Valley of the Winds Wind Farm - Submission

I'm not objecting to the project, HOWEVER, the impacts of construction traffic on people living along to the access routes have not been adequately addressed in the environmental assessment.

I grew up in Uarbry and my parents still live there. They are in their 70s and just want to live out their retirement in their quiet little village. They are extremely worried about how the construction traffic is going to impact on their life for the next "24-42 months", with the access road to the Girragulang Rd cluster going right past their house. And they are right to be worried. Uarbry is a sleepy little village, still trying to rebuild after the devastation of the Feb 2017 bushfires. Most of the houses and infrastructure were destroyed. They were one of the lucky ones to still have a house after the fire.

Even though Uarbry is on the Golden Highway, it doesn't get much traffic through its streets. The EIS traffic assessment shows 5 vehicles/hr using Short St (Uarbry) in 2023 (without the project), during each of the morning and afternoon peaks. With the project, this increases to 8 vehicles in the morning and 156 vehicles per hour in the afternoon peak! The proponent is committed to sealing the unsealed road from the "Golden Highway to Church Street" and from "Short Street to Main Street", which is great – this will go a long way to mitigating air quality impacts on residents in Uarbry. However, sealing the road will not mitigate noise impacts from the construction traffic.

The EIS background noise survey did not include background noise monitoring at Uarbry (or any of the other access routes). The EIS Noise Assessment (Table 21) shows that the nearest receiver (Receiver 31 – in Uarbry) will be subject to a predicted noise level range of 80-85 dB LAeq during access road construction. This noise level exceeds the "highly noise affected management level" (75dBLAeq) by 5-10dBLaeq. What is the background noise level in Uarbry?? It is not clear what the background noise levels in Table 4 of the Background Noise Assessment represent. Are these day-time background noise levels? Or averages over the period of monitoring? And why are there gaps in the data? Regardless, this assessment doesn't even consider receptors like those in Uarbry.

The proponent is seeking extended construction hours, to allow construction for 12 hours a day, 6 days a week (i.e. 6am to 6pm Monday to Saturday). And then OSOM vehicle movements outside of these hours. The noise assessment (Section 8.7) claims that it is "feasible for a majority of works to be restricted to normal working hours" and that "In some cases, construction works may be required to occur outside of these hours. Such activities are typically related to public infrastructure i.e. timing oversized deliveries to avoid hazardous traffic conditions or weather windows, i.e. aspects of turbine assembly which must occur in still wind conditions for safety reasons." I believe the construction hours should be limited to normal construction hours, to minimize impacts on residents. Permission should be sought to operate outside these hours and justified accordingly.

The assessment considered two options for the workforce - regionally distributed and local workforce accommodation. According to the assessment the former requires 72 heavy vehicle trips per day and 506 light vehicle trips per day! Whilst this might be great for employment in the region, with workers commuting from all around to the project, this workforce option means extra traffic and impacts on the local community. This will be extremely detrimental for people like my parents, as they lose their quiet lifestyle, even if it if "only" for 24-42 months. I believe the latter option is preferable to minimize impacts on the local community, and the environment (local workforce = less commute/pollution).