

The department issued a media release dated December 10, 2018 regarding the stopping of construction of the Crudine Ridge wind farm (CRWF).

So construction stopped on December 6, pretty close to the time when contractors would take their traditional Christmas/New Year break.

That would mean that no workers are on site and the gates are locked. Right?

Why did it take so long?

The department tells us that the Compliance unit made 4 visits to the CRWF site the earliest being on August 16, 2018. The compliance reports will make interesting reading should we get them at some stage.

The Application advises that construction commenced on August 2, 2018 and the wind farm website advises that construction commenced on or before May 28, 2018.

The conditions of consent require CWP Renewables to advise the department of pending construction commencement. We do not yet know this date and are yet to see the documentation.

Whatever the dates, DPE has known, or should reasonably have known, for many months that CWP was in breach of the conditions of consent before construction was halted.

The DPE web site for this media release has an attached illustration of an unknown, completed, operating wind farm. Why do they mislead? Surely the Department had many relevant photographs from the 4 compliance visits made between August 16, 2018 and October 28, 2018. We know from the CRWF web site images that heavy equipment was on site.

The media release tells a good story, as far as it goes. There are questions unanswered. To some of the locals, a consent breach of greater importance, the illegal clearing of Aarons Pass Road (APR), continues to be downplayed. In the media release, it reads as if there was a complaint, CWP obligingly stopped work and this modification will clear it all up.

This breach deserved a media release in its own right, but neither CWP nor the department wants to admit it was a breach.

To an outsider, it seems that the department has gone out of its way to bury this breach, even to the point of saying there was no breach at all, to the applause of the developer.

Marcus Ray has been misled by those below him who draft his letters when he claims that the clearing of APR to date is within the allowable limits. As a flow-on, the community has been misled.

The department would be wise to come clean on the APR fiasco. The facts will eventually come out. In the meantime any modification to the existing APR conditions of consent should be rejected.

(From the media release, I find Mike Young's new title, Executive Director, Resource Assessments and Compliance, interesting. It implies that not only does he set the approval conditions, he gets to police them. His combined department should reasonably have sniffed out these transgressions at a much earlier opportunity)