



# Impacts of Neoen's Thunderbolt Wind Farm

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Presentation to the Independent Planning Commission by Friends of Kentucky Action Group – a sub-group of RED4NE Inc.

Speakers:

**Karen Zirkler, Steve Johnston, Marilyn Wood, Dr Julian Prior**

14 March 2024

# Our group

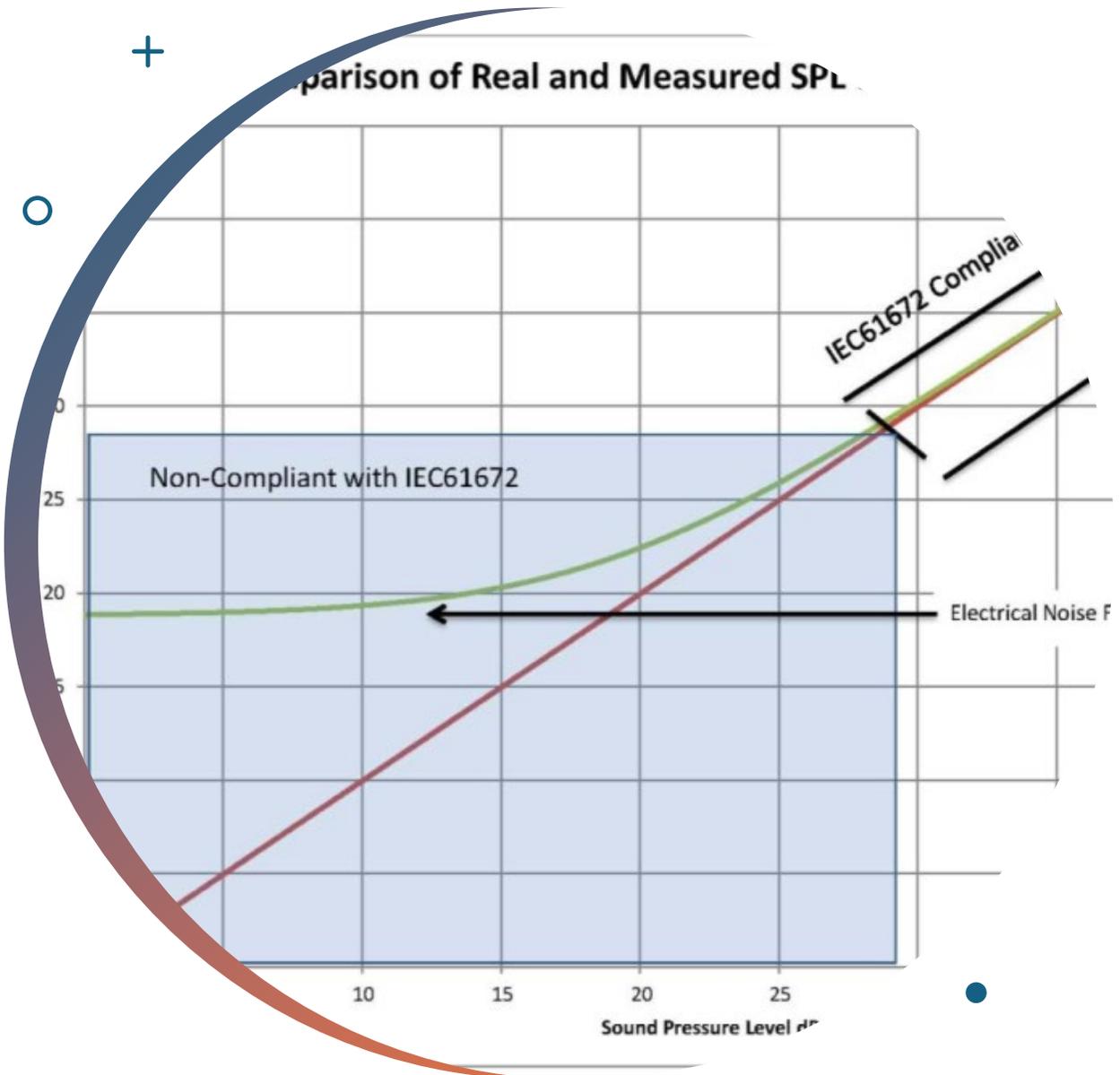
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*Marilyn Wood*

- We are a sub-group of RED4NE Inc.
- Our group formed in February 2020 - community concerns were not being heard by Neoen
- 63 local households on our member list

The logo consists of a large orange circle. Inside the circle, the text "Friends Of" is written in a white, casual script font at the top. Below it, the word "Kentucky" is written in a large, white, serif font. At the bottom, the words "Action Group" are written in a white, casual script font, matching the style of "Friends Of".

Friends Of  
Kentucky  
Action Group



# Non-Compliant Noise

Marilyn Wood

- Noise nuisance
- Bald Hills case
- Infrasound impacts
- Conflicting information
- **Implications for community**

Image source: Huson L, (2015), *Constraints imposed by and limitations of IEC 61672 for the measurement of wind farm sound emissions*, 6th International Conference on Wind Turbine Noise Glasgow 20-23 April 2015.

# Community Benefits Fund

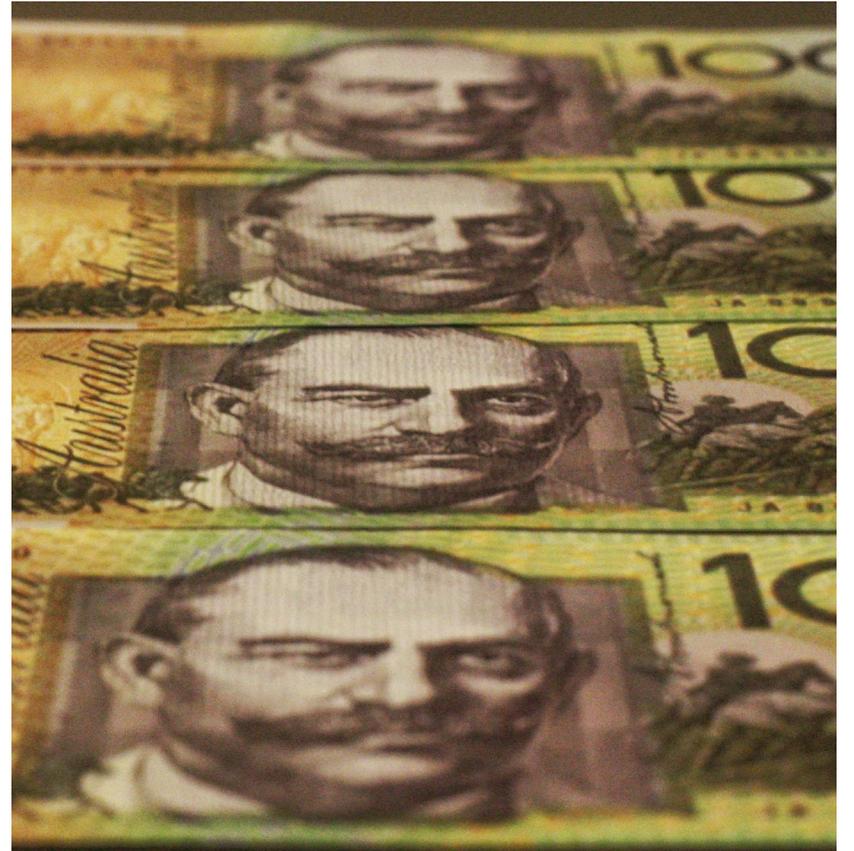
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*Marilyn Wood*

- Split across two LGAs - administratively clumsy and unlikely to benefit those impacted.
- Need one administrator for a seamless, transparent process. One project – one community – one administrator.
- Better for the proponent, better for the impacted community.
- Saves Local Government from another ‘non-core’ task

## **Recommendation:**

- **Call for tenders from NFPs with a whole of project area footprint, with a track record of administering grants**
- Supports a local NFP IF proponent pays an administration fee (lesson learnt by Glen Innes community).



# Irreplaceable Biodiversity

Karen Zirkler

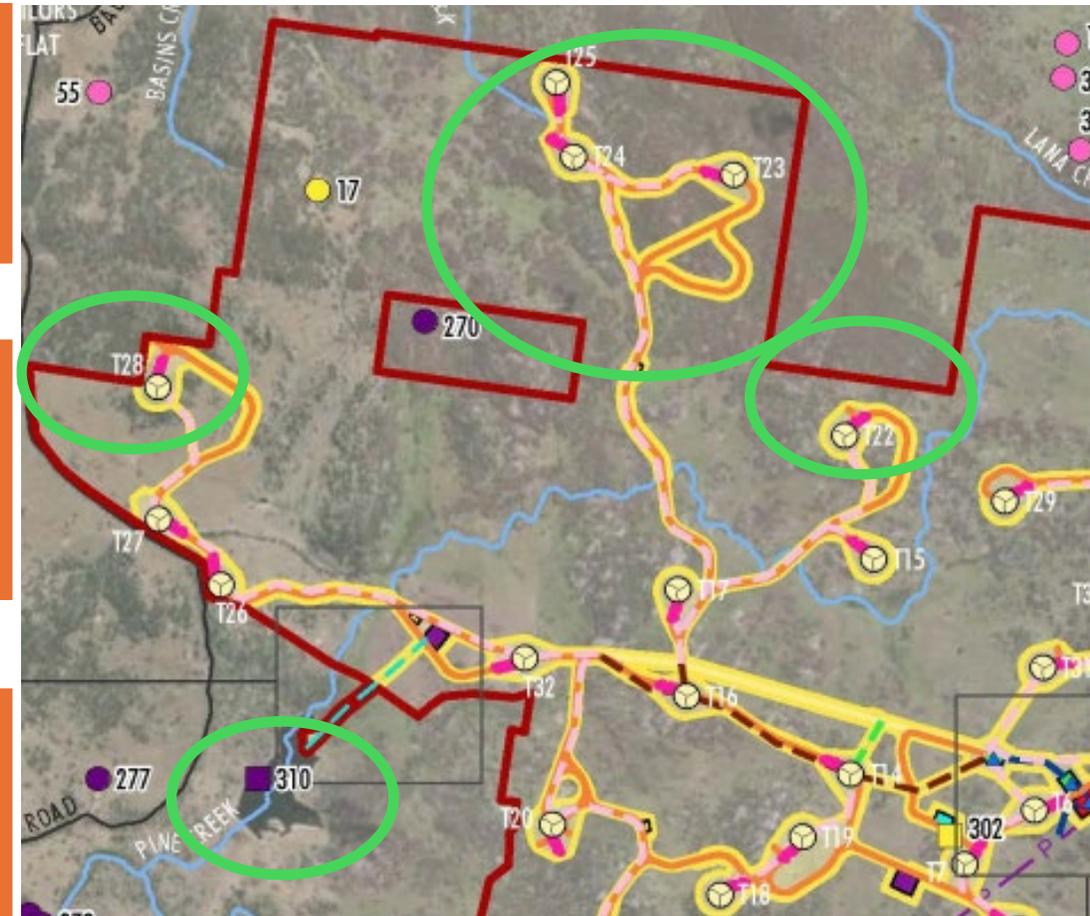
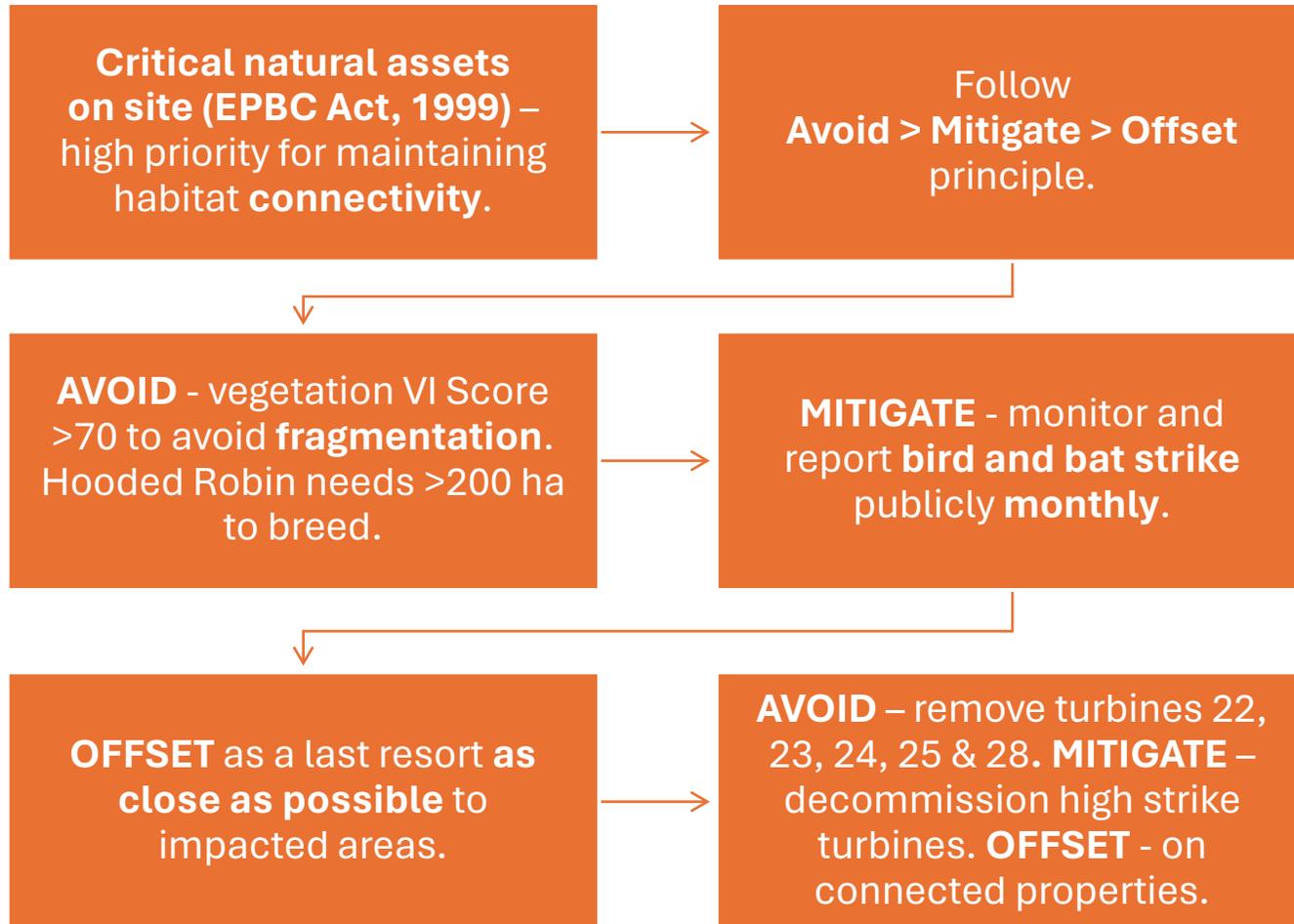


Image courtesy Development Consent.

# Irreplaceable Biodiversity

Karen Zirkler

- **Koalas (endangered) on and around site - good quality habitat.**
- *“Individuals rely on their low frequency contact calls and their great auditory acuity to locate conspecifics. The legislation controlling these developments (**the EPBC Act, 1999**) predates **wind turbines** and the amount of low frequency noise that turbines can inflict on wildlife is unregulated. There is an **urgent need for scientific investigation of this noise** and its wildlife impacts. We suggest that wind turbines could pose a threat to the viability of koala populations...”*

Roger Martin & Richard Hopkinson, (March 2024) *Potential Impacts of Wind Turbine Noise on Upland Koala Populations in FNQ*, James Cook University Centre for Tropical Environmental and Sustainability Science.

- **NSW Koala Strategy – Armidale, Uralla, Walcha are Regions of Koala Significance and ‘refuges’ under climate change.**



Koala on adjoining property, image by Karen Zirkler.



# Irreplaceable Biodiversity

*Karen Zirkler*

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- **Endangered Bell's Turtles** are frequent across the project site and in significant numbers in the large dam on Pine Creek (local ecologist, pers comm, 2024).
  - **No consideration of this species by Neoen.**
  - Proponent plans to pipe large quantities of water from this dam to a batching plant, impacting population & breeding.
  - Project creek crossings will increase turbidity, impacting population & breeding.
  - **Bell's Turtles are NOT ON SPECIES OFFSET LIST. Why?**
  - **Recommendation – reject proposal based on inadequate biodiversity assessment and compliance.**

*Image courtesy of Bell's Turtle – Turtles Forever Project, UNE*



# Burning the Biodiversity

*Steve Johnston*

- **Risk** - fire entering the project area at speed from heavily vegetated northwest
- **Rapid escalation of intensity** due to impaired control and suppression in project area
- Fire exiting project area will have developed into a larger, **more intense blaze in direction of higher density residences**
- Implications for our community?
- **Loss of built and natural assets. Potential catastrophic loss of life.**



# Process, Procedural Fairness & Compliance

*Dr Julian Prior*

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- Technically **inadequate EIS**
  - Lack of **procedural fairness** & social license
  - Shockingly **inadequate assessment** conducted by the Department of Planning, Infrastructure & Housing
  - **Systematic failure** by the Dept. **to hold the proponent accountable**
  - **What justification** for subjecting community to obsolete, not-fit-for-purpose processes, when new, fit for purpose processes are imminent?
  - **Recommend: assessment under the new process**
  - We commend the recommendations made by our members to the IPC for implementation.