(2)

Wednesday, 1 February 2017

Planning and Assessment Commission - Biala Wind Farm

Anthony (Tony) Hill

Issues

- Short notice - I received notice of the PAC hearing in an email at 3:04pm on Tuesday 31 January for a hearing being held at 10:00am on Thursday 2 February - less that 48 hours advance notice - In the notice it advises that the focus of the hearing will be "to hear views on the assessment report prepared by the DP&E with recommendation to approve the proposal subject to conditions" - The assessment report is 54 pages and dated December 2016 - Why has there been delay in notifying the public of this assessment? - How can an ordinary person with other life responsibilities be expected to respond to such a request?
- Community Consultation - one of the four main issues identified from the 38 objections lodged by the community - given that there are 38 objections out of 39 submissions and that lack of consultation is one of four key issues, why has the DPE assessment report not mentioned this issue in its Executive Summary? - The Executive Summary does consider the issues raised by the objections, but not consultation - Given that DPE has rejected other DA/EIS for wind farms why has this issue not been mentioned for Biala?
- Overall DPE conclusion - Why has DPE been able to reach the conclusion that "Given these benefits can be achieved without causing any significant adverse impacts, the project is considered to be approvable, subject to strict conditions"? - Has DPE actually considered the issues in the objections? -
- Lack of inclusion of transmission line in the proposal - this displays a lack of respect for community consultation when only part of the proposed development is submitted for approval - why has DPE made gratuitous comment on a Newtricity 'strategic analysis' when it is not part of this DA or EIS and expressed a view on which would be the more favourable option in the absence of proper public consultation?
- How will additional screening be sufficient for residents of a predominantly rural area, as recommended by DPE? Has public consultation demonstrated that this would be an acceptable option for the affected residents of the community?
- Bushfire assessment and consultation - Given that the Currandooley fire originated in the Capital wind farm area, why is there no consultation with any fire service, particularly the NSW Rural Fire Service?

- EMI - what individual consultation has been undertaken with residents who will have their television reception disrupted by EMI? - has any consultation been undertaken with the residents of Grabben Gullen about disruption of television reception?
- Misleading conclusion - DPE says that "Following exhibition, Newtricity provided a detailed response to the matters raised in public submission" - The Newtricity response is not 'detailed' and it repeated information from the EIS, it did not address the issues raised in objections - For instance an objection is "No attempt has been made to adjust the project to any concerns that have arisen" but in response Newtricity has not shown how the community has come to understand or accept any or the Newtricity responses.
- If the consultation process has been working effectively, why are there still such a substantial number of objections from the submissions received?

On the basis of these substantial deficiencies in consultation, I call for the EIS to be rejected - if it is not rejected, then no construction or operation should proceed until these issues are resolved with the local commun