

'Inana'
Ringwood Rd
Wollar NSW 2850

Natasha Homsey
Contact Planner
Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Tuesday 7 November 2023

Dear Ms Homsey,

Objection to Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone Transmission

I am a long term resident of the Wollar district and strongly object that two additional 500kV transmission lines and a large new substation are being foisted onto my community with no prior consultation. All consultation for this project that directly impacts the Wollar community was held in other places.

I have a number of specific reasons for objecting to this new, large scale industrial project in our remote rural district. We already host the 500kV transmission line between the power stations. Two more is too many.

Firstly, as a volunteer member of the local Cumbo Bushfire Brigade, the assessment of increased bushfire risk to my community for this large project has not been properly assessed. We have severely depleted local volunteer numbers in our local area because of previous poor Department of Planning decisions on coal mine development and expansion in the district. I consider the increased risk of fire and fire threat to the proposed new infrastructure is critical and will cause additional stress on local volunteers. The Barrigan Valley is the prime source of major bushfire activity in our district. This has not been identified in the Bushfire assessment report. There has been no mention of the catastrophic fire that threatened the existing Transgrid substation in 2017. There is no mention of a comprehensive fire management plan for the new proposed substation or assessment of additional resources needed to protect the infrastructure in the next catastrophic fire event.

Secondly, the cumulative impact of increased traffic movements on local and regional roads in the Wollar district has not been fully assessed in the EIS. We currently have a large number of daily vehicle movements associated with the construction of the Wollar Solar Farm. These will continue for a few more years. The proposed commencement of construction for this project will overlap those vehicle movements. There has been no comprehensive analysis of this in regard to local resident safety and deterioration of road condition. There are also ongoing regular mine contractor, mine worker and truck and dog gravel deliveries to the mines travelling through Wollar village and on the roads leading to and from the Wollar district.

Because of previous poor decisions by the Department of Planning, the Wollar General Store and Service Centre has closed. Also the Bylong General Store. Remaining local Wollar residents are now forced to travel into Mudgee on these roads for all grocery, vehicle maintenance and general services provision. Contractors working on tight timeframes do not observe speed limits and we are increasingly forced into life-threatening road incidents.

The very sketchy assessment of additional traffic and transport impacts on the Wollar community is entirely unsatisfactory.

Thirdly, the visual impact of these additional monstrous transmission towers and the likely increase in electro-magnetic radiation is adding another industrial eyesore and health threat to our beleaguered community. We object to being written off and ignored by the NSW Government and have never been adequately compensated for the socio-economic disadvantage metered out to us through previous poor planning decisions. The community of Wollar has had enough.

Fourthly, my family and I have lived comfortably on stand-alone solar power for over 20 years, including running my fully equipped joinery workshop. We will not be accessing power through this new large, fast-tracked, poorly assessed project. But we will be suffering all the negative impacts without any formal recognition or any compensation.

I object strongly to the poor consultation, poor assessment and poor outcomes of this project. The main beneficiaries will be the international companies building the large solar and windfarms to connect to these transmission lines. The lack of assessment of alternative solutions to other people's reliance on fossil fuel for electricity is a key failing of this process.

Yours sincerely
Tane Schmidt
Resident of Wollar