial support to fight fires, Destruction of wildlife corridors into and out of the Park.

✗ **High Health Impact**

From noise and vibration, blade flicker and (during construction) dust inhalation.

✗ **Increased Cumulative Impact**

The size of the Project in the context of the other wind and solar projects which developers intend to be co-located in and around Walcha induce a significant cumulative or compounding effect on the Community including visual impact, noise, road congestion and road destruction.

✗ **Road works prior to, during and after construction**

Leading to extensive road user delays and stoppages. Our roads are simply not made for these vehicle weights, and this heavy traffic intensity. Roads will be heavily damaged, have shortened life and will need to be rebuilt on a large scale.

✗ **Traffic congestion impact**

Of trucks on the Oxley Highway during the 3-year construction period, with 288 trucks per day during the 11 months of peak construction. Unknown additional traffic carting gravel and water, as the developer does not yet know where this is coming from. This additional resource traffic is likely to dwarf the traffic noted in the current traffic report. Add to this outlook the cumulative impacts of tsunami.

✗ **Negative tourism impact**

With gigantic installed turbines sited against iconic visitor destinations and wilderness areas.

✗ **Significant Water Impact**

EIS suggests the requirement for 150 Megalitres. EIS also states 6ML for concrete foundations, but simple arithmetic of 20% of 750cu.m per foundation x 119 turbines gives 17.8ML. Similarly, dust suppression has been grossly understated using industry estimates. Vestas Project Director had earlier stated that 220ML of water will be required. This would be a considerable underestimate - realistic calculation would suggest a conservative 675ML is required.

✗ **Where is the water source?**

EIS suggests it will come from harvestable rights, bores in the area, farm dams or from Walcha council supply. The scale of this requirement is staggering - it will empty the Walcha storage dam, currently under construction, more than 2 times over. Put another way, it is 56,000 x 12,000L truck loads travelling on our roads.

✗ **Massive impact on the existing gravel resource**

Construction of 113km of road plus hardstands is estimated to require 850,000 Tonnes of road building gravel. For perspective, the Brooklyn gravel pit has a current annual license of 28,000 T. (3% of this total requirement). Assuming 22T truck and dog configuration, this is over 38,650 truck loads in total, with an unknown portion of this gravel coming into the project area. The EIS does not include the majority of these gravel and water truck movements in their assessment, as they do not know where this water and gravel is coming from. If the traffic movements estimated above are carried out over a 11-month period - this amounts to an additional 800 truck movements (allowing for both directions of travel) per day!

EIS Submissions due before
23rd January 2023

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✗ **Reckless Biodiversity risk assessment**

The Developer has tabled an inaccurate, incomplete and somewhat erroneous report on the potential impacts to biodiversity values. This is particularly concerning given the immediate proximity to the UNESCO Gondwana Rainforests and the Wilderness associated with the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. There are many examples of the paucity of their assessment response. Some of these include ...

Wedgetail Eagles and Raptors – being present and threatened by the Wind Turbines as they soar from the gorges into the Wind Turbine area. There is a high concentration of Eagles that exist on the edge of the gorge, where a large number of turbines are located. These birds are particularly prone to bird strike with Wind Turbines.

Loss of connectivity habitat – impacting wildlife corridors to the National Park. Most of the retained vegetation on farmland is on ridgelines that will be cleared to make way for 113km of roads, underground cabling and turbines, that are targeting those same ridgelines.

Loss of habitat for threatened species - loss of 207Ha of Koala and Greater Glider habitat. Turbine strikes with Endangered Birds (Little Eagle, Glossy Black Cockatoo and White Throated Needle Tail) and Bats, losing an important insect pest control in the ecosystem. Loss of the threatened Narrow leaved black peppermint and other threatened ecological communities.

✗ **Biodiversity Offset Scheme**

Project construction and operation is resulting in assessed destruction of native habitat, that is carrying a penalty and Ecosystem Credit payment of \$50,887,024 and Species Credits payment of \$13,431,558. Over \$64 Million in total. This is a destructive project by industry standards. The health of our natural ecology should not be for sale. You simply cannot re-create the 207 Ha of habitat that is being destroyed. This project is in the wrong place.

✗ **Economic Analysis**

With an estimated \$200/MW hr pricing, this project is likely to generate \$420 Million annually in energy sales. Lease agreements with Wind Farm hosts is likely to be around \$3.6M in total per year, and community fund \$0.75 Million per year. For damage to the environment, they will get the chequebook out and fix that for \$64 Million, once off, through Biodiversity Offset costs, (because threatened and endangered species will appreciate the money??) An off-shore turbine manufacturer and developer is taking advantage of our community and the environment, with little regard to the long term impacts to both.

✗ **Neighbour Benefit fund**

Neighbours to the project should be compensated, with no strings attached, for the effects of sound, flicker, flashing night lights, visual amenity, construction activity, loss of capital value etc that the development has imposed upon them. Neighbours who are impacted by this project should be compensated through a neighbour benefit fund. There should be no need to sign a Neighbour Agreement with confidentiality clauses and ongoing commitments. Neighbours are being coerced into signing contracts in order to get any form of compensation. The neighbour benefit fund, which was initially proposed by the developer, and recently scrapped, is the only fair course of action.

✗ **Diminished Aviation Services**

Spreading of fertilizer, seed and chemical under threat with Wind Turbine Generators creating a no-fly zone near rural airstrips, and low cloud conditions. National Parks also flag concerns with aerial wild dog baiting.

✗ **Increased bush fire control risk**

With WTG's creating no fly zone. Water collection from paddocks west of project area, while Oxley Wild Rivers NP is on the Eastern side of project area. We lose our most important aerial tools for gorge fire control. Of particular concern is the location of WTG's against the National Park "Strategic Fire Advantage Zone", critical to wildfire control.

✗ **Visual Impact**

119 Turbines, 230m high, a height not previously constructed in Australia. Compare to the largest project currently constructed in Australia (Oct 2022) – Coopers Gap in QLD, which has 3.63MW Turbines, to a height of 182m. Add the flashing White, or Red lighting and our night skyline is dramatically altered. Sugarloaf tower sits at a height of 47m for local perspective.

✗ **Inadequate Plan for Decommissioning**

The developer intends to avoid any contribution to a bond, until they decide this "might" be necessary when their first assessment occurs at 15 years of project life. No oversight, no arms length bond held by independent party, and no insurance against financial default. This is the perfect recipe for a "walk away".

✗ **Error ridden EIS**

Indicating an unprofessional and an incapable project developer. Early errors pointed out to the planning department have forced their hand into publishing corrections – how many times can this occur before the EIS is totally dysfunctional?



*We urge you to
make use of this
material to test
your ideas ...*

1. Scrutinise it, and fact check it against the EIS
2. Talk to us about any questions you have
3. Write and Submit your EIS submission NOW.

<https://voiceforwalcha.com/eis>