

**BIALA WIND FARM**

**PAC HEARING 2 FEBRAURY 2017**

**KEN & JENNIFER HEWITT**

We reside at [REDACTED] Gullen. We are the neighbouring property to two hosts landowners. Our property is located both on the Eastern and Western side of Grabben Gullen Road. Our boundary on the Western side of the Road is governed by Wattle Creek

From the beginning, both my husband and I made it clear that we were not in favour of the wind farm but felt that it was inevitable and as such decided the best thing to do was to work with and not against.

The items that we wish to address are as follows:-

1. Interruption to our Farming Enterprise during construction and maintenance both on site and on road.
2. Traffic Management Plan and lack of empathy from the State Government regarding our concerns
3. Inability of either party to acknowledge existing dwelling close proximity of the proposed turbines.
4. The size of the structures, 2km radius, sound noise and flickering.

## **1. Interruption to our Farming Enterprise**

On the Western side of Grabben Gullen Road, which is the same side as the proposed Biala Wind Farm, is where we run half of our Breeding Ewes, all of our Rams and our Trade Cattle.

The breeding Ewes that we run on this side of the road are our Merino Ewes. We put these to a Merino Ram. These Ewes and Rams form a significant part of our income.

We have found that it is our best practice to keep the Merino to Merino lambing on this side of the road as it is secluded, quiet, less interference with the sheep and the hills provide better protection. This is paramount to a successful lambing as it is widely known that Merino Ewes have bad mothering skills, especially if disturbed.

Given the close proximity of the construction of the Proposed Turbines, we are very concerned about the work being carried out whilst lambing and joining.

We believe the increased activity and noise from the proposed sit will disturb our ewes which will see them move to one end of the paddock and most likely mismother their lambs or simply not join and this will impact our profit from loss of lambs.

We request that the PAC reject the proposal for the Biala Wind Farm

We request that should the PAC approve the Biala Wind Farm that a condition of approval is the following:-

1. Construction to be ceased within 2 km radius whilst we are lambing in the months of September and October

2. Turbines be removed from 2km of our boundary fence being Wattle Creek.

## **2. Traffic Management Plan**

On meeting with Newtricity's representative Ann Maree Lavery, we raised our concerns over stock movement as we are situated on both sides of Grabben Gullen Road. We indicated as the only landowner in the situation that we would work with Newtricity rather than against if we were shown the same respect.

On numerous conversations with Newtricity's representative, Ann Maree Lavery, we were led to believe that our request was considered fair.

We had two visits from the NSW Planning and Environment. On both occasions, again the officers informed us that Newtricity, via Ann Maree Lavery were in favour of and felt it was quite reasonable in meeting our needs as per our request. (It should be noted that Nicole Brewer, Team Leader, Resource Assessments, NSW Planning was one of these representatives)

It was a huge shock to read the State Significant Development Assessment Report signed off by Nicole Brewer and Mike Young that they consider the construction of a State Significant Development, being a State Renewable Energy Wind Farm and the corresponding construction vehicles coming past will not impact on our business and therefore that we can continue to use local traffic measures.

Both Nicole Brewer and Mike Young signed off the State Significant Development Assessment Report, stating that there will be no increase in the traffic only two oversized trucks per hour during construction phase.

We find this insulting, disrespectful and clearly out of touch on both the Farming Enterprise, the construction of such a State Significant Development, the ongoing maintenance of such a State Significant Development and the fact that it is a main road to the States Capital Territory, it is a 100km road and contrary to the traffic report submitted, it is in constant use.

To state that we will only be affected by no more than two (2) Oversized trucks per hour in the construction phase is ludicrous when the State Significant Development Assessment Report States that the proposed Biala Wind Farm will generate up to 74 jobs. That is another 74 vehicles on the road.

From experience, the workers will mainly travel from Crookwell or Goulburn, given that's where majority will gain accommodation during the construction phase, the most direct route to the site would be Grabben Gullen Road. To believe otherwise, again, is out of touch.

From Goulburn, the most direct route, with the best road for the direct route is Range Road, Grabben Gullen Road. Again to assume that the drivers of any vehicles will take the highway to Gunning and then back across is asking them to add an extra 60km to their trip., so yes they will use Range Road, Grabben Road and before you say in it will be a condition for them to use the highway, I will pre-empt you by saying – IT WON'T BE MONITORED.

We have a relatively new 30 x 10 Shed that we built to be dual purpose – a shearing shed and a shed that holds an internal race to allow us to work with our sheep inside, out of the elements, minimise down time and to meet Work Health and Safety Standards.

This shed allows us to best work with the weather where possible as we are able to shed 500 sheep both underneath and above, which keeps them dry and allows us to do a full days work in wet weather.

Our loss of productivity is minimised.

This shed has been built on the Eastern side of our property, where the majority of our infrastructure is. This means, that the livestock on the Western side of our property needs to cross the road when required, allowing us to work with them. For this, we have in place a Stock Movement Permit which we pay for annually.

The stock, being Ewes and also Ewes and Lambs are bought across the road on a regular basis every 4 to 6 weeks, sometimes more depending on the season. They are bought across in mobs ( a mob comprises of 200 – 400 sheep) corresponding the their paddocks and as such are not always bought across on the same day. The working of sheep on the Western Side of the road usually spans across a period of 1 -2 weeks.

The stock need to travel through the paddocks before coming to a roadside gate. This takes anywhere from half hour up to 2 hours to get the stock to move. This is weather dependant. Livestock dependant, hence it is not practical to simply set a time in place of when we will move them or when they will enter the roadway.

Circumstances can arise where we unexpectedly need to bring the livestock across the road.

The only time we can predict with certainty when the livestock need to be moved is Crutching and Shearing as these are set times with Contract Workers involved.

The plan proposed to Newtricity, via Ann Maree Lavery was

Newtricity to provide the following infrastructure that will allow us to carry on our Farming Enterprise with little to no interruption to both ourselves and to Newtricity.

Infrastructure being:-

1. Holding yards built to accommodate 1 mob of sheep
2. Smaller scale shed from what is currently existing on the Eastern Side of the Road, to hold an internal race, and hold one mob sheep so we can work undercover.
3. Power to the shed
4. Loading Ramp for Cattle and Sheep
5. Access road to the yards to allow us to load a truck with livestock from

We do not feel that our request is unreasonable given the State is so confident of the benefit to the wider community.

We request that the PAC reject the Proposal in full.

We trust that should the PAC approve the proposed Biala Wind Farm, that the abovementioned infrastructure be a condition of approval.

### **3. Dwelling Located within Close Proximity**

In February 2013 we were granted a DA to demolish our existing house and to rebuild a new dwelling.

It is obvious through the pictures throughout the proposal of house 7, that the demolition had taken place.

I note however that throughout the State Significant Development Assessment Report that there is no mention of a new dwelling being built or the fact that we as landholders have just invested over half a million dollars in infrastructure to improve the quality of our living yet retaining our business lifestyle and countryside as it is today.

We also note that the photos submitted of the land showing how close the Turbines are do not reflect an existing dwelling that is standing on Lot 142, DP754115 and that it is visible from the road.

This dwelling is in within 1/2km to the proposed Turbines. This dwelling had residents living in it some 50 years ago, hence it is not a newly erected dwelling and it is in fact very visible from the proposed Site Access (Northern) gateway.

We find it very disturbing that throughout the whole process of the proposal of the Biala Wind Farm, that there is no photographic images of this dwelling.

It is most disturbing that there are numerous turbines surrounding our whole boundary fence, many will be under a 1km radius to this dwelling, many will be very very close to 2km radius to our main residence and given that the Turbines are larger in structure than previous built Turbines (almost 50 metres higher) , we feel the noise and flicker from these Turbines is yet to be determined as cannot be the same as the Gullen Wind Farm as they are almost 50metres smaller.

It should be noted that when Nicole Brewer, Team Leader, Resource Assessments, NSW Planning & Environment attended a field visit on our property, the weather was poor and the visibility was nil.

Nicole was unable to get the full picture from our property of the existing Gullen Range Turbines that totally surround the Eastern Side of our Property and hence could not see the Western Side to determine the outlook of the new Proposed Turbines.

Nicole also declined to be taken to the Western Side of the Property to view the dwelling currently sitting on Lot 142.

This dwelling sits on a holding that makes up 110ha. The current LEP allows subdivision to 200acres. The LEP is revised every 10 years. It is envisaged that with the growth of the area, that over time, the LEP will slowly reduce amount required for subdivision.

It has always been part of our planning for succession planning and retirement that we would use this holding for subdivision.

This is now at jeopardy should the Biala Wind Farm Proposal go ahead.

By the State totally ignoring this dwelling, our investments, and allowing the Biala Wind Farm proposal to go ahead, the Turbines to be erected, especially those close to the boundary and the dwelling, (Turbines, T1, T2, T3, T6, T10, T11, T12) this holding will be rendered totally unsaleable for subdivision.

The State of NSW is threatening and jeopardising our way of life.

Using Wattle Creek as the Boundary Line to our property, we request that all Turbines within a minimum of 2km to the boundary be removed.

We request that the PAC reject the proposal for the Biala Wind Farm.

We request that should the PAC approve the Biala Wind Farm, that the abovementioned Turbines be removed.

We also request that should the PAC approve the Biala Wind Farm Proposal, that they make it a condition that we receive substantial compensation per turbine that impacts the dwelling under the 2km radius to allow us to readjust our loss for subdivision, retirement and succession planning.



#### 4. Size of Structure

The proposed Turbines are significantly larger than the Gullen Wind Range Turbines.

The noise generated from these Turbines at Gullen Range is evident for people living within the 2km radius. We can confirm this as we have been present at local BBQs where the noise from the blades was heard.

Our concern is Proposed Turbines are almost 50metres in height bigger thus will generate more noise and more flicker than existing Turbines.

Our main residence appears to be on the boundary of the 2KM radius. Our whole property therefore is under the 2km radius. We will be working in this constant noise and flickering every day.

We ask the PAC to reject the Proposal for the Biala Wind Farm.

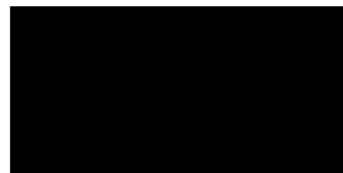
We request that should the PAC approve the proposal for the Biala Wind Farm, that the Turbines be reduced in height to no larger than the existing Gullen Range Turbines

We look forward to hearing that you have rejected the proposed Biala Wind Farm or in the extreme circumstance you approval the proposal we expect to hear that our conditions will form part of the approval.

Many thanks



Ken Hewitt



Jennifer Hewitt