

Name withheld
Address withheld
Kentucky NSW 2354

16th May 2022

Director – Energy Assessments
Development Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re Thunderbolt Wind Farm SSD-18087896

I am writing to **object** to the abovementioned proposal for the reasons included in the table below and I declare that I have not made any reportable political donations during the past two years.

Please note that due to time constraints, I have not yet been able to research and express my objections in full and I note my right to do this at a later date based on advice given by the Department of Planning on 28th April 2022.

Aspect	Objection
Landscape, visual and shadow flicker	Our house will be affected by shadow flicker in the late afternoon and during the evenings as the moon sets, impacting sleep as our bedroom is on the western side of our house, facing the proposed development.
Noise and vibration	<p>Our house will be affected by noise and vibration as the prevailing winds come from the west – the direction of the proposed development. Our bedroom is on the western side of our house, facing the proposed development, so sleep is likely to be significantly impacted by noise from the development.</p> <p>Our residence is coincidentally located ‘just’ outside the red line indicating the 35db level on the EIS maps.</p> <p>A noise logger was placed at our residence, but placed on the opposite side of the house to where the project will be located and where our bedrooms are located. This will corrupt the data significantly!</p> <p>Noise is known to travel for many km beyond the boundary of the wind farm in a tunnel like fashion, impacting residences many km away more than those that are closer.</p> <p>Of particular concern to us is infrasound. It is well-accepted scientifically that elephants and whales use infrasound to communicate over hundreds of kilometres. The larger the wind turbine, the greater the infrasound that is emitted. These towers are marine sized towers - the largest proposed on land in Australia, twice the MW of most towers and 100 m taller than most used to date. They will emit significant infrasound. Not enough research has been done on the impacts of infrasound on human health, but enough to know that it can cause headaches, nausea and sleeplessness. These symptoms impact mental health significantly. Mental health in rural areas is already a significant health and economic problem.</p> <p>I am a member of a local concerned group who have engaged an independent consultant to review the Neoen noise study contained in their EIS. Please refer to that assessment for further information.</p>

Biodiversity	<p>The proposal is located on Critically Endangered Ecological Community and has triggered the EPBC Act (1999).</p> <p>Many threatened and endangered species have been found on site in the EIS. The Koala is now an Endangered Species and they are located across the site. Neoen should be required to re-submit their EIS based on the new declaration. Impacting them in any way beyond them co-existing with a properly implemented grazing regime is not acceptable.</p> <p>As ecosystems are communities of flora, fauna and soil microbiomes, the 'mitigation' techniques Neoen propose are completely inadequate.</p> <p>This ecological community is already critically endangered. The destruction or damage of critically endangered ecosystems cannot and should not be 'offset'. Critically Endangered Ecosystems should be protected at all cost, as they are some of the last of their kind and cannot be recreated. Doing so would destroy natural heritage, natural capital and our economic future. That a 'renewable' energy project should make such a proposal is preposterous. I hope the irony of this is not lost on the Department of Planning.</p> <p>Neoen's suggestions in the EIS for how to 'encourage wildlife to move on' from habitat trees that will need to be removed is scandalous and I propose, criminal.</p> <p>Farmers are subjected to strict laws regarding the health and welfare of their livestock, for example with transport to market. If a farmer was caught 'shaking' a tree with heavy machinery causing wildlife to fall to their death or sustain serious injury, the RSPCA would be quick to get involved and the farmer would face gaol. Developers should be subjected to the same laws as farmers regarding animal health and welfare.</p>
Traffic and transport	<p>This project will cause massive disruption along New England Highway which is my route to work every day and our child's route to school every day via the school bus. The noise and dust generated by the extra traffic will impact our residence which is relatively close to the highway, as well as the health and well-being of our farm animals which are essential to our productivity levels, financial well-being, and contribution to the local economy.</p>
Aboriginal cultural heritage	<p>I believe the study of cultural heritage was inadequate and did not properly involve the appropriate members of the Anaiwan and Kamilaroi nations. I despair that the large roads indicated on the maps in the EIS are impacting directly on significant aboriginal artefact scatters and yet the local aboriginal nation is unlikely to know about this.</p>
Aviation safety	<p>The proposal is on the commercial flight path of the Armidale to Sydney flights and lights are likely to be required on the towers by CASA. These lights will impact many residences in our district, including our own. I will suffer sleep disturbance as a result, given our bedroom window is in the direction of the proposed development.</p> <p>The safety of aerial fire fighters will be put at risk given the project is in a high fire danger area and aerial support will be necessary to protect the New England Highway and Kentucky Village.</p> <p>The Westpac Rescue Helicopter operates to a significant degree on this section of the New England Highway. The safety of those pilots, crews and patients will be at increased risk from operating in an area with so many aerial obstacles.</p>
Telecommunications	<p>The EIS indicates that our television reception is likely to be impacted, as we obtain our signal from the Narrabri towers. Free to air is our only television service so we would be cut off from obtaining news and entertainment.</p> <p>On reviewing Neoen's correspondence with various telecommunications operators regarding potential impacts, we note that their letters are written in</p>

	<p>such a way as to indicate that Neoen expects there will be NO impacts. This language is likely to elicit by default, the kind of response Neoen hopes for.</p> <p>We note that out of the 24 organisations Neoen is obliged to contact, they have failed to make initial contact with 8 (33%), they have had no response from a further 14 (58%), have received a partial response from 1 (4%) and a response indicating a negative impact from 1 (4%). This is further proof of our arguments on consultation (see below).</p> <p>We operate completely on the mobile network for mobiles, home phone and internet access due to impairment of the underground phone lines which Telstra will not fix. As a result our phone and internet are likely be negatively impacted, affecting my ability to work from home, which I do at least three days per week. It will also impact our ability to conduct our farm business. And it will severely impact my son's ability to complete school and homework.</p>
Eletromagnetic field levels and Health	<p>High levels of EMF will be associated with the proposed infrastructure. I suffer anxiety and depression and I believe these levels will impact my mental and physical health.</p>
Bushfire	<p>The proponent's research into the ability to adequately conduct aerial fire-fighting in a bushfire prone area was totally inadequate.</p> <p>Fires impacting our area are most likely to start to the west of the project area and travel eastwards with the prevailing winds in the direction of my house and the village of Kentucky. However, the proposed project will be in the path of the fire, blocking aerial fire-fighting support.</p> <p>As a consequence, our home, our farm and our pets and livestock will be at risk. The lives of many residents in the village of Kentucky will also be placed at risk.</p>
Blade throw	<p>Some of the turbines are located very close to the New England Highway which is already a very busy transport route.</p> <p>Blade throw risk should be considered not just for residences but for highway users as well.</p> <p>Some existing houses are not indicated on the EIS maps! There is one at risk of blade throw that is not being considered. This also means this community member has not been considered in the consultation, or the neighbour agreement options.</p>
Water and soils	<p>Inadequate attention is paid in the EIS to how the proposal will impact ground water flows on local farms. Our farm depends on ground water in dry and drought times.</p> <p>Perhaps of greater importance is that the proposal will negatively impact water and soils over a significant portion of NSW owing to it being located in the relatively clean upper reaches of the Murray Darling Basin.</p> <p>Numerous federal government grant programs incentivise communities to improve water quality of streams and rivers in the Murray Darling system.</p> <p>This project is counter to the principles of those incentives in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Soil erosion resulting from overland flow on large areas of unprotected bare ground caused by significant construction on highly erodible meta-sediments and granite soils on sloping land. 2. Overland flow will take sediment (sand, silt, clay and organic matter) into streams in the upper reaches of the Murray Darling system. 3. Reduced water quality for downstream ecosystems and rural communities due to turbidity and lowered oxygen levels, impacting regional and remote community economies. 4. Increased potential for massive fish kills as seen at the end of the drought, impacting Australia's international reputation.

Waste Management	<p>I believe Neoen's plan for waste management is totally inadequate.</p> <p>Nothing short of fully recycling of all components, including the concrete footings in 25-30 years should be acceptable. This has not been addressed in the EIS.</p> <p>The proponent should be contributing a fully costed decommissioning bond, including CPI increases, as well as a fully costed bond to local governments for waste management.</p> <p>There has been inadequate research into the leaching of toxic materials from the concrete footings into the water table of the (clean) upper reaches of the Murray Darling Basin – a phenomenal shared natural resource that can never be replaced.</p>
Air quality	<p>My home will be significantly impacted by fine particulates from transport dust and concrete dust during the construction phase. These will never be able to be fully mitigated by the proponent. I have past health issues that have caused lung scarring and my son has childhood asthma. This much dust during the construction phase will be unacceptable.</p>
Economic impact	<p>This proposal will have a negative impact on our own family's economic future. Our land value is highly likely to decrease due to being located so close to a mega industrial scale development. Our ability to proceed with key aspects of our farm plan will be negated, as they rely on the quiet enjoyment of the landscape through camping and ecotourism in the regenerative agriculture space.</p> <p>Our local council will be left to foot the bill for excess water usage, excess gravel usage, road repairs, garbage disposal among other things, increasing council rates and impacting our family's ability to make ends meet.</p> <p>There are much better alternatives to this large scale industrial approach to renewables, such as Embedded Microgrid approaches, which our community is keen to explore. If this project is approved, those opportunities will be lost to us, as will the positive economic outcomes that would result. Instead, the significant profits from this project are heading offshore, leaving our small community out of pocket and more depleted than before Neoen came.</p>
Social impact	<p>If this project goes ahead, the social impacts on our family will be huge. We will no longer be able to host family members or visitors in our home for any length of time due to the noise, infrasound and EMF impacts.</p> <p>I offered by thoughts and feelings about this proposal to the consultants conducting the social impact assessment, but I feel my concerns have not been properly heard, nor adequately addressed in the EIS.</p> <p>I personally suffer from ecological grief, which is a result of my long-standing concern for the health of the planet.</p> <p>Anxiety and depression were diagnosed during the 2017-2019 drought, and exacerbated by the Black Summer fires and consequent mouse plagues and mega floods. I'm sure this is the situation for many in impacted regional communities (most of NSW).</p> <p>This proposal, and the many others proposed for our area is adding to the stress and the pressure. Perhaps my most serious concern is that mega scale wind installations for our transition to renewable energy are NOT the answer – they are only going to cause 'more of the same' problems.</p> <p>We need to think outside the square. Wind towers are already superseded technology. Community owned microgrids that bolster regional economics and keep the profits in Australia are the answer.</p> <p>But no one in the government is listening to all the very clever people in rural communities who want to have a go at leading the world in this space! Rural communities feel totally disengaged by the broken processes that the NSW</p>

	Government is using to address these issues. PLEASE STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND LISTEN TO US!
Cumulative impact	<p>The EIS for this proposal does not address cumulative impacts adequately as outlined in the legislation.</p> <p>The cumulative impacts of the 590+ towers proposed within a 70 km radius of Walcha (only 40 km from our home as the crow flies) will negatively impact my family very seriously.</p> <p>Our house is the highest house in the landscape in our district. We purchased here because of the view across the whole landscape from our house, in particular our kitchen and family rooms.</p> <p>Our beautiful New England region will be transformed into an industrial landscape full of negative visual impacts, noise impacts, air quality impacts, water quality impacts, transport & telecommunications infrastructure impacts, social impacts, economic impacts, biodiversity impacts and amenity impacts.</p> <p>This is unacceptable to us because there is a better way to transform to renewables that does not impact in this way.</p>
Community consultation	<p>Since graduating university 30 years ago, most of my career has focussed on effectively engaging the community in natural resource management.</p> <p>Neoen's overall approach to community 'consultation' is nothing short of spectacularly appalling.</p> <p>Our local community group has written to the Department and the Minister for Planning on two occasions to complain about Neoen. Please refer to that correspondence. They do not satisfy the 'fit and proper' test to conduct business in our community in my opinion.</p> <p>In summary, Neoen has:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failed to construct an adequate community engagement plan. 2. Confused engagement with consultation. 3. Employed a community engagement officer who has no experience in the role. 4. Employed a community engagement officer who has a major conflict of interest - her extended family members stand to become wind farm hosts. 5. Failed to conduct meetings with impacted direct neighbours, despite being requested to do so by those neighbours (our family included). 6. Failed to respond to a letter my husband and I sent them more than a year ago requesting a meeting to discuss our concerns and our requirements should this project go ahead. 7. Conducted 'drop in' sessions at inappropriate venues (more than 40 km from some impacted community members) and at inappropriate times (during covid restrictions) 8. Refused to conduct a public meeting in the lead up to their EIS submission to raise awareness and knowledge of the project, despite being requested to do so by the community. 9. Failed to enable the community to ask questions in a forum setting so that community members benefit from the questions asked by others. 10. Consulted an organisation at Guyra, more than 100 km away, but not with the local branch of the same organisation. 11. Conducted a zoom meeting online as part of their 'community consultation' with very short notice, and very poor attendance from community members due to the lack of internet access and computer use in our community. 12. Provided inadequate answers to questions at the abovementioned zoom meeting and then muted myself and another member of our community so we could not ask further questions or clarifications!

	<p>13. Failed to upload all minutes of the Community Consultative Committee meetings to their website.</p> <p>14. Blocked their Community Consultative Committee from consulting with the community. Our local community group was refused a meeting with members of the CCC. Their written response stated that it wasn't part of their role to speak with our group.</p> <p>15. Failed to have an office location in the local community.</p> <p>16. Deliberately confused the community by breaking the project into Stage 1 and Stage 2 part way through the process.</p> <p>17. One direct neighbour's house is not included on the mapping, indicating that they have not been considered at all in the community consultation process, the neighbour agreement process or the noise and visual assessments!</p> <p>A few years ago, Neoen was 'run out of town' by the Arding community not far from here for similar inappropriate and bad behaviours.</p> <p>As proper community consultation is legally required under the legislation, I trust the Department of Planning will come down hard on repeated bad behaviours of developers, given the reputational risks at stake in the current planning environment.</p>
Human and livestock health	<p>I believe I could suffer negative impacts on my health due to constant infrasound and low frequency noise if this proposal becomes operational. Anecdotal evidence is already pointing to this occurring in other regions of Australia, with at least one member of our community concerned because he has already moved away from southern NSW for the same reason.</p> <p>I also believe our livestock and the livestock of others in our region could be impacted in the same way. This has significant implications for physical and mental health of our community, and the economic health of our community should livestock be affected.</p> <p>There has not been enough scientific research into the impacts of full time infrasound on humans and livestock, and as a result, not enough is known to allow a proper assessment. Indeed, Neoen states in its EIS that access to scientific instruments to measure infrasound is limited or not available, an admission that not enough is known to assure our community that we will be safe.</p>

I maintain it is my right to the quiet enjoyment of my home and property. I also maintain that it is not acceptable for the proponent to use *my* property as *their* buffer zone.

Given wind turbines of this nature are already being superseded by better technology that has less negative impact, all of these impacts can be avoided, if we choose to do so.

I trust that NSW Planning will have the sense and foresight to dismiss the Thunderbolt Wind Farm proposal and demand a better approach that involves the community and has significantly more social licence.

Kind regards,

Name withheld, BSc.(Env) Hon 1.