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The Uarbry Tongy Lane Alliance Inc objects to Winterbourne Wind Farm (SSD 10471)

The proposal to build wind turbines adjacent to national parks and in local communities where most of the population oppose the development is clearly environmentally destructive and unacceptable.

The EIS provided by WinterbourneWind Pty Ltd is littered with inconsistencies, mistakes, and omissions. A sloppiness that we have come to expect from so many “pop up” foreign owned wind developers. This is never called out by DPE despite continual evidence provided by community volunteers who trawl the thousands of pages of EIS documents, attend numerous meetings and spend hours on research. Meanwhile the developer submits a template EIS with poor attention to detail and scant interest in the irreversible environmental impacts. Just a few examples:

- Claims that 119 turbines, each 230 metres tall, situated 6.5 km from Walcha on ridges and hilltops will not materially change the visual aesthetics of the district. Only those that don't live in the area would agree with this statement. What about the audible and infrasound?
- The impact on Koala habitat will contribute to the species decline. How does DPE make this fit with the 2020 review of the EPBC Act that found Governments had failed to protect endangered animals?
- EIS indicates bat and bird strikes will be negligible. Clearly, endangered, protected and vulnerable birds and bats are subject to blade strike and habitat displacement from wind turbines.
- WinterbourneWind Pty Ltd neglect to correctly account for vehicle movements during construction, conveniently omitting the vehicle movements for water, gravel and waste.
- Page 50 of the Landscape and Visual Impact assessment shows an example image of the process Moir Landscape Architecture use for photomontages. This image is of a farm gate (Dhu Robin) in the ACEN Coolah project (Valley of the Winds) and we note that DPE have specifically requested that all photomontages be updated to include turbine numbers and blue sky background (refer: <https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/valley-winds-wind-farm>, additional information requested October 2022). Yet almost all the photo montages presented in this EIS have either a cloudy grey background or fencing obscuring the actual view of the turbines. Moir landscape appear to have produced yet another deliberately obfuscated set of images.
- Photomontage 17 from the World Heritage Area – McMillan Lookout (appendix D) – please provide a clear photomontage of the proposed view from this lookout should this project proceed. The Wire Frame Diagram provided indicates over 106 turbines in this area.
- An independent peer review found that the noise levels of the wind farm have been underestimated. This is keeping with many noise reports prepared by developers, noise levels are consistently understated.

This project will put Oxley Wild Rivers National Park at increased fire devastation with the disabling of effective aerial firefighting. No amount of biodiversity offsets and biodiversity stewardships will compensate the loss of native flora and fauna from bush fire and habitat displacement.

The Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) adds significantly to the fire risks and environmental cost of the project. There are currently no regulations or safety protocols for dealing with thermal runaway. Yet BESS are proposed for bush fire prone areas. This project provides no details on the fire suppressant systems that could prevent an environmental disaster from fire and the subsequent thermal runaway. Are we waiting for a disaster before implementing any regulations? What about the environmental cost of the additional land clearing around BESS? And the water supply required to put out a fire in BESS?

If this project is approved will WinterbourneWind Pty Ltd and DPE take responsibility for the loss of biodiversity and the potential loss of human life and property in a bush fire event or a thermal runaway event?

This development is not in the public interest and is environmentally destructive. The only winner here is WinterbourneWind Pty Ltd, whose whole focus appears to be profit maximisation.

Kathryn Reynolds

On behalf of Tongy Lane Alliance Inc