**SWRRA concerns:**

**Overall:**

* The Federal and State level government have been methodically removing the rights of citizens to object to renewable energy projects in pursuit of their unrealistic and unattainable energy targets. This lack of democratic process by elected officials is incredibly alarming

This highlights the driving force of such rushed RE projects as financial, rather than environmentally beneficial

* The proposed Campbells Bridge Wind Farm is intended to be built within a naturally occurring flood plain. The related infrastructure of transmission lines, internal roads, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), concrete batching plants and the foundations of turbines themselves all increase the risk of flood damage on otherwise unaffected areas. The history of floods in this area cannot be mitigated or worked with, it simply deems the site to be inappropriate for a Wind Farm project
* Though RE proponents suggest they will increase workplace opportunities and employ locally, considering the workforce shortage the region is already experiencing, this will in fact only cause extra strain and pressure for locals to access the skilled labour they need.
* In addition to this, RE projects often required specialised trades to conduct the works, which will create an almost FIFO situation where skills labourers take up available rental opportunities, adding pressure to the strained housing crisis the region, and particularly this region, is experiencing.
* When a RE proponent enters a submission to construct a project, they have a project boundary they have access to. Yet under the state governments legislation, the proponent can object to any constructions or works the neighbouring landholders can conduct on their own property one kilometre *beyond the project boundary.*  No permission is granted for this imposition, and has the potential to impact neighbouring properties who signed no access contracts with the proponent, yet their ability to enact what plans they had intended for their land is removed.
* The transmission lines required to convey the potential energy generated by this project is supposedly going to link in at the Bulgana Terminal Station. There is private property that must be accessed in order to make that link, with RWE reps indicating that a duplicate transmission line will be constructed along the one already installed, yet SWRRA members have approached landholders to gauge their interest. There was a resounding ‘no’ to hosting these lines. Therefore SWRRA cannot see how this project is considered viable if the energy generated cannot be fed back into the grid.
* The lack of recyclable components used in turbines means there will be significant landfill caused at the end of the project. Considering no facilities yet exist for this infrastructure to go, the question must be asked as to where the materials will go? If a RE company has access to host land, what incentive is there for the materials to be removed, when it can be buried on land they already have control of?
* Projects such as Murra Warra or Bulgana are 2 renewable energy projects that are not running at full capacity because the transmission line system is not capable of moving that much energy. Therefore to construct more projects before the current ones are at full operating capacity is an absurd waste of resources

**Environmental:**

* The construction process will require vast trucks of trees and vegetation to be cleared to account for the 80m blades, destroying critical environments that host native flora and fauna, many of which are classed as critically, such as the Buloke tree.
* Iconic and spectacular species such as the wedge tailed eagle will be condemned should turbines be installed. Local residents have identified at least 8 breeding pair nests to be established within the boundary of the proposed project. SWRRA takes issue with the fact that heavy penalties are applied to farmers who kill or harm eagles, yet the installation of turbines holds no penalties or minimum distance standards to operate within
* The foundations required to hold a turbine of 148 requires nearly 2,000 tonnes of concrete. RWE has indicated that the largest available turbine at the time of construction will be utilised, which is currently 280m to the tip of the blade. Therefore, it can be reasoned that the required amount of concrete will exceed 2,000T, and will be left in the soil at the conclusion of the project.

**As a host landholder:**

* Once an agreement is signed with RE company, control of that property is removed from the landholder.
* Daily operations conducted on the property will be second in priority to what is required of the RE, which can compromise the time sensitive operations that are conducted on the prime agricultural land this project is intended to go on

**Impacts on neighbours:**

* There is increasing evidence both internationally and locally outlining the impacts of being forced to live alongside wind farm projects. The negative mental health impacts can extend to anxiety, depression, interrupted sleep, sleep disorders, and migraines. SWRRA members have been speaking with many effected neighbours of wind farm projects, and their anecdotal evidence paints an incredibly distressing picture.
* There is a considerable history of Supporting Study documents submitted by RE proponents to have data doctored to reduce the impacts of the project, and paint the project in a more favourable light. This is achieved through engaging their own private study companies, rather than utilising independent companies. This is at the expense of the neighbours of the project most specifically in terms of visual and audio impacts.
* The social ramifications of this project will cause division in family and friend relationships that have been around for years, potentially generations. The long-term nature of this project means that the area will create animosity and resentment in relationships
* The increased risk of flood and fire damage will cause a premium increase on the surrounding neighbours insurance policy, without funding to offset this expense. This is based on the fact that flood plain impacts cannot be suitably mitigated, and CFA brigades local to the region have already unified and indicated that they will not attend to fires upon or around transmission lines and infrastructure relating to RE projects.

**Community impacts:**

* A constant strategy implemented by Renewable Energy companies is to offer financial incentives to community groups and organisations to promote a favourable presence in the community. This disregards the concerns of those in the wider community who do not wish to have the project imposed upon their lifestyle and business operation.
* It is often suggested that the financial contributions can improve the facilities and services within small towns, yet considering how many people within a community opposes specific RE projects, it means that the money donated comes at a significant cost too. Disengaging from clubs and community groups because of this offered money means that while a bank account may increase, the pressure on volunteers will dramatically increase as though being disregarded will disengage from their community
* Therefore SWRRA cannot condone accepting financial incentives from RE companies as it exacerbates division in otherwise close-knit communities that historically have relied on its people to support eachother through hardship

**Observations from Murra Warra:**

* The person/company you sign the contract with isn’t the same who is contracted to the maintanence/repairs, therefore they are unaware of and do not care about host contract terms of verbal agreements.
* Just because the RE company has agreed the host can have access to their own paddock when required, doesn’t mean that actually happens
* Hosts must let the company know when they intend to conduct operations in paddock ie spraying well in advance. If the message isn’t communicated properly, and there is RE staff in the paddock when a boomspray arrives, the boomspray must wait until the wind farm task is completed.
* Gates are often left open, and sheep get out
* RE companies claim they will work around the hosts operations, but when the time comes, they get priority
* The exact same amount of supplies were delivered for every turbine – a lot of which were not necessary or used. This was left in a skip bin and went to Manhari metals. Not an efficient construction system
* Hosts are paid on a per megawatt generated basis, therefore: if the turbines aren’t spinning, hosts are not getting paid.