

Submission
No 42

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
ZONES (REZ) ON RURAL AND REGIONAL
COMMUNITIES AND INDUSTRIES IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Organisation: Uarbry Tongy Lane Alliance Inc

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The Uarbry Tongy Lane Alliance Inc is situated within the so call Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWO REZ).

We question the process around the legislation for renewable energy zones and wonder if the chief beneficiaries of this legislation have not already outed themselves by leaving one government job for another in the related private sector/Government authority/"independent" statutory body.

It would appear that the developers of renewable energy projects seem to have the upper hand in this State. With two wind projects, a transmission project and multiple workers camps impacting our group members we watch what has happened elsewhere in our community.

To date Beryl Solar has had two fires with no details revealed of where the damaged solar panels were disposed. There are over 1 million solar panels to be installed in the CWO REZ, how many fires will we witness within these solar projects? Will the sheer volume of solar panels in one area cause a heat island impact? What impact could this have on farmers, livestock, wildlife and people in the area? Where will damaged and obsolete solar panels be disposed?

We have seen that Beryl Solar did not adhere to some of their consent conditions and we note that the project has changed hands a number of times in its short life so far. It would appear that the NSW Government is unable or unwilling to monitor the number of developers operating in the area. How will they monitor the number that is proposed?

Stubbo solar were transporting solar panels via B Double trucks from Port. There were 3 truck roll overs on the Golden Highway in a period of 6 weeks. Each of these trucks was single vehicle accident and each was laden with solar panels. It appears that there is no clean up procedure as the EPA and Transport NSW were reportedly disinclined to get involved. Reportedly Stubbo solar, given the large number of solar panels damaged/destroyed, then banned B double loads from delivering and would only accept Semi trailer loads. Where were the damaged solar panels disposed? There were 3 B Double loads. Given that a semi trailer can load less that a B Double were these extra truck trips accounted for in terms of road safety to other users and additional diesel consumption.

How long will it be before someone is killed on the local roads and roads linking us to the East Coast? Is the State Government willing or able to ensure that the heavy vehicle drivers contracting to the solar/wind/transmission/battery projects are suitably trained and qualified?

We rely on our grain trucks and livestock trucks being able to transport our produce. What impact will thousands of additional heavy vehicles for the wind/solar/transmission/batteries have on our existing road use?

When will someone be killed/injured on our local road due to the increased amount of traffic anticipated? There is a camp, proposed to accommodate 600 people, between UTLA members and the township of Coolah. The local roads are barely fit for purpose but manage given the limited traffic. Add 600 workers vehicles, heavy vehicles and OSOM vehicles between two wind projects, several quarries, a transmission project and numerous other workers camp. There are another four workers camps in progress in our immediate area that will all be attempting to access the town of Coolah on the same roads. Coolah and surrounds has a population of 1200, the workers camps will add upwards of 4000 people to our immediate area. These additional 4000 people will be using local roads that currently barely

manage the existing population given their state of repair and width. How will anyone stop 4000 people accessing narrow local roads as short cuts to town? It will be bedlam and people will die, yet no one will be responsible for this complete sh#tshow.

UTLA Inc are gravely concerned about the volume of land clearing that must take place for roads, quarries, substations, BESS, transmission and wind, in our immediate area. The habitat loss and habitat fragmentation will have a permanent impact on native flora and fauna. It is noted that one developer is using an area of pine to offset the area of CEEC Box Gum Woodland they are clearing. How is this sanctioned by Government?

We are witnessing the planned destruction of bush fire management resources and the disregard for both the Tongy and Turee airfields. It is quite obvious to us that much of the area, including the township of Coolah, will receive only limited aerial fire fighting support during a bush fire event. The sheer number of wind towers, transmission lines and met masts will ensure that a risk assessment completed by pilots will result in a vast no fly zone. As we are located in a Valley we often have days of low cloud, when considering an atmosphere filled with smoke we will be left to burn without aerial support. The advice that proponents that quote from AFAC is not fit for purpose in our environment.

Insurance is no doubt a looming problem for many in our group. Some have crop on the boundary adjacent to the wind projects. Will they be able to obtain affordable public liability insurance? Will they be able to utilise aerial agricultural contractors?

Meanwhile every government agency signs off on these projects and at the end of the day no one will be responsible. Local Government will say it was forced on them, State Government will say Local Government agreed (as they accepted the compensation) and Federal Government will say the State Government approved it.

We live in rural areas without many services that towns and city dwellers see as standard. We live here because we love our environment, our landscape, our land and our way of life. Why is the NSW State Government sanctioning the industrialisation and environmental destruction of this land?

Many of us generate our own power, provide our own water, manage our own sewage and waste. There is no possible benefit to us in any of these projects. We already live reliant on the weather, it is can be a difficult life and most people won't be up for it. What we want is our homes not destroyed and our livelihoods not destroyed.

Recent history shows that land is devalued by industrialisation. Land devaluation will have a direct impact on our ability to borrow funds. Given the seasonal nature of our industry, borrowing funds is part of the business. When will we be prevented from selling our produce to certain markets (or any markets) because of the proximity to wind turbine blades that shed BPA due to leading edge erosion? To conform to industry standards (sustainable grain, livestock producers assurance) we have to demonstrate that our produce has not been contaminated. How do we do that with wind turbines on the boundary?

Building wind turbines and transmission infrastructure in productive agricultural land will cause enormous harm to our State's agricultural industry and ultimately our food security and export industry. We will also face increased extinctions of vulnerable, protected and threatened native flora and fauna. But will we have cheap and reliable energy? The only people that think that will be possible are those with direct financial links to the "renewable" industry.