

Objection to EPYC Pty Ltd - Jupiter Windfarm Project

EMI Impacts

I wish to submit my objection to the subject Project because of the expected electromagnetic interference impact from the proposed windfarm and its possible effect on television, radio, mobile phone and internet reception and services.

I would draw the attention of the DPE to the fiasco that resulted with the construction of the Taralga windfarm where the entire township of Taralga as well as surrounding properties either completely lost television reception or had major reception difficulties. It was proven that the cause of the loss was directly attributable to the nearby windfarm.

As the Taralga windfarm was already constructed and operational when the EMI issue was discovered the developer was forced to ameliorate the problem. In the meantime, the affected residents who were without television reception for many weeks just had to accept what was being done to them.

This is not a situation that residents in or near the Jupiter windfarm area wish to see repeated.

In the consultant's report (DNV GL Annex K) to EPYC's EIS at paragraph 4.2.1

"It is possible that the WTGs located within the established exclusion zone will cause interference to the telecommunications link. The operator of the link, Transgrid, has been contacted by DNV GL to assess any potential impact as part of a rigorous consultation process. To date, no formal response has been received by DNV GL. However, it is noted that the Proponent has advised that they have received written confirmation from Transgrid that the link will not be affected by the turbines."

It is interesting that DNV GL didn't/couldn't get a direct response from Transgrid but the proponent says that Transgrid responded to them in writing saying it wasn't a problem. Are we expected to believe that, without documentary evidence? Where is the written confirmation from Transgrid?

Currently mobile phone reception using either Optus or Telstra in the area of Barnet Drive adjacent to the PA, is marginal at best. It is common for residents in the windfarm area to have to change location on their properties to ensure the mobile phone reception. It is common practice for residents to 'find a spot on their property and provided you stand on one leg, face north east with the wind blowing from the south' you may be able to actually complete a conversation with whomever. The reception of mobile phone services provided by both Telstra and Optus is very poor.

Yet in the DNV GL report at paragraph 6.10 they say,

“To date, Telstra and Optus have both indicated that the Project will have no impact on their operations and services.”

Of course, it won't have an impact on their operations and services. It is probably a true statement noting that they are talking about their operations and services, completely dismissive of the actual reception situation.

In EYPC's consultant's (DNV GL) conclusion, it says,

“Cumulative impacts are not expected to occur for most services considered, however the possibility exists for cumulative impacts to point-to-multipoint stations, mobile phones, wireless internet, CB radio and television services. Options exist to mitigate most interference issues should they occur.”

So again, the residents will be the guinea pigs in an experiment where we don't know what the EMI effects of the windfarm will be until it is operational. Is this another Taralga experience all over again or a Mr Fluffy asbestos insulation debacle all over again? Do we not learn from previous disasters?

I contend that the Jupiter Windfarm should not be approved for development until it can be scientifically demonstrated that there will be no EMI caused by the windfarm that will affect television, mobile phone, radio and internet reception/services or any other telecommunications.

I strongly suggest that windfarms are not the answer to renewable energy and that the Department should not approve any further windfarm development in NSW including EYPC's Jupiter Windfarm Project.