

Submission on proposed Rye Park Wind Farm

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Overriding concern

Should a wind farm be allowed to have such impact on a village and community like Rye Park and surrounds?

Why impose this divisive operation on a small, country community when there are sites, not centred on existing communities, which would be free from the majority of problems foreseen during a protracted construction period?

We question the basic design of the wind farm which spreads a small number of turbines over a large area rather than a concentration of more turbines in a much smaller area, with the impact in the construction phase minimised on a community.

The area has limited capacity to mount a solid defence against the location of the proposed wind farm.

The quality of life for those close to the Rye Park village will be seriously reduced over an extended period of time without direct intervention from the NSW government.

It would be foolish to underestimate the damage already done to the community in terms of splitting it into one of two camps – those who benefit financially and those who don't (yet would have to put up with at least two years of major inconvenience).

The 'incident' at the Rye Park Hall late last year, no matter how unpleasant and inappropriate, is a clear indicator that there would be problems imposing such an unnecessary change.

General Issues

- The fragility of the Rye Park- Dalton Road, Boorowa –Rye Park Road and Lagoon Creek Road and the traffic level on the proposed route to Boorowa from the Hume highway.
- The significant level of interruption and delays to regular local traffic, school buses, commuters to Yass/Young/Cowra/Canberra, etc.
- Timely access to the local area by emergency services

Commuting to Canberra from Rye-Park for six days a week for four and a half years, either via Wargeila Road, Dalton-Rye Park Road, or the Rye Park Road to Boorowa, depending on the weather and road conditions has provided a good overview of road conditions.

In our view the fragility and capacity of the local road system is being seriously underestimated in terms of the impact of a significant change in vehicle use.

A high standard upgrade to the road system to ensure robustness during the proposed construction period of 2 years is not being contemplated.

The combination of the heavy volume and weight of traffic damaging the roads and the maintenance work required to repair them will cause regular interruption to normal traffic in the area over a two year plus period. Opportunities for overtaking slow traffic are quite limited and will either lead to dangerous overtaking situations or very unwelcome delays in trip time.

The soft shoulders of the Boorowa – Rye Park Road need to be avoided in a significant number of sections for safe driving and there are narrow sections of the road where accident risk is higher.

Sections of the road require very regular maintenance as some sealed sections have a tendency to break into dangerous pot holes under light traffic following heavy rain.

Lagoon Creek Road is scarcely a road –more like a dust track in dry weather and vulnerable to flooding with a quickly degenerating surface in wet weather. There are also distinct limits on how much widening of the road is possible. In recent years the road was closed for some weeks following heavy rain.

The section of unsealed Rye Park –Dalton Road up to the Cook(s) Hill turn is not robust at all and the usual time it remains ‘tolerable’ after grading is not that many weeks. Preparation for sealing this section would pose major delays for commuter traffic to Yass and beyond. The underground composition is not suitable for quick fix sealing. In the past, sealing smaller sections of the road in any one year has minimised traffic delays.

The standard required for enduring seal on this section of road is unlikely to be funded by a profit driven enterprise. Leaving the road in no worse condition than it is now is not really much to look forward to.

Personal Issue

We have lived on a property at Rye Park for just over just over six years, prior to retiring from working in Canberra about two years ago.

The location of the house was chosen in significant part for the peaceful setting. The proposed wind farm would have a major impact on our quality of life during the two year plus construction period.

We are located on the corner of Lagoon Creek Road at the northern end. Lagoon Creek Road runs around the property in a small radius semi-circle so we have wide exposure to traffic on the road from areas near the house.

Two or more years of construction traffic and all that entails would no longer make this property a retirement choice.

In dry conditions, dust winds result from the usual light traffic on Lagoon Creek Road.

The proposal to keep the road damp would simply compound the problem of high frequency heavy traffic on the road.

We have been unable to sell the property in the last year and a half but there have been two notable incidents:

One agreed sale fell through after we had signed the sale contract and another interested party pulled out citing the risk associated with the proposed wind farm (documentation available).

A US study of long term impacts on property prices has no relevance to anyone selling property in Rye Park in 2016 and such references in the Trustpower submissions are disingenuous.

Only recently did we realise the significance of the role of access points on Lagoon Creek Road during the construction period.

We had not been listed by Epuron as the owners of our property and until recently the misinformation on ownership was also held by Trustpower.

A Trustpower representative did visit this year after we contacted them and the use of Lagoon creek Road was presented as not negotiable.

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