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10 June 2015

The Honourable Rob Stokes MP
NSW Minister for Planning
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister Stokes

**RE: APPROVED MAJOR PROJECT APPROVAL NUMBER MP06_0315
WELLINGTON GAS FIRED POWER STATION**

In response to increasing community concern, including a petition over ERM Power's proposed gas fired power station for Wellington, Council resolved to conduct a fact finding tour of both the Uranquinty and Oaky power plants. A number of Councillors and community members have subsequently visited both sites. As a result Council, on behalf of the Wellington community, has felt it necessary to formulate a response which is contrary to its previously stated position.

The following issues of concern have been identified:

1. Noise level predictions
2. Terrain and prevailing weather conditions
3. Proximity of the proposed plant to the Wellington township
4. Economic impact.

Noise Level Predictions

Whilst it is understood that the Concove method of calculating predicted noise levels is an internationally recognised standard and used by Parsons Brinckerhoff to simulate predicted noise levels at Wellington, mistakes, errors or omissions can occur. This is evidenced by the outcome at Uranquinty where noise level outcomes were found to be substantially higher at a nominated receptor than those predicted. This resulted in the acquisition of this property along with a number of others by the proponent.

Terrain and Prevailing Weather Conditions

The two sites we visited have the respective plants situated on a broad level plain. Indeed the more recent plants of Braemar and Neerabup built by ERM have similar terrain characteristics. By ERM's own admission they have not constructed a plant within terrain characteristics to those of the proposed Wellington site which is typically undulating to hilly. The effects of such terrain on noise levels is unclear and difficult to determine with any degree of accuracy.

Prevailing weather conditions are also a concern. Again, most of the plants with the excretion of Uranquinty are built in areas which would not normally expect extended periods of low level cloud cover or experience fogs. Typically these conditions are experienced in the Wellington valley, particularly during the winter months. Evidence from Uranquinty is that cloud cover has a significant effect on noise levels to the extent that the plant is not used once a certain cloud level density is reached.

Proximity to Wellington Township

The proposed position of the Wellington plant is 1.9 kilometres from the north eastern edge of the township. This places it far closer to an urban area than either Uranquinty (3 kilometres) or Oaky (4.4 kilometres).

Economic Impact

Should a situation arise subsequent to the plants construction whereby noise levels exceed those predicted and this has a direct or perceived impact on the Wellington township a significant detrimental economic impact would be expected. Wellington's economy has suffered from regional and rural adjustment characterised in the Australian economy in the past 40 years. As a result we experience a declining population and a struggling retail sector.

An emerging strength for our local economy is to attract people who are being forced out of the increasingly expensive property markets of Dubbo, Mudgee and Orange and who are seeking a quiet country lifestyle within commuting distance to major regional centres. A power station on the edge of Wellington does not help to foster this opportunity.

In summary Council now deems the risks associated with this project in its current form outweigh any likely economic benefit to the community. Council is not opposed to the construction of this plant within the Local Government Area but would stipulate that it not be built within an 8 kilometre radius of an urbanised area.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rod Buhr', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Clr Rod Buhr
MAYOR