

MAJOR PROJECTS PLANNING.

OBJECTION Submission SSD-78247462

Canyonleigh – battery-energy-storage-system

The Project overview in the Canyonleigh – battery-energy-storage-system Environmental Impact Statement states The Project is located in the South Eastern Highlands bioregion.

The area is characterised by densely vegetated undulating topography forming hills, valleys, and endemic forests in the form of dry sclerophyll forests. Dominant vegetation communities consist of eucalyptus varieties, including Mottled gum, broad-leaved peppermint, white gum, red stringybark and black ash forests and Box Gum woodlands, now classified as critically endangered. The construction of this 130 .6-hectare area for the BESS complex will impinge and destroy the habitat of a number of native birds and animals including identified species of lizards, Gliders and Gang Gang cockatoos. The cumulative geographical trauma that will be caused in the construction of another BESS project along with the hundreds of wind turbines and a solar (farms) already constructed, proposed and determined to be constructed in this region is nothing short of catastrophic environmental vandalism. Nothing can withstand the ravages of heavy machinery and the industry of arterial road building and land clearing that is required for the installation and maintenance of these projects.

Included in the land clearing will be trees, foliage and undergrowth vegetation of hundreds of different species that all play a significant role in the revegetation and restoration efforts in the region, contributing to the health and continuing sustainability of the local environment and the topography of the region.

Battery Energy Storage systems:

It is recognised and documented that Battery energy storage developments can and will alter a natural watercourse through the change of natural site topography. The increased water runoff from the Battery modules can and will lead to erosion and sedimentation impacts during the construction phase and over the duration of their lifespan leaving a legacy of permanently altered natural water flows that will not provide continued water distribution to existing plants and trees. There are man-made dams dotted throughout the surrounding farmland of the Canyonleigh proposal that aid nearby agricultural practices.

Within the 2.5 km Study Area, the identified water bodies include:

- Wollondilly River - located approximately 0.36 km northwest from the Project Site
- Sheep Dip Gully - running roughly northeast to Wollondilly River located approximately 1.60 km to the northwest of the Project Site.

It concerns me that a single event could lead to “irreversible contamination” of land and nearby water storage for neighbouring livestock’s and while PFAS are known carcinogens and can persist indefinitely in groundwater, very little is known about other carcinogenic properties and contaminants leaching from battery modules. For local graziers and nearby communities in the South Eastern highlands that share the natural water course and run off from tributary systems in this proposed area it will add further unnecessary stress of having a serious contamination event with a BESS project along with documented environmental harm to our waterways making regional farming untenable and causing unconscionable stress and anxiety to the mental health of our regional communities. The average lifespan of these atrocities is twenty-five plus years, and the cumulative damage to the surrounding areas will result in the land being completely unviable for any type of farming activity or restoration to revert to native animal habitat in the near and far future.

A major culprit in the fallacy of the renewable energy industry is the introduction of carbon offsets: developers can destroy habitat in one location if they “offset” it elsewhere. It is a fact that BESS construction works, ongoing maintenance, repairs and monitoring has destroyed wildlife habitats, including some protected and other endangered animals, birdlife including other local vegetation, and the purchase of offsetting certificates will not address the large-scale destruction of wildlife or native bird habitat that is being done in the South East highlands. Wildlife carers receive no meaningful support from Government or from the Renewable energy companies and developers, despite bearing the brunt and brutality of animal rescue, being the ones rescuing, treating, and rehabilitating our injured, sick, orphaned and homeless native animals. NSW urgently needs to adopt a wildlife levy through the community benefits funding initiative so wildlife carers in impacted areas can access funding for feed, medical treatment, and species-specific housing and shelter.

Impact on Road Infrastructure & Local Traffic

Regional councils throughout NSW, Victoria, SA and the New England area have become very vocal with concerns about REZ projects taking up agricultural land, potentially causing groundwater contamination and raising the local fire risk, as well as the impact on local roads and highways. Only very recently they have finally started to consider the massive impact and the toll of increased trucks, construction vehicles, and transport of heavy machinery and industrial components will have on our roads. This has been raised as a level of concern by me and many other sole objectors throughout NSW and subsequently ignored.

Heightened traffic of heavy vehicles for the transportation of the components required for the construction of these developments will continue to push the capacity on highways and roads to reach their destination. Component deliveries are typically spread over an extended duration and typically expected to be between 56 heavy and 54

light vehicles to any singular site per day. There are also considerable risks and hazards associated with the transport of oversize vehicles on local, regional and state roads. This also includes visual amenity for small vehicles traveling the same route in areas with limited or no overtaking lanes.

The expense to upgrade and maintain these local roads networks is substantial, there is no indication anywhere of who is responsible for the financial burden of these works. It is grossly unfair of developers to expect community rate payers and regional taxpayers to carry the burden of local shire and regional road damage caused by independent developers and overseas investors. It is also grossly unfair to expect local traffic, other trade workers, tourists and grey nomads to have to wait long periods on sections of road that are under repair or construction and to give way to allow heavy vehicle and oversized transport.

In closing I am disappointed and appalled at the casual disregard that most of the land hosts for these projects, the Local councils, the developers, notwithstanding the citycentric mindset of the supporters that embrace the dogma of “renewable energy” calmly dismiss the effect these projects have on our mental health and our social fabric because we “live in a remote or regional areas.”

It may be sparsely populated compared to dense city living and suburban areas, but it does NOT automatically give licence to the destruction of hobby or small farming industries and our countryside. Since 2000, roughly 80 per cent of referred projects have been approved, often with minimal conditions. Government legislation is giving the green light to speed up further the destruction of our environment and the social fabric of our regional communities by providing the Minister with autocratic powers to ram through renewable energy approvals. This will remove all powers to oppose and object to the rapid expansion of these types of renewable energy projects from the community and owners of projected land use for renewable energy projects. The adoption of this legislation will also put massive industrial wind, solar and transmission builds ahead of rural people, wildlife, farmland and real environmental care. Foolhardy actions like these are punitive to farmers, agriculture and indifferent to future social and ecological consequences in our regions.

If this legislation is successful, it will also remove the last recourse for community members and farmers to object to these proposals through the Planning process and our last bastion, The Independent Planning Commission, and ultimately, the jobs and appointments of those that work in these departments.

Annette Smith
486 Moppett street
HAY NSW 2711
0407971986
themackinnon@hotmail.com