

## Objection to Shoalhaven Hydro Expansion Project

My partner and I live in Kangaroo Valley and our only place of residence will be directly and adversely affected by this proposed expansion. As we live directly adjacent to the station, and right in the middle of the proposed tunnels, the details (or more precisely, lack thereof) in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are extremely distressing and will certainly have a profound and detrimental impact on our mental health, our property, the local wildlife, our neighbours, the local infrastructure and the broader Kangaroo Valley community.

The EIS is dense, ambiguous, entirely lacking in detail, plainly misleading, dismissive of real and prospective impacts on residents, wildlife and infrastructure and prepared in a manner wholly advantageous to the proponent.

My concerns are many;

- The 24/7 use of explosives to break, aggregate and remove 420,000 cubic metres of spoil and the subsequent 'dumping' of this possibly toxic spoil
- a proposed timeline of 5 years (and certainly longer) of blasting, vastly increased noise levels, ground vibrations, heavy vehicle traffic and environmental degradation
- no details covering surface level drilling and blasting
- no sincere consideration given to the impacts, consequences and long-term effects of 5 years of well above average noise levels and vibrations
- heavy vehicle movements increasing from zero to 200,000 is an intolerable imposition
- no serious consideration given to the impact of heavy haulage vehicles, buses and other trucks on the already weak and damaged roads
- a wholly inadequate road dilapidation report and proposal for maintaining same
- the inevitability of sleep disturbance and the completely unacceptable stress this will place on my health
- the ridiculous suggestion of temporary noise barriers which will do nothing to alleviate the problem
- no curfew as works are proposed to go on 24/7
- no serious assessment and impact that 5 years of ground vibrations will have on residents, our houses and property, flora and fauna and the environment in general
- as beekeepers our hives and those of our neighbours will be decimated as ground vibrations represent a prominent environmental stressor for honeybees, with the potential to impact on their cognitive and motor abilities, reducing their ability to pollinate crops and produce honey, as well as the dust from blasting and drilling that will pollute the flora they feed on
- the almost certain demise of many local businesses who are already reeling from the effects of droughts and fires in 2019/20, the ongoing covid pandemic since 2020 and the devastating rains and floods in 2022
- residents property values, given many people such as myself have invested heavily in our retirement in Kangaroo Valley
- the lack of detail relating to the mitigating measures that will need to be addressed when the identified problems occur
- weak and inadequate notification details and timelines for any changes to blasting, haulage, crushing and myriad other operations outlined in the EIS
- measurements and guidelines used to determine noise levels are particularly egregious and demonstrate a complete lack of understanding and respect for the environment and residents (how can they be based on those in the city of Sydney?)

- no substantive or meaningful measurements to account for adverse meteorological conditions
- no alternatives, other than trucks, for the quieter removal of spoil
- no considered alternatives as required by the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs)
- SEARs also requires an assessment of the risks to public safety, particularly the handling and storage of explosive materials, however we are given scant details
- data analysis such as maps and sound level recordings are inadequate and out of date
- some residents have not been included in the EIS
- no risk assessment of the number and types of businesses that will be impacted
- a 'she'll be right' attitude to the ramifications of 24/7 construction activity (simply stating a plan will be developed and further consultation undertaken when problems and issues arise is not only in contravention of SEARs but breathtakingly arrogant)
- no mental health assessment or any consideration given to the direct or indirect consequences on the lives, livelihoods and financial security of those impacted
- a total lack of logistical details covering the employment conditions, accommodation, transportation, amenity or support of an estimated 370 strong workforce
- references to existing traffic volumes are reliant on terribly outdated data measurements taken in February 2019 (a noticeably quiet time in the valley)
- the EIS fails to specify precise locations and descriptions of all works to be undertaken, including structures to be built
- no analysis about the almost certain project delays, timeframe extensions and their budgetary implications (a critical point given our tax dollars will be funding this proposal)
- no costings whatsoever, therefore no cost benefit analysis (only speculation that this project will cost a minimum two billion dollars)

### Conclusion

It is frightening to have to consider this proposal when we look at the Snowy 2.0 pumped hydro project. Yes, it is eight times larger than what is being planned here, however none the less significant and we will certainly be left with another white elephant. The only difference I can see is that they want our tax dollars up front. Every failure associated with the Snowy project from completion dates and cost blowouts to environmental degradation and electricity generated will be replicated here in the Shoalhaven. The Snowy project was considered by Senate Estimates and subsequent reporting noted that the 'battery,' and therefore the one proposed here, will be no different to any other and as such it will be a net load on the National Electricity Market. For every 100 units of electricity used to pump water uphill, only 75 units are returned when the water flows back down through the generators. Not only will the Shoalhaven proposal be devastating for our valley, like Snowy it will not be efficient and will forever be a burden on NSW taxpayers. And all for the benefit of just 80,000 homes in Sydney.

If Origin really are serious about their 'green' credentials they could pay to instal a 5Mw solar panel system and battery storage for those 80,000 homes. Given the speculated cost of the expansion proposal, this would be far cheaper (saving approximately \$10,000 per home) be more financially prudent and much less a financial burden on NSW taxpayers now and in the future.

This venture was rejected 3 years ago as it was deemed economically unviable. The only reason this project is being reconsidered is simply because your and my tax dollars will be subsidising it. Kangaroo Valley resident's tax dollars that will not see one benefit for our community. Instead, we will get only pain and suffering for 5 years and beyond. Our lives will be devastated.