

NEWS

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 co-existence 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 five-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



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

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 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, Baringi Gadjin Land Council, and the CFA.

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

Wimmera Mail-Times contacted West Wind Energy and the Minister for Environment Lily Ambrosio for comment.

Summer tales

A MUM'S WORLD WITH YOLANDE GROSSER

IT'S times like these that I remember there are select days during the Wimmera summer.

When the only sensible activity on the menu is sitting very still with a damp tea towel draped over your head, positioning yourself as close to the air conditioning system as is humanly possible, or plunging headfirst into a swimming pool to reduce your core temperature.

This kind of stifling heat can only mean one thing, it is, of course, the perfect time to throw open the doors of the closest secondary college to enforce the attendance of thousands of overheated teenagers, hyped up on hormones, wearing slightly ill-fitting uniforms.

To survive the elements in close proximity with their peers, supervised by one hundred instantly frazzled adults, hoping everyone understands the importance of toeing the line to avoid a mutiny.

We will all have to drag ourselves away from watching the Australian Open on telly, although watching the tennis players pouring with sweat often makes me feel just that little bit cooler somehow, but much more out of shape.

As the athletes fly around the court, leaping and lunging, I take a minute to straighten up when I get off the couch to make myself another cooling cup of hot tea.

Tennis on the telly does give me the opportunity to regale my family with stories of one summer when I worked at the Australian Open, and that French filmmaker took me back to his penthouse and tried to bed me.

He was so experienced at seduction that I didn't even know it was happening until I snapped out of my bubbly Aussie country girl naivety to smell the roses.

I'm pretty sure it was when he



Yolande Grosser

wanted to show me his jacuzzi that the jig was up.

The irresistible beauty attributed to me in that French accent is difficult for my gorgeous young daughters to believe, as I tell the story while balancing the aforementioned cup of tea on my post-menopausal belly in between sips.

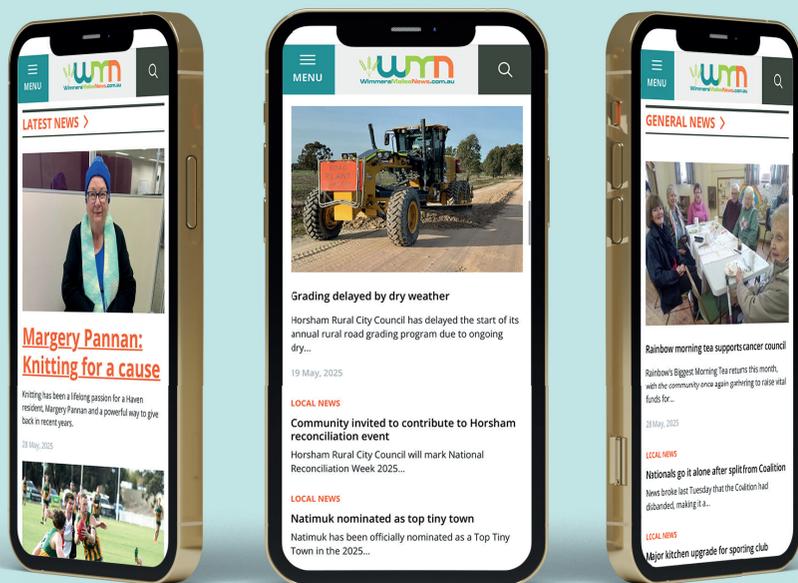
So embarrassed by my stupidity at the time, I kept it under wraps for years, then I used to pull that survival story out to share with my daughters as a cautionary tale when they headed out into the world.

Only now, as I write about it, do I recognise that a huge dose of flattery from a charming French filmmaker might be quite a shot in the arm as I head back into my homely Chaplaincy office to deal with everyday teenage tragedies daily from now until Christmas.

Nah, I didn't fall for it then, and I definitely wouldn't fall for it now.

I can't wait to get back to school, actually. With my staycation behind a whole lot of beautiful people and me to meet in front of me, it will be worth all the perspiration and squeezing into my ill-fitting clothes to do so.

Then again, not much clothing is required in this heat – just a whisper of linen and some sandals should cover it.



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