

22/10/2017

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to lodge my concerns about the modifications to the Coppabella Wind Farm SSD-6698.

My first concern is the increased clearing of native vegetation from 68.3 hectares to 180.9 hectares. The vegetation includes White Box, Yellow Box, and Red Gum in an endangered ecological area. The area to be cleared is vulnerable to erosion, the removal of more vegetation will increase the risk of erosion. It is my understanding that the Coppabella's are prone to erosion because of the gradient and soil type being very fragile, land clearing would only increase the risk of land erosion and land degradation. Once this has occurred it is extremely difficult to repair the land and prevent further degradation. The occurrence of such an event would render the land useless for ongoing use in agriculture and/or any other use. Mitigation strategies are discussed the success of these strategies are variable. Offsets in other locations do not help the involved site.

My second concern is related to the increase in size of the wind turbines, the increase in size from 150m to 171m will further impede the ability of local community to enjoy the pristine natural landscape that currently exists in the area. The increase in size will create more of a burden on the landscape affecting land values and peoples enjoyment of the natural environment. The visual impact assessment of 3.4km is inadequate due to the size of the structures. My residence is 18km from the site and will have direct sight of the majority of the project. The main aspect of view is directly at the project site. With scattered tree obstructing some turbines. Our residence was not assessed in the EIS as we are outside of the 3.4km range. However the project will greatly affect our views. The lighting at night will also be a burden on our quiet enjoyment of our environment. A concern is around bird life being impacted, a mitigation strategy is spoken of in the EIS. This strategy is the removal of carcasses from the area, who is responsible for this? I highly doubt that people will be employed to remove carcasses from the area for the life of the project, the size of the site would also mean the undertaking of this strategy would need to be on a significant scale. Is this achievable and realistic?

My final concern is regarding fire risk. The EIS has no mention of fire mitigation strategies. My concern is how does the project plan on mitigating the risk of fire during construction, maintenance and equipment failure once the project is operational? Does the project have a plan to safely remove staff from the site if there is a fire? The Coppabella's are in an area that is prone to fires and the land formations means firefighting access is difficult and exit from the mountains is also difficult. This may compromise the safety of project staff and surrounding communities.

Thank you for your time, I hope my concerns are taken into consideration when making your decision.

Yours sincerely

Christie de Mestre