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Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
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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.

How do I to respond to an EIS that is so blatantly inadequate and misleading ...

I have a work life history in producing EIS documents for public exhibition, so I am fully aware of the need to make these documents as 'watertight' as possible, so when they come under public scrutiny they can't be misinterpreted or misunderstood. This is not the case for the Winterbourne Wind Farm EIS. This "fluid" document (a term used flippantly by ERM to describe this EIS) is full of holes and assumptions that are in truth, morally reprehensible. There is an obvious arrogance throughout this EIS, it suggests that we (the Walcha community) 'couldn't be bothered' or worst 'too stupid to comprehend' the implications a project like this coming to town would have.

There are numerous areas of concern I could delve into – but for efficiency will highlight a few that stand out – It's hoped the group submission from the Voice for Walcha will address the project more fully.

Biodiversity Impact – There are many obvious errors in the identification of what wildlife 'really' resides in the area. These studies of the flora and fauna were undertaken during the worst drought in over 100 years. So-called experts were studying the area when transient birds had either already migrated away or busy nesting, so (obviously) their findings found little or no evidence of some of these species in the Walcha area. The obvious disregard for unfelled biodiversity corridors and vulnerable (and threatened) species is unbelievable – but the fact that the project is right up against a UNESCO World Heritage Area and National Park, just beggars' belief! I'm also hugely concerned that Vestas is already aware that as part of the construction period and beyond, there will be huge amounts of biodiversity destruction, so have (already) budgeted for tens of millions of dollars in biodiversity offsets! How can this be about saving the planet if so much has to be destroyed in the first place?

One final biodiversity comment ... I also wanted to include a more general observation – namely, biodiversity vs REZ zones. I have (also) included a map of the New England Biodiversity Map - as shown overlaid on the Voice for Walcha Cumulative Map (I refer to this map later in my objection). I cannot believe that the NE REZ zone has been placed - fair and squarely - over the same area! Clearly a case of poor planning?! If our federal government is so committed to protecting these areas – can the NSW planning department not see the hypocrisy??

Socio Economic Impact – It's really very obvious that little (if any) research was conducted in and around Walcha. This minuscule list of "what you'll find in here" suggests that this was most likely a poor google search rather than a detailed analysis of our LGA.

Also, where is the Economic benefit analysis? the referenced appendix, where perhaps some of the answers may lie, is missing from the EIS. Why was it not included?

Community Consultation – one word ... woeful.

Much has been already said on this topic – so I will inform you of another nugget to show the complete lack of transparency and respect shown to our community.

At a meeting the Voice for Walcha had with Vestas (August 2022) – of which I attended – the subject of getting information out to the community, understanding the wider community and their issues, and hosting Community forums came up. We questioned Doug Landfear (the irony of his surname is not lost on me) and his boss Evan Carless about 'why' they are reluctant to host public information forum events like those held by Voice for Walcha. They said that they have been advised that they 'lose control' at public events – and that 'one on one' is more conducive to more positive results .. yeah I wonder why!! No noisy punters in the back row calling them out perhaps ?? At this same meeting, one of my colleagues asked Vestas – "were they aware of the effect their divisive project was having on our community" – to which Mr Landfear replied, "you're NOT going to pin this on me!", mockingly laughing as he said it. To which I said – "YES!!, you have to bear some of the responsibility because if it wasn't here, the division wouldn't have occurred!" His colleague next to him (Mr Carless) started crying. We questioned the crocodile tears – he said that he was sad about how this was affecting the community – if he'd met with the 'community' rather than just the handful of already signed up and muzzled landowners, he would have already known this.

Indigenous Consultation – I am not of indigenous decent, so my comments can only be viewed as an observation. But I find the complete disregard of the local custodians, the Dunghatti Bari Nation, a travesty. The fact that they were not involved or consulted in the first place, again shows how flawed the proponents EIS's process has been. The project area 'actually' contains **numerous** artifacts, sacred and massacre sites – all of which are incredibly culturally significant to our local indigenous communities - I can only imagine the public outrage in Denmark if the danish indigenous population was treated in such an offhanded disrespectful and appalling way.

Roads and Traffic – The term 'minimal' appears hundreds of times throughout the EIS. None more so than in this section. To suggest that substantially increased traffic movements on our 'only road' from Tamworth to Walcha won't have significant impact is just a down right lie. I don't doubt that with road mitigation and trucking professionals that they will be able to move the endless shafts, blades, gravel, water etc etc... but what happens to those workers who travel everyday between Walcha and Tamworth? Who will pick up the bill for their time and expenses when they are stuck the bottom of Walcha Road for hours while a blade - at snail pace - crawls up the hill? And who's problem is it if someone is stuck in an ambulance after having a farming accident, or is having a baby, car accident or heart attack to name few – who will be ultimately responsible for the potential delay? Can we sue Vestas/CIP for lost of life etc? What about the welfare of the animals that transit between the two locations – what if they are held up for hours – how can this be fair and ethical? The list could go on and on ...

I expect that (potentially) no one from Vestas/CIP has actually driven the route to understand all the different impacts there will be. God forbid this project goes ahead – there will be years of construction work getting these roads ready for this project – and that's before anything has started! has this been factored into timings etc? I suspect not!

I could go on about the incorrect tallying of numbers of cars, trucks, cement, gravel and water trucks on the road – some simple mathematics will prove their statement as false. Go back to the drawing board Vestas and do it again – honestly and fairly.

Noise – I am aware this is a huge issue that just isn't being addressed fairly. Not only were the studies conducted on turbines smaller than ones this project is proposing – to say that the noise impacts will be minimal (again that word) is just factually incorrect. It has become apparent that there are significant errors in the assessments of how much noise there really will be when these turbines are operational. How fair is it that the Walcha community is asked to comment on these reports when they are so blatantly inaccurate and misleading??

Blade shedding – I cannot believe this is not something we are screaming from the roof tops about. The fact that these blades knowingly shed toxic plastic into the environment is just unbelievable. Vestas's turbine blades use Bisphenol A (BPA) to bind the components together – BPA is known to increase the chances of getting cancer and other illnesses. So knowing this, it's doesn't take a brain surgeon to put two and two together - that this pollution will in no doubt, end up in our rivers and into the very same water we/animals end up drinking??? How can this practice be allowed to continue? How can Vestas – who have admitted they use this epoxy – make these blades in good faith?

Finally, I am very concerned about the cumulative effect of so many projects proposed of our area. How is it fair that Walcha bears the brunt of power generation for the 'greater good'. I was the creator of the Voice for Walcha's 'Cumulative Map' for the New England area (See Attached). While I worked on the file, I just couldn't believe the amount of proposed energy projects – seemly mostly around my town from only one developer – Walcha Energy. I know the Department of Planning can only comment on projects that have made it to the 'list' – but there really needs to be an avenue to show the public a list of proposed projects (even if many only make it that far) – so that the cumulative effect can be assessed properly. Going forward this is something that really needs to be considered and a solution found. In the meantime, we'll just keep adding projects - as we become aware of them - to our map and make it available to all.

In conclusion, it's **SO** clear to me that this project should not proceed any further. Given its obvious pitfalls, it should never had made it past step 1. I suspect that 20 years ago when this project was being conceived, it was (perhaps) visionary and no doubt had some merit in making a small step towards climate change. But over time, advances in turbine construction and more recently, economics and greed, have now turned this visionary project into a '*bulging at the seams*' Megamonster that has no place in Walcha.

Given the amount of other potential renewable projects in the pipeline – I feel that Walcha should have the opportunity to choose a project that *is* the right size, in the right location and the right developer for our community and not be bullied into secret agreements, cash incentive and divisionary tactics. It's clear that Vestas has little respect for Walcha – their arrogance, and lack of interest in us and the greater community should be ringing alarm bells.

Kate Durack

The Cumulative Effect

In progress and proposed renewable projects in the New England REZ (Renewable Energy Zone)
as at 9 January 2023

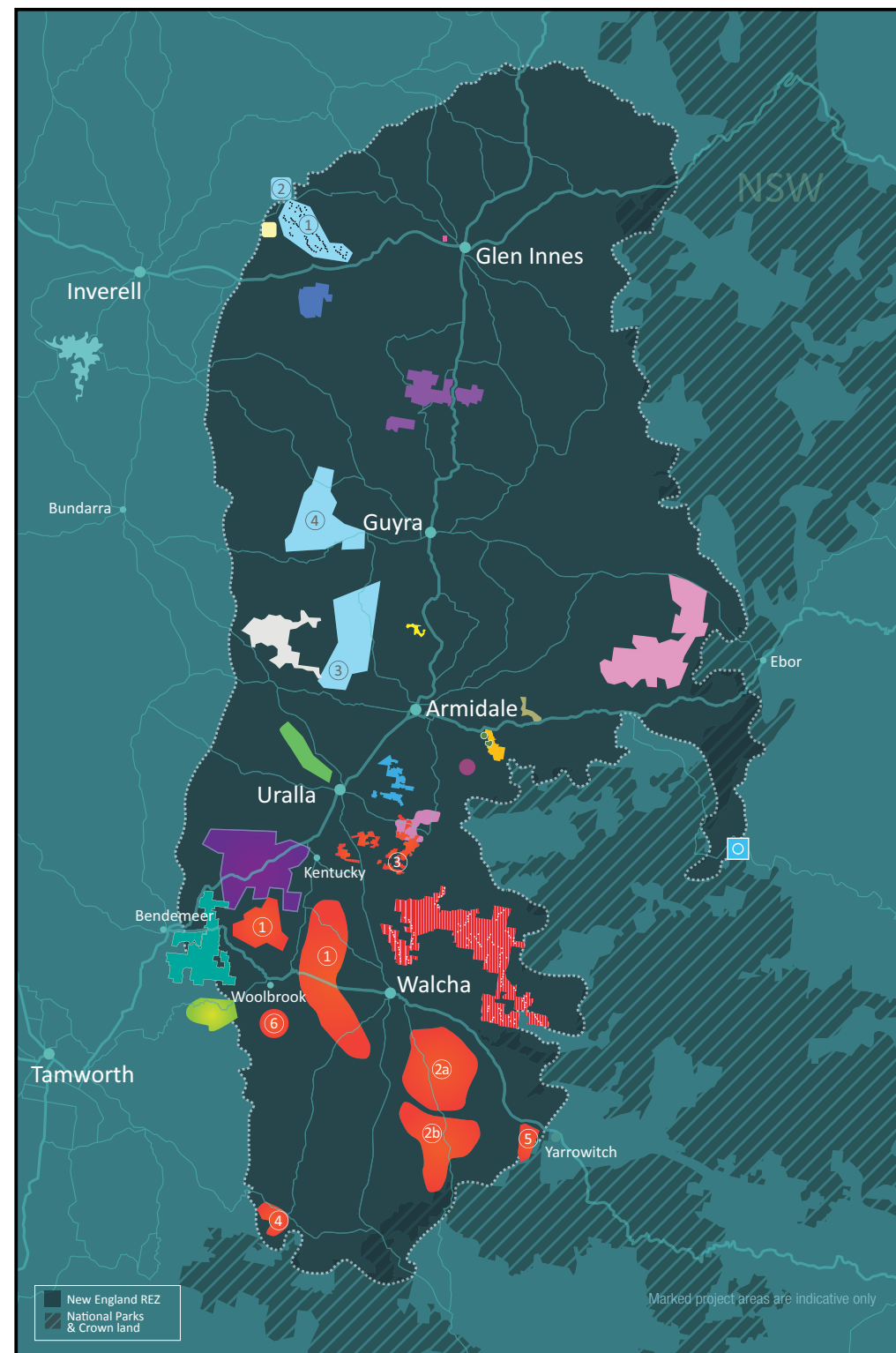
DEVELOPER	PROJECT NAME	TYPE	NO. TURBINES/ SOLAR PANELS	MEGA WATTS	SOURCE
Vestas, Copenhagen Infrastructure + WalchaWind <small>(originally owned- Walcha Energy)</small>	Winterbourne Wind	Wind	119 <small>(project up-date 1/8/21)</small>	700	Planning Portal NSW
Walcha Energy <small>Note: the renewable energy resource of the Walcha Energy Project is in excess of 4000MW.* Source: at Sept 2022 www.walchaenergy.com.au/</small>	1. Ruby Hills Wind	Wind	140	860	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walchaenergy.com.au Aemo.com.au > NEM Generation Aug 2022 rubyhillswind.com.au dungowanpumpedhydro.com salisbury solar.com.au
	2a. Brackendale Wind North	Wind	80	500	
	2b. Brackendale Wind South	Wind	30	200	
	3. Salisbury Solar	Solar	2.4 Million	700	
	4. Dungowan Hydro Battery	Hydro		300x8hr+	
	5. Tia Windfarm	Wind	50	300	
	6. Woolbrook Wind Farm	Wind	16	100	
Neoen	1. Thunderbolt Energy Hub	Wind	?	380	WindMap
	2. Thunderbolt Energy Hub	Solar	Est 60	120	
	3. Thunderbolt Energy Hub	Battery	Est 70	400	
Cubico	Salisbury Wind	Wind	Est 60+	360	Senior Advisor 0467 068 264
ACEN Australia	New England Solar Farm	Solar	2.6 Million	720	newenglandsolar.com.au
		Battery		50x1hr	
Unknown	Woolbrook	Wind & Solar	? Early Stages	??	Unknown
Metis Energy	Bendemeer Renewable Energy Hub	Wind	?	380	bendemeerenergyhub.com.au
		Solar	?	210	
		Battery	?	200x2hrs	
Oxley Solar Farm	Oxley Solar Farm	Solar	3.85 Million	215	oxleysolarfarm.com.au
Infrastructure Capital Group	Rangoon Wind Farm (N/S)^	Wind	25	130	Planning Portal NSW
		Battery		100x4hrs	
Providence Asset Group	Solar PV Farm (Guyra)	Solar		4.5	Planning Portal NSW
CWP	1. Sapphire Wind Solar Farm ^	Wind Solar	75	270 180	CWP Renewables
	2. Sapphire Battery Hub ^	Battery		30	
	3. Boorolong Wind Farm	Wind		270	
	4. Unknown name	Wind	?	?	
Goldwind	White Rock Wind Farm ^	Wind	119	175	White Rock Wind Farm
EDF Energy	Yarrowyck Wind	Wind	?	?	
EDF Energy	(Limited details)	Wind	?	?	
FRV	Metz Solar Farm	Solar		115	Metz Solar Farm
Enerpac	Tilbuster Solar Farm ^	Solar		152	Tilbuster Solar Farm
Canadian Solar	Sundown Solar Farm ^	Solar		360	sundownsolarfarm.com.au
Glen Innes Windpower	Glen Innes Solar Farm ^	Solar		4.5	gleninnessolar.com.au
Res Group	Res Solar	Solar	?	?	
Epuron	Doughboy Wind Farm	Wind	50-60	300	Planning Portal NSW
Infinergy (Boralex)	Olive Grove	Solar		29.9	olivegrovesolarfarm.com.au
	Stringy Bark	Solar		29.9	infinergy.co.uk

^ Not shown on detailed map (right) to see actual location go to larger map > voiceforwalcha.com

* includes the on sold Winterbourne Wind project and assumes the use of 6.2MW towers

Source: Planning Portal NSW Link, Eco Generation WindMap showing projects in area, Thunderbolt Energy Hub NEOEN booklet, Newtricity project link

If you know of any proposed developments in the New England area that are not as yet listed on this map, please contact us. To learn more or to get involved > voiceforwalcha.com



The New Englands' Biodiversity Map
(shown as a yellow dotted line),
overlaid with the New England REZ Map.
This map shows the most current list
of renewable energy projects -
both operational and proposed,
at as January 18, 2023.

