

IPC Meeting

Pyramul Hall

Crudine Ridge Wind Project Mod 1

11/6/19

CWP ripped the guts out of what remained of this once peaceful & pleasant community and now they seek to rip the guts out of Aarons Pass Rd. This modification seeks to destroy hundreds of trees and annihilate a relatively untouched and unique ecosystem. The approval of this project will spell an environmental & ecological disaster. Allowing this is a complete contradiction to what this project is supposedly trying to achieve. How can such environmental devastation with little regard to existing flora and fauna possibly be called "green" How is the complete removal of 1000's of trees in order to transport materials to site considered a step towards sustainability?

CWP have said themselves and you'll find many locals stating the same argument "we support the project for the fact that the road will be immensely improved". Clearly council were on board as it saves them having to deal with it but let's not forget that the excessive clearing CWP seek goes well beyond what is required to improve standard road safety. And I'd like to point out if the locals were so concerned with road safety where are the previous complaints to council and the works request forms? Why did they not start a petition to generate interest regarding the dangerous nature of the road that they all speak so passionately about now?? You will in fact find residents of APR spoke here at the very first PAC meeting completely against the project. Funny how things change when a little money is thrown around. There are 10 residences that will be affected by this modification along APR and 9 of them now have agreements with CWP. Is it no wonder that their submissions were for the approval? Just like so many others who agree to the project they stand to benefit financially. Just another fine example of the backbone of this entire project...greed!!

CWP make a complete mockery of the "generally in accordance with" provision. That clause or particular wording should never have been introduced. CWP seem to think it literally gives them free rein as it's far from definitive! CWP clearly intend to do as they please and if & when they get pulled up simply say "we thought we were generally in accordance with" what an absolute joke! It's a complete insult to all involved in particular the Department. In order to seek initial approval CWP consultants clearly watered down the tree removal aspect and reported an estimated 55 trees would need to be removed for the turbines to navigate the 20km section of road. Pity it was an utter and complete lie in order to gain approval. CWP clearly had every intention of removing what they wanted, when they wanted and if they happened to be pulled up on it, they would just happily cop a fine. This is made abundantly clear by the utter annihilation of 100's of trees in the first 3.5kms once clearing commenced. At a guess they removed those allocated 55 trees in the first hour!! "Oops sorry compliance officer, my bad? I thought I was acting generally in accordance with" What's an extra 250 trees on top of the 55 they were actually approved for? Pity there's another 17ks and 1000's of trees to go. It's a complete farce!

And because of that very clause which they've happily used as a safety net they have gone ahead and secured finance, contracts & stakeholders but now have the hide to express their grave concern at the possibility of substantial financial losses if the project is not approved by the IPC. "We'll be financially ruined if you don't approve this project" is an unacceptable pitch, yet you'll hear it here today several times. This project is meant to be about the environment yet all we hear is money! It's not our problem CWP jumped the gun and got so cocky that they put themselves in this financial position. They should have proceeded in the correct manner and not assumed that "generally in

accordance with" nor the department were going to allow them to continually break the rules! It is completely negligent of CWP to put their hosts and contractors in this precarious position and they must take full responsibility for the potential loss of income and face the consequences of attempting to cut corners, break the rules and not follow conditions of consent. It is completely unacceptable for the PAC to base their decision on the possible financial losses of those involved and I'll take this moment to reiterate the following IPC code of conduct 3.1 Honesty, Integrity & Public Interest. "Members must not make decisions or actions motivated by: Financial benefit, including avoiding financial loss" Therefore some of the arguments you hear here today should be dismissed.

I could go on about lies, misconceptions, discrepancies, cover ups & non-compliance issues all day but let's touch on an important issue that CWP have managed on more than one occasion to sweep under the carpet. Koalas! Let's not forget, koalas are currently listed as a threatened species under both State & Federal legislation. Unfortunately for the poor unsuspecting actual breathing living animal that in fact reside on the ridge and along the pass CWP were unfortunately smart enough to lodge their paperwork 2 months before koalas were listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act in April 2012. Meaning there was previously a complete disregard to the fact that they actually exist where the work and extensive clearing is to commence. However, I now question where koalas stand? Given that this new modification was lodged in 2018. Do we trust that Ms O'Dwyer is correct in saying a referral to the federal government is not required? I in fact think not and I believe this needs to be fully investigated.

In documents provided previously CWPs own ecologist found within a small area that they surveyed 18 pieces of evidence of koala activity. Yet in an article published by The Australian last year CWP project manager Brendan McAvoy said in obtaining approval, assessments had shown the area was not a koala habitat, yet Ms O'Dwyer references koalas several times in CWP's biodiversity development assessment report.

Locals know that there are koalas in the region even one turbine host was overheard saying "we can't have koalas becoming a problem, I may have to start culling" Road users know there are koalas with one Sydney weekender going as far as insisting the council install the koala signs at both ends of APR after a sighting. Both councils know there are koalas with both MWRC & Bathurst hosting Koala Conservation sessions early last year. They even went as far as providing the first 25 people to register for the event with 20 free koala feed trees to plant on their properties. Bit contradictory don't you think to then allow a wind company to completely destroy a known habitat. Explain to me again how's it's a green project when koalas are allowed to be killed, maimed & misplaced for the sake of 37 turbines? Particularly given the recent headline news "Koalas now functionally extinct" says Australian Koala Foundation. This made every mainstream news just a few weeks back with the foundation stating that Koalas are hanging on for their very survival with news that the marsupials don't have enough breeding adults to support another generation. Another article published by the ABC in 2017 reads "A rise in koala sightings in the NSW central tablelands is leading to hopes the region could be instrumental in saving the species" There have been a spate of recent sightings in the region around Bathurst, extending towards Cowra, Mudgee & Lithgow, the increase in sightings points to how a high elevation haven can help save them.

CWP certainly aren't making an attempt to save them, they are quite content to ignore them. Are you going to allow this to continue to happen? Given the blatantly obvious danger our very own National icon faces? Are you aware that two neighbouring properties to the project site were preselected for this year's NSW Office of Environment & Heritage koala field survey? Applied Ecology were contracted by the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage to undertake koala field studies in the local area. Koala field surveys were being conducted across priority areas of NSW as part of the

NSW Koala Strategy. These are 2 that I know of, I've no doubt that there were in fact more. So, properties within direct vicinity of the project were chosen as areas of "Priority" for a koala survey. How has that been overlooked?

This is your opportunity to stop this untrustworthy & reckless company making a mockery of you, making a mockery of the rules and a mockery of the Department of Planning. Enough is enough!! Before I finish, I would like to request that those directly affected by this project are given the same opportunity to have a private meeting with the IPC as CWP had last week. I believe this only fair.

Thank you

Chontelle Rowland-Jones