

Commissioners.

In contrast to my original submissions on defective photomontages and property devaluation, I would like to talk about bushfires.

I am not a member of the RFS, so I speak as a layman and an observer.

We have had two major bushfires in the last two months near Tarago.

One started in the Capital wind farm and both finished within the proposed site of our Jupiter wind farm. The Capital fire covered an area twice the size of the Biala wind farm and was stopped, partially, on my rural road after marching eastwards for 12 kms. I had evacuated and didn't expect to see my beautiful home again.

Both fires were stopped by intense aerial water bombing, an option not available within or close to turbines. Those who say otherwise have not seen the DC10 in action. Flying near, and below the level of, 185 metre turbines for that aircraft would not be the "routine procedure" the Department would have you believe.

The successful RFS ground crew strategy was to protect individual residences where possible.

Those two fires reinforced that rural New South Wales, destined to get hotter and drier, is a high risk bushfire area and that:

- Low and Medium bushfire risk assessments in EISs are a joke
- In an emergency, non-human species of fauna, threatened or otherwise, are ignored.
- Bushfires do not respect different species of vegetation

and for the Capital wind farm bushfire;

- Bushfires do break out on wind farms
- The Capital fire would not have broken out if the Capital wind farm had not been there.
- Proponent staff on-site, if any, were of no help and contractors are not paid to fight fires.
- Any fire fighting equipment on-site was either not used or ineffective
- The Bushfire Management and Emergency Response Plan, if existing, was useless.
- "advanced on-board control systems designed to mitigate any risk of fire" have little to do with controlling bushfires
- Nobody told the bushfire it couldn't break out and rapidly travel in so-called low or medium fire risk zones.
- Bushfires in wind farms are unlikely to be contained until well out the other side
- The access tracks, a key supporting argument, were of no help; nor will the Biala track spaghetti, and
- Bushfires in wind farm country travel very quickly.

What riles me most is the effort that consultants go to, in order to minimize the risks of bushfires.

PAC commissioners are familiar with the RFS matrix for assessing bushfire risk.

Likelihood	Consequence			
	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost Certain	High	Very High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	High	Very High	Extreme
Possible	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High

NSW Rural Fire Service 2008

The way to game that matrix is to conclude, and gain departmental agreement, that the likelihood of bushfires is low. From there it is easy to restrict the consequences of that bushfire to medium and low,

ratings favoured by wind farm consultants for whatever they are assessing, be it Visual Impact, Biodiversity or Noise.

In this case, though, the game is played with human assets and lives.

We were very lucky:

- It was not a catastrophic fire day
- The water resources were almost at their peak (they aren't now)
- There was still a lot of green vegetation around
- There was no other local fire. A large fire endangering Bungendore or even Crookwell, would have drawn much of the ground and aerial fire fighting resource away.
- At dusk when the aerial resources had stopped for the day we had a very heavy short thunderstorm, and
- Our wind farm had not been built.

So, I say good luck to those residents on the eastern side of the Biala wind farm.

The last two months have proven that what happens in practice debunks all the theory hypothesized by wind farm consultants and shows how out of touch the Department of Planning is by supporting that theory in the Biala Assessment.

All I ask from the PAC is to call for some honesty.

Thank you,
Anthony Gardner