

These comments are made as a permanent resident of Jacks Corner Road, Kangaroo Valley and being within 2km of the Power Station.

General

There seems to be a lot of uncertainty about the specifics of the project details, some of which understandably cannot be defined until a contractor/s has been appointed if this project proceeds. This leads to concern about the actual impacts of both residents/owners close to the project sites, and more broadly for people in the surrounding areas.

A commitment needs to be made to have clearer communications and consultation with all affected people/businesses to ensure there is understanding of specific impacts and how these might be mitigated in a way that is acceptable to all parties.

Environment / Biodiversity

We are fortunate to have a variety of flora and fauna that thrive in the area, and that have returned after the 2019/2020 bushfires. Before this project is approved, a more detailed assessment is required on both the short- and long-term impacts of the project on the plants and animals in this area.

Of particular concern is the clearing of @29.5 hectares of vegetation that also impacts the 'homes' of native animals. What mitigation plans are there to reduce the impact, including of any threatened species?

There are many animal deaths on our roads already, which increases with holiday traffic. Have the impacts of additional, including heavy, vehicles been considered and how will this be managed appropriately?

What are the plans to regenerate the vegetation area that is cleared for the dumping of soil from tunnels and other project works?

Noise

As a quiet neighbourhood, any construction works are noticeable for their loudness, as we have found during the rebuild of homes after the 2019/2020 bushfires. Continual and excessive noise as is proposed for 24/7 over five years is untenable. Whether the noise comes from drilling, tunnelling, blasts, vehicle movements, construction activity and workers generally, the noise levels will carry much further than anticipated in the proposal documents.

Are there mitigation strategies to address this issue if the project proceeds and the noise levels are excessive? How will residents be able to report any problems with any noise or vibration issues? How will these issues be managed by the project manager?

Roads

The condition of the roads leading into and within Kangaroo Valley have been precarious since the 2019/2020 bush fires and are still under strain.

For Jacks Corner Road in particular, the evidence of the impact of heavy vehicles is apparent. While some repairs have been made, the increased traffic, particularly heavy trucks used for re-construction of homes, has become an ongoing problem. Particularly for residents who use these roads every day, we deal with the potholes, the edges disappearing and ripples appearing due to heavy rains. Fixes are generally made by patching the roads, but the

problems reappear as soon as another weather event occurs or more vehicles use the roads. There are also issues around visitors not understanding the nature and problem of our roads, travelling at excessive speeds and endangering lives and damage to their vehicles.

A commitment must be made that the roads will be maintained in a suitable manner during the course of the project, as well as ensuring they are in good condition at the completion of the project if it proceeds.

Residents

I believe that until the project starts, if it proceeds, that the impact on residents, particularly those close to the project sites, will be unknown. Of particular concern is the mental health of residents who will be living with the project noise over the entire course of the project for 24 hours a day.

Has any consideration been given to how this might be better managed, such as the project renting any homes that are close to the project sites, so that the owners have an option to reside elsewhere for the duration of the project.

What plans are in place to address any resident concerns as the project progresses? Will there be a specific contact person on the project team responsible for monitoring and advising on behalf of residents?

Businesses

Two businesses in particular in the direct project area are of concern. The first being the Wisdom Wombat Refuge and the second the wedding venue Wildwood.

The work undertaken to rescue and rehabilitate wombats that are injured or abandoned is valued and necessary. The noise impacts in particular will have an exceedingly detrimental effect on the wombats cared for by this business.

The events hosted by Wildwood bring much needed visitors to Kangaroo Valley, who not only use a local business in Wildwood, but also support many other small businesses through the use of local wedding vendors and by shopping in our local village. If there is one unhappy couple due to any impacts of this project, word will quickly spread and there will be direct implications for future events.

The direct impacts on both of these businesses, and the resulting impacts more broadly for Kangaroo Valley small businesses, needs to be thoroughly researched and considered. Explicit mitigation strategies would need to be agreed with these business owners. An agreement of stopping work for an hour for a wedding is not an acceptable mitigation strategy.