Submission – Winterbourne Wind amended EIS

Land use

Construction of the individual roads required to service each turbine and construction of a new road south of Uralla to avoid the Oxley Highway take up hectares of prime New England agricultural land, land that is producing food. Australia is already being warned that food security is an issue, and yet projects such as the Winterbourne Wind Farm persist in attempting to convince us that construction of wind turbine generators is compatible with existing land use in the northern tablelands region.

It seems to me that during the construction period (now extended to 52 months), land holders will be unable to use their paddocks due to the traffic coming and going through their land, and the likelihood that gates will be left open, allowing livestock to escape.

In addition, cropping will be interrupted by the individual roads that have been built to each turbine. And how will you ensure that the underground electrical cables, which are an integral part of WTGs, are buried deep enough to avoid the tines of any cultivation that may be carried out as part of cropping activities?

And with so much traffic travelling through grazing properties, what steps will be taken to ensure bio security is upheld?

Construction of the new road will cause further disruption.

How can that equate to 'normal grazing or cropping activities adjacent to' turbines?

A more sensible solution would be to put wind turbines in flatter areas that have little or no agricultural production, and lower population density, than in the New England area. While this solution may increase the cost of transmission, once the transmission infrastructure is built, it need not be built again.

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Traffic: 'Reduce amount of construction traffic using local roads by sourcing raw materials for construction from within the project site'.

Quarry assessments: 'Inclusion of on-site quarry to supply gravel, aggregates and potentially bedding material required for Project construction'.

- Does this quarry exist already, or does it have to be developed, and what happens if an area containing suitable material to be quarried cannot be found?

Cumulative impacts: 'The distance between this Project and other projects in the region is not expected to result in significant cumulative impacts.'

- This is not at all reassuring; we want certainty, not hazy expectations. It seems to me that it would be impossible **not** to have cumulative impacts if several projects are all being developed in the same region with overlapping time frames.

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'These forecasts demonstrate that there is an urgent need for additional renewable energy development in NSW over the next seven years to offset the planned retirement of coal fired power and ensure a reliable energy supply.'

Roof top solar has been a great success; let's do roof top wind as well, using vertical access wind turbines (VAWTs). The technology exists for VAWTs, and new innovations are constantly leading to smaller, more efficient units. VAWTs on residential and commercial rooftops in our cities would reduce our dependence on non-coalfired electricity generation projects that are being developed in inappropriate areas.

'Up to 16 local FTE jobs during operations to provide plant operation and maintenance services and $25 million per year of operation in direct and indirect economic benefit for the local region.'

It's a beautiful theory; however, given the current population and demographics in Walcha, it is unlikely that this number of full time staff can be found in the immediate area. It is more likely that the FTE jobs referred to will be filled by DiDo (Drive in, Drive out) workers from other areas, and that they will spend their hard-earned dollars in their home towns or city suburbs, rather than in Walcha.

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Ancillary activities: 'Water for construction purposes sourced on-site where possible.'

Another hazy statement stating what any practical operator would do anyway.
From where will the water be sourced if it cannot be sourced on-site?