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From:

Sent:

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Wednesday, 27 September 2023 5:00 PM

To:

Community Engagement Review

Subject:

Submission to the Community Engagement Review

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this process.

Renewable energy is critically important. The fossil fuel sector has been pushing us closer and closer to disaster and they are still doing it, with lobbying, greenwashing and undermining progress. However, the roll out of renewable energy and the associated infrastructure must be done well and in the right place. Massive projects that serve the purpose of delaying a true transitionally from fossil fuel use by setting out to provide offsets without considering the total environmental picture are not what we need. Projects with huge footprints, like the 230 m wind turbines on land such as Epuron plans in the central Tasmanian Highlands, need to be assessed rigorously for their total impact. Smaller, more localised projects with less environment impact and lower transmission requirements closer to the sites of use might be better, for example. Off-shore projects, already well-established around the world, would present less threat to land-based ecosystems. These ecosystems are already

struggling - adding the noise and the physical effects of these towers and including in their construction must meet the needs of all concerned, including local landholders and wildlife. We cannot keep sacrificing bits of the web of life as if it can keep functioning as if it was whole.

Each project must stack up over its entire life for all related emissions and benefits/harms, particularly when as is too often the case the profits are flowing overseas to the very industries that are threatening our survival.

We need to transition, but we need to do it safely and well.

No amount of money can repair dead wedge-tailed eagles, or fragile environments. As a doctor, I am familiar with the principle of 'First, do no harm'. This does not justify no action, it means it must be the right action. The right action for a human means the one that has been agreed on, with the best advice on treatment available, between the patient and the doctor. For our planet - all our humans and the rest of the web of life - surely we need the same informed consent and consideration of every option.

We need renewable energy and we need it yesterday, but we still need the right renewables in the right places with the right consultation and problem-solving.

I recently reviewed a document on an assessment of the impact of some proposed wind turbines in Tasmania.

Despite the EPA instructions on clarity, this was probably the most obfuscating document I have read on just about anything, and I have read a lot. The company chosen was already known to be in trouble for inaccurate and biased assessments. This is not acceptable.

We need good, robust assessments that take concerns seriously. We need consultations that include listening, not just ticking the "We consulted widely" box, whilst completely ignoring what was actually said, or cherry picking a few minor supporting points.

The groups running community consultations need to be meticulously transparent and have no conflict of interests. For example, KPMG ran consultations on the National Health and Climate Strategy and somehow completely failed to mention fossil fuels or Australia's Scope 3 exported emissions - we all know we are on the same planet. Frankly, there is nothing Australia could do that is more important than cutting off the pipeline of fossil fuels beyond our borders. Climate change driven by these very agents is the biggest threat to health and to our actual survival, yet in Health and Climate consultation they get a free pass?

Community engagement is a critical factor in the way we proceed. Robodebt rage will be nothing compared to fossil fuel fury as we face what is coming. We know that the harms are known, we know we spoke up at every level and we know that the best solutions are not being chosen. With really good community engagement it might become clear that most of us would accept a higher price now to save a disaster later. I lie awake worrying about my grandchildren and all the other humans who will pay the price for vested interests drowning our voices - and oh yes, and our planet too, apart from the bits on fire.



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