

Tara Saxon

"Rangeview"
16 Yarrowitch Post Office Road
Yarrowitch NSW 2354
0431 817 075
tara@tarasaxon.com

Matt Kean

Minister for Energy

Via email: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/treasurer>

19 October 2024

Dear Mr Kean,

As a Walcha resident and citizen of NSW, I am writing to you to express my deep concern with and opposition to the proposed Walcha Winterbourne Wind Farm project.

I believe this development and proposed project is completely inappropriate for our region. The blight on our landscape will be indelible and will destroy the natural beauty and wild scenery that is our hallmark. Removing people's ability to enjoy the unspoiled environment is something we will never be able to recapture.

The scale of the build is well beyond the capacity of our town and our region to sustain. The solar farm project in Armidale is already struggling to find workers and to accommodate them. The same issues will be encountered here with this wind farm project. Inevitably, we will be required to import workers from elsewhere who will drain the (already tight) resources of our town, while banking their paycheques and then taking their money back to their hometowns - likely the Hunter, Sydney etc. The trickle down economic benefits touted by the project team will not be felt here in our region. The incomes earned from the project will be taken out of the region.

The traffic chaos this project will herald will be something this area has never seen. Many of us left busy towns and cities on the coast to escape the traffic mayhem that ruined the amenity. Now this project seeks to bring these problems to Walcha. The extraordinary size of the trucks. The sheer volume of truck and construction traffic is absurd. Our road network already struggles

with regular car and semi-trailer traffic. These vehicles will destroy our roads, shifting the burden for repair to the council, State and Federal Governments. We the local people will have to live our lives around the road repairs and be inconvenienced by it. It will make the roads unsafe. This is unacceptable.

Living anywhere near high tension power lines is widely considered undesirable. This is not a “fringe” opinion held by a bunch of hippies and conspiracy theorists. Banks know it and they price in a higher measure of risk when extending a mortgage to someone looking to buy near high tension lines. Property values reflect the lack of demand for these sorts of properties. It is common knowledge that they are harmful to health and it is almost universal that people want to live as far as possible away from such structures. There have been more studies done on the dangers of living near high tension power lines than pretty much any other man-made structure. The studies unanimously point to the correlation between high tension power lines and increased incidence of cancer and neurological problems. Many people leave the big cities looking to escape this threat to human health and the hideous blight these wires and their supporting towers are to the landscape. The fact that our council would be considering bringing these in such huge numbers to our region and building them over such an incredible distance is inconceivable.

The decommissioning phase of this proposed wind farm is also very concerning to me. How these turbines will be removed from the landscape, how they will be disposed of and who on earth will manage this is something I have not seen any convincing discussion on. The component parts for these wind farms are NOT recyclable. There is nothing we can do with these things, other than dig enormous holes for them and bury them. The entire project is washed a pretty shade of green however everyone knows that these projects are not environmentally sustainable in any way. The sourcing of the materials, the building of the component parts, shipping it all here, getting it all trucked around, getting workers here... the environmental benefits of electricity generated by wind are negated by the ridiculous logistics of the set up phase and the total lack of an end strategy. Not to mention the carbon catastrophe of constantly flying the highly paid Danish consultants back and forth from the offices of their parent company to keep pushing the project onward.

Those of us who are not in-bed with this project - and by that I mean those of us who are not on the payroll of Vestas or standing to benefit financially from selling out our land for the construction of these hideous turbines or power lines - are the biggest losers in this whole equation. And there are plenty of us!

As locals all we will get is the pain points of this project. We get none of the economic benefits, none of the project profits, all of the resource stretching to accommodate the workers to the construction phase, all the traffic mayhem, all the damage that the construction traffic will bring to our roads and all of the visual and environmental disturbance and destruction that a wind farm of this scale will cause. This is completely intolerable.

This project has minimal support from our community. The people who live in Walcha Shire are a tight knit group of locals and we have banded together in our opposition to this project. The ONLY people in support of this project within our community are the handful of families who are working directly with the developer to champion the project. It is estimated (I believe accurately) that approximately 75% of our local community oppose the project. For our State Government to push a project like this through and onto the residents of an area like ours, when CLEARLY we oppose it is the antithesis of democracy.

As a once-proud Australian, I have been saddened over the years as I have watched our landscape becoming spoiled, our resources depleted, our real estate sold off and our infrastructure divested always into **foreign hands**. This project is no different. The overseas -based company that is the driving force behind this project stands to gain the most in a financial sense and will be parking all of that profit into the banks and the economy of the European Union. The resulting need for management, trouble shooting and ultimately decommissioning are the unpleasant but necessary aspects of the job that will be left to those of us on the ground to manage. They get all the gold and the glory, we are left here to pick up the pieces. On top of having to live in a spoiled environment.

Before moving to the Walcha area, I was cautioned that wealthy landowners with long-term family ties to the region tend to wield a disproportionate amount of sway within the council. These families are rumoured to ensure that projects which benefit them financially are pushed through council and they have a reputation of having "bought off" the support of locals and used their significant financial resources to silence the voices of dissent.

This letter is my attempt to equalise the scale in this regard. I will not be silenced and I intend to have my opinion and my voice heard in this matter.

I would appreciate a short note or email to acknowledge your receipt of this letter, so that I know my objection has been tabled.

Sincerely yours,

Tara Saxon