

JOHN HANN

Commissioners John Hann, Annabelle Pegrum and Stephen O'Connor,

The market has spoken.

In the Assessment, the Department advises us a number of times that the Capital 2 wind farm project was declared to be "critical infrastructure" by the NSW Government in 2009, 8 years ago. So critical that nothing has happened.

Both the public and private sectors would appear to disagree that this wind farm is critical to, let alone required in, the NSW electricity network.

Exhibit A is the renewables auction process undertaken by the ACT Government over the last few years.

In wind auction 1, the successful bidders came from Victoria and South Australia. In wind auction 2, the successful bidders included the Sapphire wind farm in northern New South Wales. In 2016, Crookwell 2, originally approved 12 years ago, was successful under the ACT's Next Generation Renewables Program and can now commence construction.

If they were serious, Infigen, with its Capital 2 wind farm, must have been a participant in each round. You therefore have to question why Capital 2, with its apparent advantages (location, Australian proponent, etc), was not successful. Commission members may have contacts within the ACT Government or the Wind Auction Advisory Panel who could explain this lack of success.

Exhibit B is EnergyAustralia which has recently provided a partial Power Purchase Agreement enabling the Bodangora wind farm, near Wellington NSW, to proceed to construction with the aim of being fully operational in the second half of 2018. Bodangora, like Capital 2 is a wholly owned Infigen project. It was approved a couple of years after the Capital 2 wind farm. Once again you must ask why Capital 2, with its apparent advantages, was not a better option for EnergyAustralia. Perhaps the Commission can enquire.

Then again, Capital 2 could just be surplus to Infigen's requirements. It certainly appears to be on the nose.

Am I right in assuming that this is the first wind farm extension modification that has come before the PAC?

If so, you have a unique opportunity to put some backbone into this aspect of the planning process.

We will be surprised if you reject the application. That would be far too much of a shock for the NSW planning system. Determine a reasonable extension to the lapse date. You should not follow the Department's advice and recommend an extension period starting at your determination date. That may raise legal questions as to the status of the approval between when it lapsed and that subsequent determination date. Two years from lapse date is ample, given that the two major reasons for the construction delay have disappeared. The RET is now stable and the impending construction of Bodangora will give Infigen all the knowledge and experience it needs in current wind technology.

Having set a date, put some hard and fast conditions on it. ie. if Infigen cannot show the PAC a signed PPA or a signed finance contract within that time, then the approval for Capital 2 lapses unconditionally and they can start again.

Many newcomers to the thriving Bungendore area will be shocked when this wind farm starts construction and 41 turbines, considerably taller than the existing Capital and Woodlawn turbines are placed around the shores of the lake that some newcomers had never seen filled with water before. They deserve a say at some stage, and only a project reset will afford them that opportunity.

Remember, the Capital wind farm only started construction as a result of political grandstanding.

To misquote the late Kerry Packer.

You only get one desalination plant in your lifetime, and Infigen has had theirs.