



Stunning display

Photographers, including the Wimmera's Greg Deutscher, were thrilled by a beautiful Aurora Australis on Tuesday night. A member of the Horsham Camera Club, Mr Deutscher captured the majestic scene in five panels at about 10pm. The Aurora Australis appears when solar particles and plasma met the Earth's magnetic field. Photo: GREG DEUTSCHER

Dual land use puts projects in doubt

SHERYL LOWE

THE government has, in principle, permitted two competing land-use projects in Western Victoria on the site of the proposed Warracknabeal Energy Park (WEP) near Warracknabeal.

With no framework for coexistence between open-cut mining and wind turbine projects, the current WEP Environmental Effects Statement has been described as futile until this land-use conflict is resolved.

The proposed WEP is a 219 wind turbine project with a footprint of approximately 26,000 hectares of agricultural land west of Warracknabeal, part of which includes a current exploration licence held by World Minerals PL (WMR).

Public submissions are currently being heard by the Environmental Effects Statement panel in Melbourne.

WMR lodged a written submission and also appeared before the panel in December 2025 during the three-day hearing in Warracknabeal.

Representing WMR, Corey Saitta and David Coventry identified what

they claimed to be the dual land-use issue, as WMR holds an exploration licence for part of the area now being considered for the WEP.

WestWind Energy claims they began monitoring the wind resource at the Warracknabeal site in early 2017 and determined it was ideal for a wind energy facility.

However, WMR successfully applied for a five-year Exploration Licence (EL 7582) in August 2021, with the ability to apply for another 5-year term.

World Minerals has drilled a significant number of exploration holes in the licenced area with the view to applying for a mining licence.

They identified the issues that they foresee if the WEP goes ahead, and the government also approves mining for a portion of the same land.

They raised questions about the government's apparent approval of dual land use and questioned how co-existence would work between a wind farm and open-cut mining on the same land.

The written submission claimed



World Minerals representatives David Coventry and Corey Saitta presented Submission Number 18 to the Environmental Effects Panel in Warracknabeal in December regarding the Warracknabeal Energy Park.

Photo: SHERYL LOWE

there was no plan for co-existence or what, if any, buffer zones, if the WEP went ahead.

With no co-existing framework, it was an impossible situation for both entities to plan, it stated.

It also states that the WEP overlaps the mineral deposits of significant value, which would obstruct access to them, and that while WEP could be established elsewhere, mining must be where the deposits are.

The submitters stated that the EES process would not address the dual land use, so the land use conflict would remain unresolved at the end of the EES.

Maps were provided to the panel and members of the gallery showing the overlap and the deposits of what was described as world-class mineral sands derived from inland-sea sediment.

The unprecedented global demand

for critical minerals was highlighted as a reason for their priority in World Minerals' claim to the land use.

The Murray Basin has long been a focus of mineral deposits, and this should be recognised as a point of national security, they claimed, citing their use in technology and weaponry.

They claimed that, while there was no guidance on the coexistence of renewables and mining, the EES process was futile.

The EES hearing has run over several weeks, beginning at Longerenong, continuing in Melbourne and Warracknabeal at the end of 2025, and again in Melbourne starting January 19, 2026.

The panel received 92 submissions from the public, including Horsham Rural City Council, Yarriambiack Shire Council, the EPA, Baringo Gadjin Land Council, and the CFA.

Twenty-nine submitters requested to be heard during the EES hearing.

Warracknabeal Herald contacted West Wind Energy and the Minister for Environment Lily Ambrosio for comment.