

# Submission to IPC

In support – prepared by Russell Sydenham. February 2024.

## 1. Introduction

My wife and I purchased our property in 2005 and moved there in 2006 (AD05).

We were attracted to the region for its beauty and friendliness, but the main reason was our property and the business of trout farming that went with it. It is located between Morrison's Gap Road and Shearers Road.

We have volunteered in community organisations in Hanging Rock and Nundle. I have been Chairman of the Nundle Community Development Committee (S355 committee), and past President and founding member of the Nundle Business Tourism and Marketing Group Inc. (NBTMG).

I have also been an Industry Representative on both the NSW Aquaculture Research and Advisory Committee (ARAC) and on the NSW Seafood Industry Advisory Council.

## 2. Engagement

As one of the most highly impacted residences and properties, we have had clear, frank and open discussions with the Applicant and associates. We've had access to Someva staff by direct phone call, and Engie staff throughout the feasibility, development, negotiation and application process.

## 3. Biodiversity

I refer to the Biodiversity Assessment Reports and 6.5.7 Biodiversity Offset Para. 220.

Our property consists of about 184 hectares and is immediately adjacent to the proposed development. We have been in close and frequent discussion regarding the setting up of a Biodiversity Offset Stewardship programme on parts of our land. Most of our land is forested and the rest is used for a dwelling, tourist visitation centre and an aquaculture facility, which produces about 10% of NSW's trout. We are also classed as an artisan food producer making smoked and cured meat and poultry products. Our facilities include a restaurant.

A heavily forested property is difficult and costly to maintain with roads, feral pests, weeds and bushfire mitigation taking considerable effort. We recognised the environmental value of our property a long time ago. The Windfarm development will afford us an opportunity to better manage our property from an environmental point of view. Detailed surveys have been done by Biosis with the purpose of setting up a Biodiversity Stewardship programme on the majority of our property. This will provide the Applicant with some of the offset credits required, but will also help to preserve additional Plant Community Types and Flora and Fauna over and above those required by this development. It will also establish a wildlife corridor adjacent to the development area. Furthermore it provides us as landowners an income to better manage our property. (See case study Appendix 1)

## 4. Visual Amenity

A lot has been debated about the visual aspects of the windfarm. Research shows that it is a very subjective topic with some people liking the sight of wind turbines and some disliking them. I am confident in the rigorous standards set by NSW Government and the application of standards that are probably some of the most stringent in the world.

I quote from:

**HILLS OF GOLD WIND FARM Amendment Report APPENDIX R SOCIO ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT**

***“The Australia Institute notes opposition to wind farms can be skewed towards a vocal minority, and with many of the health impacts being strongly subjective there needs to be consideration of the objective evidence and the benefits that wind energy can lead to in terms of climate change and health\*. Investment into cleaner energy sources can contribute to ‘the greater good’ by reducing premature mortality and healthcare costs associated with the negative impacts of fossil fuels.”***

\* The Australia Institute, 2014, Wind Energy, Climate and Health. <sup>1</sup>

## 5. Transport

As a business impacted by traffic movements along Morrison’s Gap Road, I have had clear and frank discussions with the Applicant relating to our ability to deliver our produce to our freight companies. I am satisfied with the solutions offered, including having direct communications (via two-way radio) with the traffic management people during development and construction. There will be some disruption and we have agreed to modify our delivery schedules as the need arises. Improvements to dangerous areas on Morrisons Gap Road will be very welcome for all road users, particularly in wet and foggy conditions.

## 6. Business and Tourism

Business and Tourism has been my focus for almost 19 years since moving to this region. As former President of the NBTMG (2010 to 2016) I have witnessed Nundle grow in tourism numbers. More recently however (Covid, Drought, Bushfires, cost-of living pressures) I have seen a decline in business in some areas. Several businesses have closed and a few more have opened. Division within the community has unfortunately dominated business cohesion and joint marketing efforts. My view is that the region needs money to grow tourism. It needs more investment in new tourism ventures, accommodation venues and retail infrastructure (micro shops, adventure tourism etc.)

I have no doubt that in the short-term, tourism may be impacted by construction activities, extra traffic on the roads and limited accommodation due to construction worker’s needs. However, this is revenue into the region. I am also of the opinion that once the novelty of seeing wind turbines wears off, more experiences are needed to entice visitors to visit the region.

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[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346386389\\_A\\_survey\\_of\\_the\\_visual\\_impact\\_and\\_community\\_acceptance\\_of\\_wind\\_farms\\_in\\_Australia](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346386389_A_survey_of_the_visual_impact_and_community_acceptance_of_wind_farms_in_Australia)

Sealing Crawney road to the Dag Sheep Station and sealing Morrison's Gap Road will help existing businesses and will open the opportunity for winter tourists to see the snow. (Roads are closed when it snows so that our business is isolated from tourists.)

## 7. Energy Security DAD-01

With coal fired power stations scheduled to close in the Muswellbrook area, starting in 2025, energy security is a concern to me as an individual. There seems to be a mis-match between the need to close coal fired power and the development process transitioning NSW to a renewable energy economy. I am concerned about this too.

Anti-windfarm lobbyists will have a clear run at disrupting renewable developments in the future if the precedent is set where Development Applications are submitted and approved, specifically for the purpose of disrupting the development process.

I would like to present some facts relating to the establishment of DAD01 on a neighbouring property:

- Windfarm development and community meetings announcing the process of applying for a SDD May 2018
- 24<sup>th</sup> August 2018 DA2019-0097 was lodged with Tamworth Regional Council (TRC).
- In mid-2019 or thereabouts, notice of the application was placed on exhibition according to the required process. This closed on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019
- Council received 50 objections from 40 individuals relating to the proposed DA and a public meeting was held in Council Chambers on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019.
- The DA was refused by TRC with 15 reasons for refusal given (see attached letter Reference DA2019-0097 4 October 2019) The DA failed to:
  - Address Cl 7.3 of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016
  - Address planning for Bushfire Protection
  - Koala Habitat
  - Objectives of RU1 Primary production zone – minimise conflict between land use and properties
  - BASIX Certificate mis-match
  - Issues relating to TRC Development Control Plan 2010
  - Fencing details
  - 2WD access road
  - Documentary evidence that the site has legal right to access the site over lot 210/DP 819485 and adjoining reserve
- We objected to this development.
- Subsequently, a private certifier was engaged and a Complying Development Certificate issued for a site a short distance from the original DA. Very few of the previous reasons for refusal by TRC seem to have been covered in the CDC. However, TRC was obliged to accept the CDC and under the SEPP (Exempt and Complying Codes) 2008, Part 3D, there are no third-party appeal rights to the approval.
- I have compiled a matrix (see below) to show the greater impacts on this situation.

<b>Impacts of DAD 01</b>			
	<b>Remove turbines</b>	<b>Allow turbines</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Loss/ gain in generation capacity</b>	384 MW	450 MW	66 MW
<b>Total Number of turbines</b>	47	58	11
<b>Impact for State of NSW</b>	Reduction in available <b>new</b> renewable energy.  Higher cost of energy production on this site.	Increase in renewable resource of 54 MW.  Lower cost to produce energy at HOGWF.	66 MW  Economy of scale would make it cheaper to produce.
<b>Ask CDC owner to reconsider different location</b>	no	yes	The property comprises about 1100 acres and currently has a house 2 km from the boundary. This would fall outside of the impact of wind turbines (2.073km)
<b>Community support</b>	Low	High	-
<b>Capacity to affect other renewable projects in NSW &amp; Australia</b>	High	Minimised	-
<b>Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost to build dwelling about \$95 000.00.</li> <li>• Loss to project 11 turbine sites.</li> <li>• More than \$100M in construction value.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Reduces TRC VCA by \$1.6M.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	Greater value to Community, and TRC VCA.	\$1.6M gain for Tamworth Regional Council.
<b>Direct Community benefit (Enhancement Fund)</b>	\$33 000 less p.a.	\$33 000 more p.a.	\$990 000 over life of project at present value.

<sup>2</sup> My estimate only.

<sup>3</sup> My estimate only

## **8. Conclusion**

I ask the Independent Planning Commission to approve the recommendation to proceed with the granting of the Development Application for the Hills of Gold Wind Farm. I also ask that the Commissioners consider the potential impacts of allowing DAD 01 to disrupt the application to the extent proposed by DPE, and to re-instate 11 turbines affected by DAD 01.

PREPARED BY Russell Sydenham

# Landholder story: Income and environmental benefits

A Belmore River property protects the environment and provides a steady source of income to fund land management.



A Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement site was established a number of years ago on the Belmore River, located approximately 340 km north-east of Sydney in the Macleay Hastings IBRA subregion.

The landholders entered into the scheme to preserve the natural beauty of the property, which is set between national parks on the northern and southern borders and creates a natural corridor between them.

The site is still used by family and friends for recreational enjoyment and camping, and is a treasured location near the coast.

‘We love the abundance of native flora and fauna and the peace and quiet.’

Establishment of the stewardship site has provided the landholders with the opportunity to preserve natural habitat while the land pays for itself, without needing to resort to development.

‘The stewardship allows us to maintain the lifestyle opportunities of the property, while providing a steady source of income to manage the land.’

*Page last updated 17 April 2023*

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme/generate-credits-biodiversity-stewardship-agreement/case-studies-and-landholder-stories/landholder-story-income-and-environmental-benefits>