Insert your name and adress

Insert date

Dear insert title/name

I am writing to implore you to add your voice and all the power of your office to help stop the installment of a 800MW/1600MWH battery system (BESS) comprising of approximately 256 inverters and 512 battery enclosures on a 454.35 acre property on Esk-Kilcoy Road at Kilcoy in the Somerset Regional Shire.

Enervest (a Melbourne Company) submitted their DA to council in September 2023. The public were not notified till 7th May 2024 and submissions to object closed 30th May. Despite this over 300 objections were submitted to Council resulting in Somerset Shire Council asking for much more detailed information from Enervest. They were given an extension till 25th January 2025 to do this.

The 50% of the population of Queensland that live in the greater Brisbane area are at risk due to the ill advised placement of this BESS at the head of Somerset Dam which forms part of Brisbane’s water supply.

On 19th October 2023 SEQwater wrote to Somerset Council to require Enervest to

provide more information on no less than 7 points. There seemed to be more emphasis on the effluent removal during construction stage (expecting that there will be around 160 people employed during construction) and an “erosion and sediment control plan” during construction than on any consideration of the danger of contamination of the water supply nearby post building completion of this facility.

Of greatest concern is the high probability of the contamination that would occur if there were either a fire or a thermal runaway as has occurred in 4 of the 12 Li-ion battery facilities currently already operating in Australia. When they experience a thermal runaway these batteries give off huge amounts of acids, e.g. HF, HCl, and HCN, inorganics such as CO 2, CO, NH 3, SO 2, carbonates, most typical ones being DMC, EMC, EC, volatile organic compounds such as ethylene, acetylene, and methanol, and carcinogens, such as formaldehyde.

When or if the fire brigade tries to put a thermal runaway out (this is impossible but the attempt may mitigate the number of battery enclosures being involved) millions of litres of water are required. This might reduce the amount of gases and smoke going into the surrounding atmosphere but not a likely scenario based on the total size of the Hazeldean facility. We have a local Volunteer Rural Fire brigade stationed at Hazeldean 5 minutes away and an Auxiliary Fire brigade at Kilcoy less than 10minutes away, neither of which is equipped for such an event. Following on from the injuries and deaths of fire brigade members in thermal runaways overseas, many fire brigade members in Australia are refusing to attend such events.

I’d like to point out also that there seems to be no consideration of this in the amounts of proposed water storage on site to manage a thermal runaway. Enervest claim that “Given the nature of the proposed use, the development is not reliant on

the supply of water for operational purposes, Water requirements for the purposes of drinking and fire-fighting will be stored on site within storage tanks to meet the site’s needs. Determination of the relevant water supply will be investigated during detailed design of the proposed development.” I think these need to be determined long before, not investigated during the design stage.

One report entitled”7000Acres – Battery Energy Storage Safety Concerns” regarding Cottam in England pointed out the applicant for a BESS facility there said that “no less than 228,000 litres of water will be stored onsite. This is considerably less than the 5.5million litres considered necessary by the Yorkshire Fire Brigade for 50MW BESS.” It was mentioned that the facility had enough water to deal with two EV car batteries.

If left to burn there is the danger of the toxic gases and smoke that escape drifting over the both New Country Creek and McMahons Creek (both flow through the property) and the dam only 2 klms away or over Kilcoy less than 3klms away. There are also housing estates at both ends of the property to be leased. All these houses have tank water. If smoke and soot from these poisonous gases land on their roofs their water will be contaminated.

My final point on this BESS facility is that water used trying to control a thermal runaway soaks into the ground, and when the batteries are no longer viable they will be left to rot and release all their toxins into the water table.

We will all be left in an Ellen Brochovich scenario as in Hinkley California where Pacific Gas and Electric used Chromium 6 to prevent rust in gas lines from 1950s to 1966. The toxic chemical eventually seeped into Hinkley’s water supply. Even though the town’s people were compensated and many moved away, 30 years later they are still suffering.

When the ineffable pollution occurs it won’t be noticed for tens of years quite probably. I will be long gone but my children and their children will be here to suffer the consequences, and yours.

Please insert Sir/Madam help us to bring pressure on our Somerset Regional Council to ensure this particular BESS facility does not get through the DA process. It will affect millions of people not just those in our shire.

Yours sincerely

Insert Your name

 Your email

 Your mobile