

## Submission in Relation to Cumulative Impacts of the Flyers Creek Windfarm

Chapter 17 – Cumulative Impacts, of the Flyers Creek Environmental Assessment notes;

The Department of Planning's Guideline for wind energy states that: *"Cumulative impacts may result from a number of activities with similar impacts interacting with the environment in a region. They may also be caused by the synergistic and antagonistic effects of different individual impacts interacting with each other and may be due to temporal or spatial characteristics of the activities' impacts."*

In the executive summary on page S-13, the (EA) states,

*The main cumulative impact of multiple wind farm developments for the region is likely to be related to the combined visual impact of the wind farms at locations where more than one wind farm is visible. Flyers Creek Wind Farm is about eight kilometres to the north-west of the existing Blayney Wind Farm which comprises fifteen Vestas 660kW wind turbines. Due to distance, vegetation and/or topographic features, the cumulative visual impact is considered to very minor as discussed in Chapter 17.*

*Cumulative noise impacts from wind farms are not significant unless residences are within about 3 kilometers of both projects. As the Blayney and Flyers Creek projects are 8km apart, cumulative acoustic impact will not be an issue."*

It is considered that the environmental assessment (EA) has grossly under reported on the potential cumulative impact of the Flyers Creek Windfarm as negligible consideration has been given to the already present effect of the Cadia Mining Operation which flanks the NW sector of the proposal.

This section of the submission provides a brief summary of the Flyers Creek Environment with respect to industrial usage, highlights erroneous statements made within chapter 17 of the (EA) and highlights the likely cumulative impacts not addressed by the (EA).

The Flyers Creek district is in general a picturesque rural setting, classified as 1A general rural zone within the Blayney Shire. The northern portion of the district hosts a majority of smaller "hobby farm" rural residences and retirees while the southern or down stream portion of the district is host to larger pastoral rural enterprises. These small rural holdings are on land upon which Blayney Shire Council has allowed to be subdivided in an effort to encourage people to settle into the area. This has worked very efficiently in my view. People within the district value the tranquillity and view of the rural setting. In addition, the Flyers Creek district is also host to the Cadia Mine Operations which was recently granted approval for a significant expansion. The mining operation will border the western portion of the proposed wind farm (see Figure 1). We believe there should only be a limited amount of industrial scale use of such a rural landscape and as such would have concern over the cumulative effects of both the mine and the windfarm, particularly so for residences that are situated in between the two in terms of noise and visual amenity.

The total area of the Cadia Mine Lease is approximately 5,500 hectares (13,600 acres) and the total approximate project area of the proposed flyers Creek windfarm is 6,000 hectares (14,800 acres). This is an approximate total of 11,500 hectares (28,400 acres) attributed to industrial land use in close proximity within an otherwise tranquil rural environment. There are very few rural landholdings that are greater than 500 hectares (1,200 acres) within the Flyers Creek district, and these are generally located within the far south. At their closest, the Cadia Valley mining lease and Flyers Creek Windfarm project are as little as 1km apart.

There are a number of small rural holdings that occur within the thin corridor between the Cadia Valley Mine Operation and the proposed Flyers Creek Windfarm.

There are several erroneous or misleading statements made within chapter 17 of the (EA). On page 17-3, section 17.4 paragraph 1, the (EA) states;

*"The Cadia Mine, owned and operated by Newcrest Mining Ltd, is located about eight kilometres north-west of the Flyers Creek Wind Farm project."*

This statement is misleading as the mining lease and proposed Flyers Creek Wind Farm project boundaries are within 1km of each other.

On page 17-3, section 17.4 paragraph 1, the (EA) also states;

“As the activities of the mine and the windfarm are so different, it is considered that the Flyers Creek project has a negligible cumulative impact in conjunction with Cadia Mine’s activities.”

The sheer consideration that on the basis of differing activities there will be negligible impact is in direct contradiction with the Department of Planning’s Guideline for wind energy which as the (EA) has already indicated, states that: *“Cumulative impacts may result from a number of activities with similar impacts interacting with the environment in a region. They may also be caused by the synergistic and antagonistic effects of different individual impacts interacting with each other and may be due to temporal or spatial characteristics of the activities’ impacts.”*

The above statement also suggests that a proper investigation into the potential cumulative effects of both the mine and wind farm on behalf of the proponent may not even have taken place.

Such close proximity between large areas of industrial land use and much smaller rural holdings will have the following cumulative impacts;

1. There is the strong possibility of the Flyers Creek district becoming over industrialised should the Flyers Creek Windfarm be approved. The Cadia Valley Mine has recently been granted approval for a significant expansion (Cadia East Project Project Approval 2010). In what is considered a tranquil rural setting, the addition of another industrial activity on top of the already expanding Cadia mine site will result in over industrialisation of the Flyers Creek district. The land areas of the Cadia mine together with the proposed Flyers Creek windfarm dwarf the areas of rural holdings in the area. Many of the smaller rural landholdings of the upper Flyers Creek district have purchased due to the current rural setting of the district. A likely over industrialised perception of the area will likely lead to significantly reduced land values and contests the very reason for which families have resided to the area over the previous decade.
2. There is the possibility of additional cumulative industrial noise within the upper Flyers Creek district due to a. the current Cadia Mine Operation and b. the Flyers Creek Windfarm. When addressing the cumulative effects of the Blayney wind farm with the proposed Flyers Creek wind farm (Section 17.3, page 17-2, paragraph 2) the Flyers Creek (EA) states, *“Cumulative acoustic impact would only be a material issue if residences were located within about three kilometres of turbines from both projects”*. There are a number of residences that are within three kilometres of Cadia Valley mine and proposed turbines for the Flyers Creek Windfarm project. Given that, it would seem likely that there would be a material cumulative acoustic impact for residences located within about three kilometres of turbines from the Flyers Creek Wind Farm and Cadia Valley Mine. This possibility has not been addressed within the Flyers Creek Environmental Assessment. It should be noted that some landholder residences that border the eastern and south eastern flanks of the Cadia Mine lease have several noise related issues since the granting of the projects expansion early in 2010, and therefore, it will be inevitable that the wind farm would only add to this issue. It should also be noted of a recent SA Supreme Court decision to uphold an appeal where AGL’s Hallett 2 wind farm has been found to have breached SA noise guidelines upon which the NSW guidelines are based.
3. It is likely that the Flyers Creek Windfarm will have a cumulative effect on visual amenity for residences that already have visual amenity decreased due to the Cadia Valley Mine. This will be further exacerbated for residences that in addition to the Mine will also suffer decreased visual amenity due to the proposed windfarm. While the Flyers Creek EA notes the potential visibility of the Cadia Mine from some parts within and near the Flyers Creek project, it fails to make note of whether this observation has been investigated/consulted or not and therefore whether or not it is of any significance.

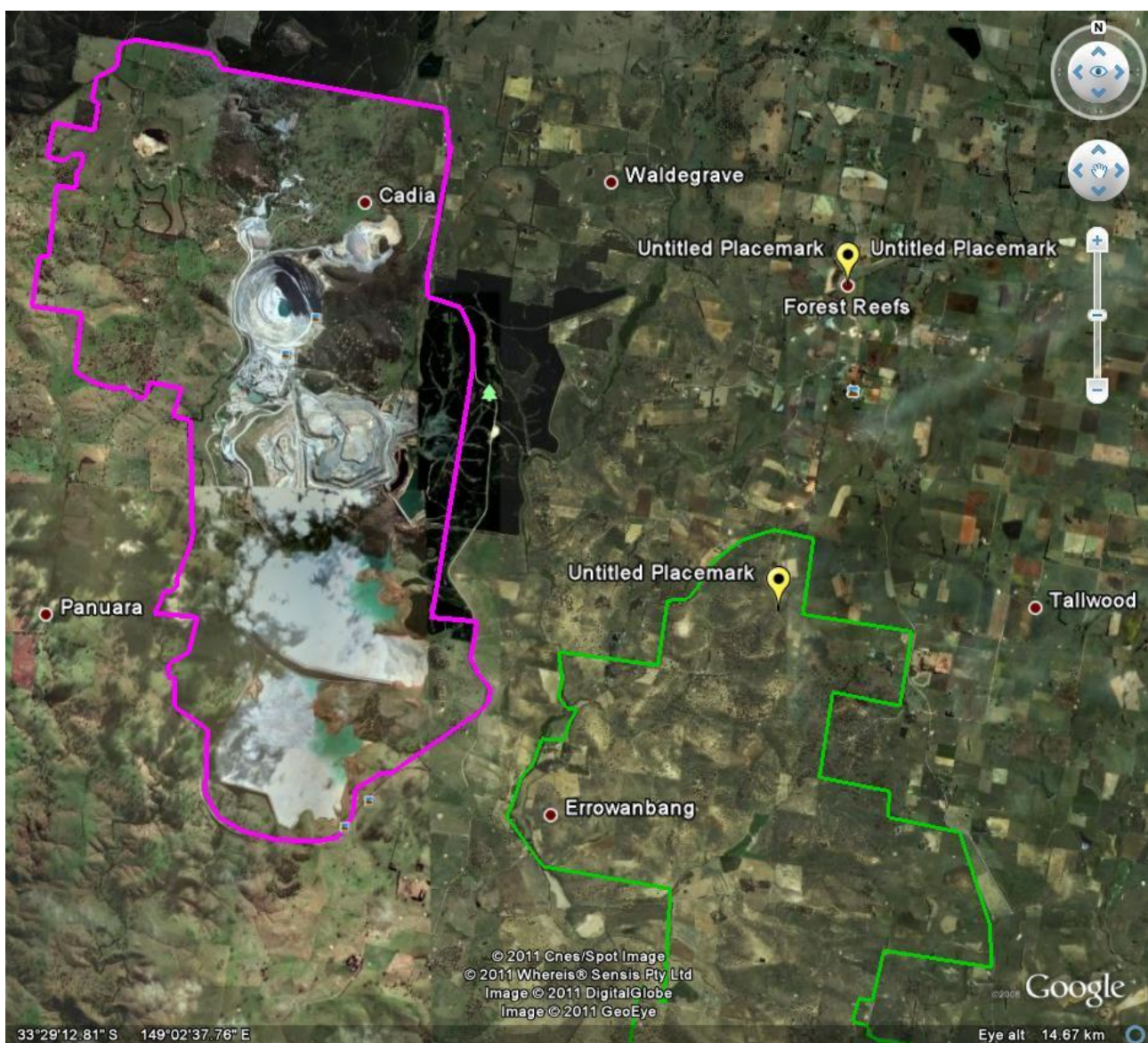
In summary, it is considered that the environmental assessment (EA) for the Flyers Creek windfarm has significantly failed to properly address the cumulative impact of the Flyers Creek Windfarm with other industrial activity currently taking place within the immediate Flyers Creek district.

It is suggested that only a limited amount of industrialisation should be allowed over a rural setting and that a suitable minimum buffer should be enforced between wind turbines and residences/schools as well as the noise guidelines which currently determine the proximity of turbines from residences so that pre-existing residences/schools can have a reasonable level of protection.

Information sources

1. Cadia East Project – Project Approval Section 75J of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, January 2010, The Hon Tony Kelly MLC, Minister for Planning.

Figure 1. Google Earth image dated June 2010 highlighting the proximity of the Cadia Valley Mining and processing operations (pink outline) with the proposed Flyers Creek windfarm project (green outline). Field of view is approximately 17km across.



( 17km )