

Safety and other issues with the central access point to the Jupiter wind farm site.

Road Number 79 - From the Batemans Bay - Queanbeyan Road at Doughboy, via Tarago to Auburn Street at Goulburn is a State road and we make the assumption that RMS is responsible for assessing its suitability as the access route for the infrastructure for the Jupiter wind farm. In particular we are concerned about the safety aspects of the entry point for the central section of the wind farm site.

The approximate coordinates of the entrance (taken from the last published map of the site on a satellite photo of unknown vintage are: Easting 743270 and Northing 6101860. There were no coordinates of any of the eleven entrances in the Transport Impact Assessment section of the EIS (after 3 years of planning)

Issues of concern:

1. The state of the road.

A site survey will confirm to RMS that the road, particularly around the proposed central entranceway is in poor condition.

2. The construction of the road near the entranceway.

The road is very narrow. The lane widths are as little as 2.85 metres. The entrypoint is actually on a double-line section of highway. ie. dangerous before we consider a wind farm entrance.

There are no bituminized verges to speak of.

The section to the immediate north has trees relatively close to the narrow roadway.

3. The road is dangerous today. There is an impromptu memorial to the north near the entrance to Branxton Park, a wind farm host property.

4. The proposed entrance is on a short undulating section of straight road between two bends (one speed limited and therefore deemed dangerous). The sight distances would appear to be minimal, especially to the south.

Regarding sight distances, were they established in the expectation of unexpectedly coming upon an oversized load on a Restricted Access Vehicle of 80 metres or more?

5. The road, during and after construction will be even more dangerous.

The turbines, with micro-siting could be as close as 650 metres from the road. In the central section of the wind farm alone, at least 13 turbines will be within 2 kms of the road

The planting of roadside screening, *Cupressus leylandii*, by the developer or their associates will lead to more danger. Without these intermittent screens, drivers would more likely view the wind farm when it was safe to do so. With the screens, the temptation is to view the wind farm when the gaps allow for it, whatever the potential dangers this narrow winding road imparts.

6. Traffic Volumes

The RMS Traffic Volume Viewer does not show any data later than 2008. The only certainty is that the volumes have increased given the increasing number of residences built, for

instance, in the subdivisions of Barnet and Roseview. Being a tourist route to Braidwood and the coast, the road carries its fair share of caravans and boats. The wind farm will be a major distraction for drivers. Other submissions will highlight the amateurish fashion in which traffic volumes for the wind farm were arrived at.¹

7. There is an active intersection between Barnet Drive and State Road 79, there being 25 lifestyle properties in the Barnet subdivision. This intersection is only a few hundred metres from the central access point. This intersection is also the pickup/dropoff point for school buses with attendant parental traffic.

8. Safety must be considered before construction and for the life of the wind farm. You cannot rely on the Transport Impact Assessment in the EIS. Many approved wind farms have requested increased turbine heights and blade diameters. For instance, for the approved Sapphire wind farm a recent modification requested an increased tip height of 200 metres and an increased maximum rotor diameter of up to 140 metres.

The local Woodlawn wind farm has shown us that turbines have a habit of breaking down, necessitating the use of large contract cranes to dismantle and later to reassemble the turbine. Decommissioning will cause traffic volumes significantly in excess of those nominated for construction. A single vehicle delivering a turbine blade will be replaced with a number of vehicles carrying chopped up portions to the dump. Similarly, a single vehicle delivering a large section of a turbine tower will be replaced by several vehicles removing cut up segments.

9. The area is active for wildlife, especially wombats and kangaroos

10. It is rare to find a wind farm in three distinct sections, each only connectable via a state road. The Transport Impact Assessment section of the EIS does not address this issue in any detail.

11. The speed limit in the vicinity of the entranceway is 100 kph. The developer, as a solution, may suggest a “temporary” downgrading to say 80kph. This is an admission that the developing of the wind farm has caused safety issues. A speed limit downgrading is another example of the local community being disadvantaged and is not the answer. If the developer wants to have the entrance in that location, then that section of State road 79 should be redesigned and redeveloped at developer and host expense such that it is safe at its current limit of 100kph.

12. Additional safety signs have little impact, especially if no danger has been encountered recently for regular travelers.

13. The central access point will also intersect with the 33kv transmission line. This issue was not addressed in the EIS. After 3 years of planning, this transmission line only has a “preferred” option of being placed underground. It therefore must be assumed that it will be above ground. This decision cannot be left till “detailed design” phase. ie after approval.

¹ I am advised that readers should also study a submission on the Transport Impact Assessment section of the EIS by A. Gardner entitled “Jupiter Submission Chapter 2”

14. Finally, were the Australian Standards for Access Points designed with massively oversize and overlength vehicles in mind?

Conclusions:

The central entranceway is in the wrong place. Dangers cannot be ameliorated without redevelopment. Failing that the entranceway must be relocated.

RMS will no doubt insist in the Terms of Consent that the road be restored when construction is finished. Given the current state of the road, that is too late. In addition, before construction commences, the road surface must be upgraded to a safe condition.

The RMS should insist on public viewpoints being constructed in the vicinity of the northern and central sections of the Jupiter wind farm, similar to the one on the Crookwell Rd, near the Crookwell wind farm.

Any future documents, for instance a Traffic Management Plan, must be published.