

To whom it may concern

Objection to the Hills of Gold wind farm near Nundle and Hanging Rock.

My name is [REDACTED] and I am the co-owner of Lot 13 on Morrisons Gap Road, property [REDACTED] on Barry Road, Nundle and [REDACTED], Nundle. All three properties are impacted by the proposed transport routes and two are visually impacted. Naturally, I object to the Hills of Gold Wind Farm.

This submission is an extension of my presentation at the Public Meeting on 1.02.24

Leaving aside the personal impacts, I truly believe there are good projects and bad projects, and this one is off the scale on the bad side.

Over the last 6 years I've read thousands of pages related to the Hills of Gold Wind Farm and occasionally related to others. I've discovered there are wind farms with access straight off the highway and power lines going over the top. They are sited on windy rolling hills surrounded by large grazing properties with many hosts, not one family hosting the majority of the project.

Take a look at the benefits this Project is *supposed* to deliver and the reason the Department thought it should be approved:

The Project is located in the area with a good wind resource, a relatively low population, and is capable of delivering an early connection ahead of the New England REZ.

"The project is therefore in the public interest", the Department concludes.

This public interest can only be realised if the above are met, and the environmental cost of the early supply of harvested energy from this particular windy location is worth the risk.

The wind resource:

To comply with current legislation and guidelines, turbines from 53 to 63 must be removed as recommended. Additional turbines need to be removed to account for not assessed or poorly assessed properties, and in the case of assessed properties, to get away from the heavy reliance on vegetation screening, not agreed to by the property owners, nor proposed with an input from the bush fire specialists.

This leaves little of the Applicant's wind resource.

Low population:

The Applicant and DPHI justify the location due to low population, but fail to recognise an existing tourism industry (SEARS item) with tens of thousands of visitors. Nundle and Hanging Rock are not sleepy rural villages, but truly are diverse and vibrant "hot

spots”. Census headcount is not a true reflection of the area’s population, be it permanent or transient.

Crown Lands protected the Teamsters Rest campground but DPHI ignored the impact of the wind farm and its infrastructure on tourism of Nundle and Hanging Rock villages or Sheba Dams, a much busier campground.

Early connection:

The proposed road upgrades on the route from the port of Newcastle and within the Muswellbrook shire mutually benefit the Hills of Gold wind Farm and the New England REZ.

The Hills of Gold wind farm is unable to proceed ahead of REZ.

Additionally, Hills of Gold suffers from access issues and might not be able to proceed at all.

Commissioners need to ask themselves, is this wind farm worth approving? Or will you leave us with another ghost wind farm on the ridge, never resolved, but always there.

Public interest:

This project is supposed to benefit the broader NSW community, yet just the announcement of it has already delivered a documented public dis-benefit, to the Nundle community in particular. It resulted in the community fracture, and an associated economic loss with a cancellation of a major event run by volunteers.

The construction period of approximately two years will further the damage. Some tourism focused businesses might not be able to recover. This will have a flow on effect within the broader Tamworth region.

The scarring of this landmark ridge, visible from Tamworth to Muswellbrook, would leave a long lasting legacy.

Did you know that real estate agents in Tamworth sell views to this range to their buyers?

Here is an example: *“...The most beautiful views surround this lovely property, with the occasional fall of snow on the Nundle hills, your views are to die for..”*

This is an ad for a property at 216 Country Road Tamworth, a \$2.8 million, 100 acre pad some 56 kms away from the wind farm. Somebody needs to tell this agent to let the buyers know the “Nundle hills” will be studded with red lights.

Here is another one, a luxury home on 81 hectares on the New England highway:

“...spectacular views of the famous Nundle hills to the south...you will wake each day to stunning mountain views from the home’s master bedroom...”

This one is from the suburban house in Tamworth: “... *open plan entertaining kitchen, living and dining area which overlooks the backyard and views to the Nundle hills...*”

This wind farm wears the title of the “most hotly contested wind farm in NSW”. It needs to go down in history as a landmark case where the community won, because developers didn’t do their homework. It will set the standard for other projects to follow.

But if approved, nothing will be sacred anymore. We may as well put turbines on the Kosciuszko mountain if the windy location is the only thing that matters.

Road noise:

When the original Traffic Noise report came out I read through it and thought that the road classification and the 60 dB noise limit did not make sense for roads that never see any truck movements. I called Anthony Ko and said: “ this doesn’t add up, they are local roads” and he replied: “yes, we picked it up too”. It’s a shame this was a verbal conversation and not in writing. Because they picked it up and did **nothing** with it.

I am pleased that the confirmation from Council was recently received, following enquiry from HOGPI, that Barry road between Forest Way ana Morrisons Gap road is indeed a local road, and so is the Morrisons Gap road itself.

I believe that this road mis-classification is a serious issue. I believe it might have happened before at other wind farms. If the Project’s transport exceeds noise levels at certain receivers, the Applicant must negotiate agreements with impacted property owners.

I believe that DPHI Assessment report mis-classifying roads as sub-arterial potentially saves the Applicant significant amounts of money.

In the case of Hills of Gold wind farm, impacts need to be recalculated, so residents know where they stand in terms of compensation.

I believe the potential impact of this on Hills of gold wind farm, and other wind farms, needs to be investigated further.

Visual impact mitigation:

The EIS must incorporate the following elements:

- an outline of any mitigation and management options proposed, **including consultation with affected property owners regarding the proposed mitigation works.**

Consultations with the affected neighbors were not adequate, consultations regarding the mitigation measures were non-existent.

The Applicant just made the statements that they will plant trees in front of affected properties, disregarding whether the trees are wanted by the landowners or not.

Following is the extract from the Wind Energy Visual Assessment Bulletin 2016 which provides the guidelines for wind energy development and assessment process:

..”Vegetation screening ... may be an option for selected viewpoints. However, this mitigation option should not be the first that is considered. A key reason for this is that visual impact issues often cause conflicts between the community or individual residents and the proponent’s proposed wind energy project, and people value landscapes and particular views of the landscape. Vegetation screening can potentially remove such views. Given this, it should be kept in mind that mitigation using vegetative screening will be subject to further consideration by the consent authority. However, in appropriate situations and where residents have requested vegetative screening of proposed wind turbines, this mitigation option can be useful.

Due to the great height of most wind turbines compared to that of surrounding trees, generally the vegetation must be relatively close to the viewer to be effective.

In addition to vegetation as a mitigation tool to screen views to wind turbines, consideration should also be given to the potential for existing vegetation to be lost, removing visual screening that may have been relied upon to ensure reduced visual impacts from wind turbines. Loss of vegetation can occur through circumstances such as trees falling over due to senescence, trees blowing over in wind storms, trees being chopped down, or trees burning down in bushfires...”

Instead of the screening as a mitigation measure being requested by the affected residents, in the case of Hills of Gold the screening was imposed on them.

No consideration was given to the future loss of the screening either, be it planned (landowner clearing) or accidental (fire, drought, wind, snow breaking limbs).

This wind farm has not been planned, or assessed, in accordance with the Bulletin.

Transport Routes:

I would like to reinforce again that no consent will be given for the Barry Road/Morrison's Gap Road intersection's **use** or **modifications**, which would result in the encroachment on our property.

Close attention needs to be paid to the clearing of **Snow Gum TEC** along Morrisons Gap Road, completely unnecessary due to the duplication of the proposed OSOM routes.

Engie had an opportunity to display a “model proponent” behavior and remove this route which is proposed to be used by a selected component only. This would also remove the duplication of the transport impacts to the community.

I request that the transport route via Old Hanging Rock Road, Barry Road and Morrisons Gap Road is removed from the project.

The location of the turbines close to the road itself presents an unacceptable public risk in the long term, and a major disruption to the public road asset in the short term.

I repeat my request that turbines 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69 and 70 are removed. I support the removal of turbines 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62 and 63.

Project footprint:

Proceeding South along the ridge, turbines 50 and 49 are trespassing on a public asset, the Crown road corridor, either wholly or partially, and are interfering with the Crown land with associated earth works. I request that they are removed or relocated.

Turbine 47 is located in the State Forest, on NSW Government land, and the Applicant continues to deny this. It is possible that the royalties from turbine hosting will be collected by the private person, but the legal burden of the decommissioning is on the shoulders of NSW tax payers.

Turbines 45, 43 and 40 can not move sufficiently within the 100 meter micro siting allowance to achieve the recommended 130 meter set back from Ben Halls Gap NR. I request that they are removed.

I request that batching plants B3 and B3 are relocated from the catchment area containing Sphagnum moss.

I request that the location of the Wombramurra Trig station within the project’s footprint is assessed.

This assessment is riding on the back of incomplete EIS and supported by incomplete Constructibility Advice. The two main components of the wind farm, the location of the optional substation, and the Western Connector road, are missing and have not been addressed.

The constructability and accessibility of this Project is therefore questionable.

I request that the Hills of Gold wind farm be rejected.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Do-Not-Reply IPCN Submissions Mailbox](#)
Subject: Hills of Gold wind farm
Date: Wednesday, 14 February 2024 4:11:19 PM

Good afternoon and my apologies

I have successfully provided my submission which is now uploaded on the IPCN website but I just realised that I have forgotten to mention two important details. I have stated in my submission that we will not consent to the trespass over our property. I have forgotten to ask that our property, Lot 13 DP 249183 be removed from the Schedule of Lands of the Recommended Instrument of Consent. Also, we have never been contacted by the Applicant regarding the encroachment issue and no negotiations are in progress.

I hope this is acceptable and this information can be added to my submission, if it is possible.

Thank you

[REDACTED]