

Submission Opposing the Jupiter Wind Farm

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission opposing the Jupiter Wind Farm.

This is my second submission. My first submission focuses on the human impacts of Jupiter and gives my reasons for opposing that wind farm specifically on the basis that it is unprecedented, inappropriately sited and ethically wrong.

After reading other background documents on nearby wind farms approved or in the process of being approved I felt compelled to give my objections to the process itself in a separate submission.

I do hope you will read my comments with objectivity and fairness and not dismiss them out of hand simply because they do not fit neatly into your assessment criteria.

You may not like my wording but it is no more or less than the apatetic coloration used in the documents written by wind farm proponents and Government alike.

My Background

I live about 40 km from the Jupiter area and in general I have supported the development of renewable energy technologies and specifically wind farms until now.

I blithely assumed that the wind farm developments were managed and approved by governments in a responsible manner. Nothing could be further from the truth...

What I provide below is a tiny thumbnail sketch of what I have read in the mountain of documents that are freely available for the sake of transparency. There are hundreds if not thousands of instances where the words are sensitively (to use a particular EIS favourite) chosen to distort, deceive or mitigate (to use another favourite), and where an artful compounding affect is used to add wrongs together to make a right.

NSW Planning and Environment

NSW Planning and Environment too often creates a false impression of fairness but in doing so distorts the truth.

Here is just one simple example. In their assessment of the Biala Wind Farm NSW Planning says not once but twice in their submission to PAC supporting the application that there is wide regional interest in this project. Whereas the reality is that 38 of the 39 pubic submissions objected to the proposal, many from more than 50 km away. The real truth is that there is wide regional opposition to Biala. The Department is not telling it like it is. I can only suppose this is because community opinion does not matter to them and public consultation is merely a diplomatic exercise (more about that later).

You know that I could give you pages and pages of such convenient distortions.

I object to the way the Department conducts its business and slants their assessments in favour of the wind farm proponent.

The Wind Industry

The Wind Industry must be having a great laugh at NSW taxpayers expense because they seem to have the NSW government wrapped around their little finger. An EIS is a minor impediment to the honey pot of riches. Just jump through the familiar hoops. Job done. Approval guaranteed.

All that is needed to create a wind farm opportunity are willing hosts, nearby transmission lines in a shard of open country and a Development Application. Is it an accident that the Jupiter DA is a blank form signed by the proponent and dated October 2016? Fill in the blanks later perhaps?

After the DA is done make a few phone calls to the usual group of consultants and an EIS that can ruin lives is underway.

The reality is that wind farm proponents are free to put wind turbines any where they choose as long as they tick the right boxes, kowtow to a prescribed game plan and mitigate their way through the tricky bits with sensitive micro siting of turbines and mitigating tree plantings. Then they bribe the gullible with the promise of money. Get others to sign noise agreements. Job done. And if there is anyone left standing buy them out.

You all should watch the 1993 movie called " No where to run" - you would enjoy the similarities. It is also a B class movie...

The EIS Consultants

Consultants move money past each other through a revolving door. You do this, I'll do that and we'll all get lots of work doing so called independent assessments using the same software, the same monitoring equipment and the same dated databases so that we can draw the same conclusions - that the impacts, what ever they might be, are tolerable.

I object to the way the consultants sweep issues away by planting a few tree or offering so-called sensitive scenarios for controlling noise. And I'm sick of reading that there are no known health effects. No pun intended.

Here is a little gem from Jupiter: "... the Proponent will endeavour to source a turbine model... that will operate in accordance with the noise compliance limits... the Proponent will at the same time also pursue landholder agreements to achieve noise compliance... [for scenario 1]."

Tell me how getting people to sign a legal document saying they will put up with whatever noise blows their way achieves noise compliance?

Another gem from Jupiter: "... public viewpoints... are dynamic with motorists travelling along the roads relatively quickly, reducing the duration of the view and hence the severity of the visual impact."

So the faster you drive the less the impact. I don't think so.

You know that I could give you pages and pages of these gems.

I object to the way the consultants can create a smoke and mirrors EIS using the same tactics over and over again.

The Jupiter Proponent: Epyc Pty Ltd

Jupiter Wind Farm epitomises all that is and has been wrong for a long time. Epyc is a wind farm developer with no credentials who will get all the time they need to jump the hoops - two bites at the cherry so far - to properly consult the community and relevant authorities. Something they should have nailed the first time around. And still haven't.

Maybe the usual consultants are getting a bit complacent or bored or perhaps dizzy in that revolving door?

I talked with the Project Manager from Epyc early in the process back in 2014 and can only say that the undisguised contempt for the affected community, whom they had labelled and dismissed as anti wind farm campaigners, even way back then, is a travesty. Except that it is not funny.

Some of the things the project manager said to me were: People don't have to look at the wind turbines... modern turbines make minimal noise... the project area is sparsely populated grazing land... we have no obligation to follow the NSW guidelines, they are only a draft... our intentions are to get to the EIS stage as quickly as possible and after that we may or may not develop the wind farm... it depends on the choice and number of turbines and what gets approved, but we are experts in this.

I objected to that attitude then and I still do now.

Epyc's behaviour is shameful.

Please take a moment to read Epic newsletters and the minutes of the CCC meetings to see how this attitude has persisted and worsened throughout this process.

So What Happens Next?

Based on past assessments NSW Planning will recommend the project to PAC with extra conditions, leaving no doubt that they have assessed the EIS thoroughly. But not necessarily objectively.

There will be some soft pruning of the project, a few extra conditions will be imposed by PAC leaving no doubt they too assessed the EIS. Epyc will likely get at least two more bites at the cherry to mitigate their way out of trouble against a battle weary community. And if there happens to be any one left standing they will be instructed to buy them out.

Then with a 100% past approval rating it is full steam ahead...

I am ashamed and sickened by the whole process.

Brenda Gerrie

12 February 2017