

I oppose the Jupiter wind farm on the grounds of inadequate bushfire risk assessment.

I am an active member of the Boro-Mt Fairy Rural Fire Brigade and I have seen first hand, the fires that have impacted on this community in November 2016 and January 2017.

And yet, in the EIS, the authors have attempted to predict that the area is predominantly of low fire risk and the roads built around the wind turbines will assist ground support in dealing with fires. There are two problems with these assertions:

- This region has just experienced two large fires (and two smaller fires) – perhaps EPYC might like to revise their likelihood of fire in the area
- Aerial fire fighting was key to minimising damage

Timing of EIS in bushfire season

Why did EPYC release the Jupiter EIS so it would be on exhibition at the height of the fire risk season?

Why did the DoPE allow the Jupiter EIS to be released at a time when large portions of the affected community could and were tied up fighting fires and dealing with the aftermath of the fires?

What does this reveal about their knowledge of the fire risk to our community? It shows a lack of knowledge about the community in which EPYC is attempting to place wind turbines. Such lack of knowledge is a reflection of the company's inadequate consultation. The Department gave us 2 weeks extra to submit our objections, but our fire fighters lost many days fighting local and neighbouring fires. Some even served further afield at the Sir Ivan Fire. And that's just the acute phase. The post fire phase consists of blacking out, repairing properties, dealing with the emotional side of the trauma, fund raising, Blaze Aid support etc. These survival activities are incompatible with writing submissions to protect oneself against a future threat of wind turbines.

Elvis can't go there

If the Jupiter wind turbines are allowed to be built, they will further inhibit the community's ability to fight fires. Two of the recent fires were stopped with the help of aerial support. I understand that aerial support will be the 'go to' approach of the future in the case of larger or potentially damaging fires and the presence of 173m high wind turbines with residences between parts of the wind farm, will complicate this process. We have one instance of a fire that covered only a few hundred square meters near a house, that was controlled by highly timely action by helicopters. Without that intervention, that house would have been under threat and a much larger fire could have resulted. Much closer to home during the Cullendooley Fire was the fire retardant released by the DC10 just north of our property, effectively protecting us. In the December 16 Lower Boro Fire, I witnessed a DC10 releasing fire retardant to the level of the treeline. The proposed turbines tower over that treeline, so together with smoke, the DC10 would not have been able to protect that area and may have required a substantial set off distance for safety reasons, both for the plane and for the turbines. Had the Jupiter towers been present during the last two fires, the damage to property and people could have been very much worse.

Lost in transit: one meeting

5.1 EPYC and ERM, their consultants, have documented 'Consultation with the former Palerang Local Government Area (Lake George office) Fire Control Centre was undertaken on Tuesday 6 January 2015 to discuss initial assessment and management recommendations'. Consultation is a vague term that one could easily misconstrue as being a meeting. A recent GIPAA request has revealed that this consultation or meeting has no RFS documentation. It doesn't matter how one looks at this result, it is not a good look for EPYC/ERM. Where's the evidence that the consultation occurred? If the answer is it was informal and not minuted, that shows the developer's lack of understanding of the area and the fire risk. It also shows a gross disrespect of the community who lives here.

Wind farms start fires

One of the recent fires, the Currandooley Fire, started at a wind farm (Capital). This is fact. It is not disputed. What is disputed is how that fire started. I understand the matter is before the Coroner. This fire has drawn people in the community who were pro-wind farm or neutral, and firmly placed them in the opposed camp. We now know that had the Capital Wind Farm not existed, the Currandooley Fire that destroyed approximately 3000 hectares and one house, would not have occurred. The community now knows that wind farms cause fires.