

Catherine BALL
484 Bowmans Creek Road
Bowmans Creek NSW 2330
9th May 2021

Bowmans Creek Wind Farm SSD-10315

**Re: OBJECTION TO PROPOSED STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT (SSD) NO. 10315 –
BOWMANS CREEK WIND FARM – Construction of up to 60 wind turbines 220m height**

I would like to **object** to the proposed Application **No.SSD-10315** NSW Government, Major Projects, Department of Planning and Environment. This project is a controlled action under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999* **EPBC 2020/8631**. Singleton Shire, Muswellbrook Shire and Upper Hunter Shire councils are within the proposed SSD boundary.

I own and occupy Lot 1 DP 1167323, 484 Bowmans Creek Road, Bowmans Creek, NSW, 2330. This site has an area of 1.029 Ha and 150m of road frontage to Bowmans Creek Road. The building I reside in is an Old Catholic Church listed at Singleton Council as Local Land Heritage: Singleton LEP Schedule No.156. Mr William Schmierer, my Great Grandfather, built the Catholic Church in 1902. The church and site have strong historical association with the early settlers of the area and in particular the five generations of the Ball family (including myself), who provided the land, worshipped and maintained the church and land for 118 years. As stated in Appendix Q EIS the population of Bowmans Creek is 8 people. My home is named S17-2 (non-associated) in the EIS.

I strongly object to the SDD-10315 Bowmans Creek Wind Farm for the following reasons:

Loss of Visual amenity – Landscape and Visual

- Bowmans Creek is one of the last untouched rural valleys in the Hunter and is pristine cattle country, probably some of the best grass fed beef in Australia and beyond.
- Loss of visual amenity due to the construction of 25 wind turbines surrounding my property. Reference: *Bowmans Creek Wind Farm EIS, Appendix H*. See attached photo 1 and 3
- I will be able to see at least 25 Wind Turbines from my front door and a total of 8 turbines within 3 Km from my property. 25 turbines in 3 x 60 degree segments will be visible and surround my home. The view of 220m turbines towering over my home will be unbearable and a great disruption to my visual landscape that is situated along the creek line of the Bowmans Creek valley and with ridgeline views. Reference: *Bowmans Creek Wind Farm EIS, Appendix H pg.187*.
- Proximity to wind Turbines; my home will be 1.7km from Turbine 9, Turbine 10 is 2.0 km and Turbine 8 is 1.8km near Yellow Rock. A further 5 Wind turbines are very close to being within 3km and another 6 Wind Turbines (west) are just over 4.4km away from my home. Also I will see a further 10 wind turbines to the west, **making a total of 25 wind turbines in my view**. Reference: *Bowmans Creek Wind Farm EIS, Appendix H pg.187*.
- Blade flicker at my home will be anywhere from 14:59hrs 52 day per year, 20 minutes a day. I find these results unacceptable to normal visual amenity. I note that the same flicker will occur with moon rising and setting causing an unnatural appearance and flicker. The surrounding landscape at times will have a serious strobe effect in certain areas causing driving difficulties and distraction and possible health effects. I would like further calculation for my property with the removal of Turbines 9 and 10 and Turbine 8 removed or setback to see if there is any improvement on these unrealistic results.
- Blade Glint will also cause disruption to the visual landscape.

- As my home is Local Government listed as Heritage LEP No.156 and according to Green Beam Design page 50 EIS my home should be Level 1 SENSITIVITY (High) and this does not seem to be considered in the design of the wind turbines.
- Green Beans Visual performance Objectives pg.188-191. I agree to have Turbines 9 and 10 removed as they have unacceptable visual and noise impact. I would like to have all Turbines closer than 3.1km to my home removed from the project. Green Beam mention that "I have some degree of screening" pg.188 but these trees are not on my property so I have no control over them and will most likely be removed for underground power line and road widening construction. Further to that road alterations are proposed in the EIS along this area and the trees will be removed for access of over sized vehicles and blades transport. So I conclude it will be unlikely for any level of screening to exist in the east or south view of my home after construction and I will look out my front door to see 6 Turbines.
- Further to having all turbines removed from a 3.1km radius to my home I would prefer to have no wind turbines in any of the 60 degrees segments. I would like Turbines No.26-31 set back outside my view and sound range, at least 5km setback would mitigate the some of the problems associated with this construction.
- Night-lights installed on the Wind Turbines will have a negative affect on this night landscape. There is no night-light in this area and the landscape will be lit up like a Christmas tree along the ridge tops. I request that no night light be installed on the wind turbines or any other construction.
- Oz Ark states (pg39) that any road works will be on the opposite side of the road (this is where a trees line exists). This southern tree line is being used in the EIS to mitigate my visual issues to the south. When the road is widened Fig 39 the trees will be removed. I will then clearly see 6 wind Turbines from my front door. This contradiction in the EIS needs to be addressed and investigated.
- The surrounding landscape will turn from beautiful countryside to an industrial development. The development does not "fit" in with the landscape.
- The EIS states on pg.311 "The assessment concludes that there will be no impact on LEP listed items", this is misinformation and my property will be heavily impacted by way of visual, traffic, noise, dust, vibration and heritage significance. Further studies and more precise information needs to be collected so a thorough analysis can be concluded.

Historic Heritage

- My home S17-2 is a Local Land Heritage of Singleton Council LEP No.156. The history of this Church and former school is over 120 years long. The Roman Catholic Church of **Our Lady of Perpetual Help** (Succour) was opened (and possibly consecrated) in 1902 by Bishop James Murray. From 1902 to 1973 church services and community missions took place regularly. Mass was said once a month at Bowmans Creek. Locals could rotate between the country churches each week if they were sufficiently dedicated. Other nearby churches was at Glennies Creek and Ravensworth. A newspaper cutting from 1925² gives the Mass times for the parochial District of Singleton indicates that of the 7800 population there were 1800 Catholics. It notes that as part of the Parish, **Our Lady of Perpetual Succour**, Goorangoola, opened in 1902, had Mass celebrated on every second month and Christian Doctrine classes were held every Sunday. Ref. Statement of Heritage Impact, 2017 Sally Flannery, Orbit Planning, Heritage Consultant. I will attach the full document (24pages) that fully describes the heritage of my home (as requested from Singleton Council 2017).
- Singleton Council issued an Occupation Certificate for this heritage listed home in July 2019.
- The building was formally listed as Heritage in May 2017 based on the criteria listed below. With the support of Council and NSW Department of Planning & Environment the former Roman Catholic Church has recently been listed as a heritage item under Schedule 5 of Singleton Local Environmental Plan (SLEP) 2013. The SLEP amendment was accompanied by a detailed heritage assessment prepared by Carste Studio Pty Ltd. The

Assessment of Heritage Significance included a 'Statement of Significance' that assessed the building against the NSW Heritage Office criteria, and stated:

"The church was erected in 1902 by Mr. William Schmierer, Great Grandfather of the present owner for the local Roman Catholic residents, on land owned by the Ball family. The site and former church building are historically significant as a privately owned and constructed Roman Catholic Church. (Criteria a).

The church and site have strong historical association with the early settlers of the area and in particular the four generations of the Ball family who not only provided the land, but also worshipped in and maintained the building. Other families who were strongly associated with the site and building were the Bowmans Creek Marshall family, and the Catholic families on Campbells Creek – the Sattler, Cooper and Ritter families, and the Kinzigs of Dry Creek. The Church has a strong service association with the St Patrick's Parish of Singleton and St Catherine's College, whose youth Group used the building for retreat camps from 1979 to 1984. The Redemptorist priests from the broader Roman Catholic Church used the church for Retreats and Mission. (Criteria b.)

The building is a Simple Carpenter Gothic rural church building, with gable roofed Nave and Vestry annexe. In its setting, located on a flat beside the creek and low down in a valley, with a background of trees along the creek route, the building has landmark qualities. While it is not now used as a church, it still retains the identifiable characteristics of the bush church. (Criteria c.)

The place has several layers of importance for its social value as a meeting place for the dispersed rural community, its use as a School for a short period of time and ongoing weekly religious instruction as well as a place for religious retreats by the Redemptorist priests, a venue for St Catherine's College Youth Group camps, and its importance as a worship centre for the Roman Catholic community of the Bowmans Creek area. (Criteria c.)

The bush carpentry methods are of interest, the workmanship employed in construction being of high quality. (Criteria d.)

In dispersed rural communities, the social focus was on Halls and churches, and in this area, there are very few remnants remaining, many buildings having fallen into disrepair through closure or lack of use through rural decline, and suffering from storm, flood and termite damage. Thus, this place is a rare remnant in the remote area of Singleton LGA. (Criteria e.)

The building is intact and retains much of its detailing and elements, including some of the movable elements associated with its church function. Some of these are not retained on site, but are stored locally. The interior timber walls, ceiling and floor and their finishes are in very good condition. The exterior requires some repairs, which are in the most part trim and painting. (Criteria f.)"

- The building met the criteria for heritage listing on a number of the criteria including criteria a, b, c, d e & f and was added to Schedule 5 of SLEP 2013 listed on 12 May 2017.
- I have sent the following documents by email to Anthony Ko (8/05/2021) For further information and I will attach to submission if possible, for further information:
 - Statement of Environmental Effect Lot 1 DP1167323 – Orbit Planning, November 2017 and
 - Statement of Heritage Impact – Caste STUDIO Pty Ltd, October 2017
- The above document validates the importance for Historic Heritage of my property and the surrounding area and how any disturbance will to the area affect this listing.

- I note that in the EIS has represented my home with misinformation. The photo on pg 23 Oz Ark is misinformation, as it was not listed as heritage at the time of the photograph (Google 2010). Further to that verbal quotes were inserted in the EIS from associated landowners about my home. If the contractors wanted to find out information about the property would not it be best practice to ask the owner and not people who are gaining advantage from this project.
- My home is 37 metres from the road corridor and will be heavily impacted by traffic, vibration and noise. It is a simple weatherboard construction without insulation.
- Oz Ark states (pg39) that any road works will be on the opposite side of the road (this is where a trees line exists). This tree line is being used in the EIS to mitigate my visual issues to the south but if the road is going to be widened then the trees will need to be removed. This contradiction in the EIS needs to be addressed.
- Oz Ark states road works will be 45m from my front door of my home; this is incorrect as shown in attached site plan of my home that states it is 37m to road corridor.
- Oz Ark incorrectly assumes “the development will not affect views from the heritage item”, I disagree.
- Oz Ark incorrectly assumes that “road-widening works will not affect the heritage item”, I disagree.
- Oz Ark incorrectly assumes “the development will not dominate the heritage item,” I disagree. See attached documents to support this.
Statement of Environmental Effect Lot 1 DP1167323 – Orbit Planning, November 2017 and
Statement of Heritage Impact – Caste STUDIO Pty Ltd, October 2017
- I request a detailed study to be done on my property regarding the heritage impacts and other issues that will impact my home. It is not sufficient to look at it from the road corridor, display an incorrect photo when it was not listed as heritage and ask associated stakeholders about the history. I really am surprised the lack of information and misinformation regarding this unique property within very close proximity to Turbines and road alterations.
- Loss of local heritage in the Bowmans Creek area; it is a unique historical place of European heritage from 1870’s. The area is dotted with wool sheds, dance hall, Blacksmiths shop, Local land Heritage Church (my home) as well as federation homesteads; the architecture provides many examples of a long history and settlement for over 150 years.

Increase Noise and Vibration

- Noise predictions indicate that levels will exceed current levels by a large amount. Epuron’s studies indicate I have a current background noise of 24 decibels; this will increase to over 34 decibels, generated from the turbine blades and other sound. Reference: EIS. This increase of noise will be unpleasant to live comfortably. The turbines will also generate very low frequencies that have been attributed to sleep disturbance. The World Health Organisation acknowledges that sleep disturbance contributes to chronic disease and child development issues.
- The noise and vibration from traffic during construction will be unbearable. My home is 37 metres from the road corridor. Traffic is 12 hours per day.
- Noise from turbines will affect people on the valley floor at a higher level than calculated. Most often the wind blows greater and constantly on the ridgelines and is calm in the valley floor (my home). This will increase sound levels at our homes greater than what I have been told.
- Noise, vibration and dust from road widening.
- I request a further noise study be taken from my property so a more accurate data set can be collected. The last data was recorded in one of the windiest times (in drought times a dominant westerly wind tends to blow more often and stronger as in the case of the sound recording taken at my address by SONUS end of 2019)
- Figure 39 states that 35 road separate road upgrades will occur over just 12 km distance from my home. 10 upgrades will occur within 2km of my driveway, 3 road upgrades will

occur at my driveway entrance, within 37m from my front door. This will cause noise, vibration, dust, water pollution, dangerous driving condition and increased traffic.

- I request further studies to understand the full impacts of these road upgrades. I disagree strongly that I will not be impacted by these large scale road works.

Increased Traffic

- Increase of traffic on Bowmans Creek Road during construction and management (up to 50 years)
- Risk to local residents using roads while construction is occurring.
- The Project is expected to generate 282 total trips in and out of the site for a period of 7-8 months. This will continue for 2 or 3 years during construction although the numbers will slightly decrease. Currently no more than 10 vehicle trips are recorded per day. This is close to a 300 times increasing in traffic.
- The local roads will not withstand this type of vehicle movement and increase traffic movement.
- Road upgrades within 37m of my property. 35 road upgrades to Bowmans Creek Road and Albano Road. I use this road frequently and assume there will be long delays with such large-scale road works when travelling to Aberdeen and Singleton.
- The current conditions of the roads it will not be safe to generate this level of vehicle movement, even with upgrades.
- The roads in this area have not been constructed for that type of usage/weight and ratepayers will be left to repair problems left behind.
- Noise and vibration caused by traffic to my home that is 37m from the road corridor.
- Safety issues when leaving and entering my driveway.
- Increased dust and erosion of sealed and unsealed roads.
- In conclusion Bowmans Creek road and Albano Road are not suitable for site access to build the Wind Turbines. I request that an alternative access route be considered for the project.

Bushfire Risk

- Bushfire risk through ignition of turbines.
- Bushfire risk through loss of water bombing procedures from planes/helicopters due to height and placement of Turbines

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

- Loss of aboriginal heritage; song lines, aboriginal walking tracks (St Clair Reserve to Mt Arthur), disturbance of massacre sites and archaeological remnants. Destruction of unique sandstone cultural viewing platforms. Disturbance of song lines corridors along ridge tops.
- Areas around Bowmans Creek and Lincolns have high aboriginal significance. Proposed Underground cables are to be constructed in that area. My father found grinding stones and other unusual stones in the Lincolns creek in the 1980's. The area is surrounded by 300-year-old Grass trees – *Xanthorrhoea sp.* which holds great significance to Aboriginal culture. These trees will be heavily impacted with construction of access tracks.
- I request that further studies be done regarding Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. Several very important artefacts have been found along Bowmans Creek Road (Albano Road in EIS). Albano Road OS-01 (37-3-1587) recorded a selection of artefacts. This is an area where the EIS has noted road alterations and disturbance. There are also other important sites under Stony Creek Bridge – 3 coloured ochre (used in ceremonial events). This is also an area for alteration of roadway to allow over sized vehicles through the area. Further studies need to be undertaken before any road works could occur.

- Insufficient ground surface survey. As exposure is only 15% for 925Ha and ground visibility was 70% where the survey is only 10% of total area. More studies need to be conducted to get a better overall understanding.

Water

- Disturbance and destruction of waterways; streams, gullies and creeks to Bowmans Creek and tributaries, Stony Creek, Lincolns Creek, Glennies Creek and Hunter River catchments.

Biodiversity

- Flora and Fauna destruction; endangered species including Koala, Powerful Owl, Masked Owl, Spotted tailed Quoll, Eastern Bent winged-bat, Feathered tailed Glider, Speckled Warbler, Glossy Black Cockatoo and Little Lorikeet. *Cumberland Ecology* collected the data sets for flora and fauna for Epuron in the worst drought in 100 years giving highly inaccurate results.
- Further studies need to be carried out in more ordinary conditions to collect more accurate information.
- Raptor species such as Wedged-tailed Eagle have high population and live throughout the year from Bowmans Creek to Muswellbrook will be heavily impacted from blade kills. Falcons, Kites, Owls and Glossy Black Cockatoo as well as many bats and other bird species will also be impacted adversely.
- Offsets don't fix the destruction to this fragile ecosystem. This area is so fragile any disturbance has ongoing effects.
- The Powerful Owl studies were insufficient and need to be conducted under better/different time's conditions.

Community Consultation

- Community consultation to this point has been inadequate. I was not informed of the project or processes until February 2019, 4 months after community meetings. No letter drop when Epuron was visiting the local area on many occasions.
- Individual consultation inadequate through not providing written information, intimidation and pressure from Epuron. Basic lack of information.
- I have found the whole process stressful due to the lack of transparency about the project. I feel a lot of pressure was applied to sign an agreement before the EIS was released. I had no idea I would have an opportunity to remove Turbine 9 and 10 if a neighbour agreement was not agreed to, I was informed by Epuron in March 2021. If I had known this information earlier I would have found the process less stressful.
- Most people in Goorangoola area are not aware of the real impacts of the project.
- The Community has been split into two parts, those that agree and those that don't agree with the project. Suspicion and misinformation has become part of this community due to the project and its impacts on surrounding landowners.
- The many meetings with Epuron were not helpful to my understanding of the negative effects I will be impacted by this project. It was, more of a process in telling me what would happen, I felt like nothing was up for negotiation. The meeting were not a two-way conversation that would leave me more confused and stressed than before the meetings.

Economic

- Economically unfair. How is it possible for my neighbours to financially benefit from the Wind Turbines when the Turbines are closer and impacts greater to my dwelling than either of their residences? I feel like this isn't a "fair go for all." There is a small group of

people who will benefit financially and the rest of the community will suffer from the constant noise, traffic and visual pollution created.

House and property prices – difficulties selling

- Reduction of property prices and ability to sell for any reasonable price during and after construction.

When all the cumulative effects have been assessed this SSD project will negatively affect people in the Bowmans Creek, McCullys Gap, Muscle Creek, Rouchel and Hebden areas. The many effects will negatively impact my home by way of noise, traffic, vibration, pollution, visual landscape, turbine flicker, blade glint, night lights, loss of biodiversity, waterway disturbance, economics, increased bushfire risk and heritage.

The EIS is a large document of over 2000 pages and has taken many days to just briefly understand some of the impacts I will have to endure for 25 – 50 years. My reasons for objecting to this SSD project are not exclusive to the above mentioned. It will require many more days/weeks of reading and analysis to understand all of the impacts I will endure. I feel like the submission time is rather short for such a large project.

Thank you for considering my objection to the **PROPOSED STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT (SSD) NO. 10315 – BOWMANS CREEK WIND FARM – Construction of up to 60 wind turbines 220m height.** This development does not “fit” this tranquil rural community.

Yours Sincerely



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Photo 1 – Turbine No.8 View to south from front door (Photo supplied by Epuron December 2019)



Photo 2 - Local Land Heritage Former Catholic Church 1902 – 484 Bowmans Creek Road, Bowmans Creek



Photo 3 – View to west (Photo supplied by Epuron December 2019)

