

Our ref: SSD-9550

Prof Mary O’Kane  
Chair  
Independent Planning Commission  
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## Subject: Bowmans Solar Farm – Referral to the Independent Planning Commission

Dear Professor O’Kane

The Department has completed its assessment of the merits of the application for the Bowmans Creek Wind Farm (SDD 10315).

The application is referred to the Independent Planning Commission for determination as there were more than 50 unique submissions objecting to the proposal.

Bowmans Creek Wind Farm Pty Ltd, owned by Ark Energy Projects Pty Ltd (Ark) proposes to develop a new State significant wind farm located approximately 10 kilometres (km) east of Muswellbrook in the Muswellbrook Shire, Upper Hunter Shire and Singleton Local Government Area’s.

The project as proposed would have a generating capacity of approximately 347 megawatts (MW) and includes a new 330 kilovolt (kV) transmission line to connect to TransGrid’s existing network at the Liddell substation.

During the exhibition of the environmental impact statement (EIS), the Department received a total of 142 submissions from the community, in addition to advice from 18 government agencies and the three host Councils. Of the public submissions, 131 objected to the project and 11 supported the project.

After reviewing the submissions, Ark made a number of changes to the project to address issues raised in submissions and agency advice, including:

- deletion of four turbines (T10, T33, T60 and T61), re-siting of turbines T8, T9 and T32 and minor micro-siting adjustments to several turbines;
- removal and relocation of site access tracks, a net reduction of approximately 10 km in underground power reticulation and a reduction of approximately 14 km in overhead power reticulation; and
- an overall reduction of the development footprint by approximately 98 ha.

## Department of Planning and Environment



Under the delegation from the consent authority (i.e. the Commission for this development), the Department accepted the amended application for the reasons outlined in the Assessment Report.

During its assessment, the Department raised concerns about the visual impacts of five turbines (T64, T66, T67, T68, T69) on three Muscle Creek residences (F18-1, F19-1 and G17-1) and requested Ark consider further mitigation, including removal of turbines or neighbour agreements. Ark subsequently secured neighbour agreements with the owners of two of these residences (F18-1 and F19-1).

As an agreement was not secured with residence G17-1, the Department has recommended deletion of T64 and T68. As a result, the total number of turbines would be 54 and the project capacity would be reduced to 335 MW.

Ark also offered to enter into a voluntary planning agreement with each Council, to support the provision of social infrastructure via a community benefit fund, with annual contributions of \$686 per MW installed agreed in principle.

In assessing the merits of the project, the Department has considered the environmental, social and economic impacts of the project, submissions on the EIS, relevant environmental planning instruments, the suitability of the site, and the public interest, in accordance with the requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

During the assessment process the Department visited the site, and consulted with local residents, Councils and relevant government agencies.

Based on this assessment, the Department considers that the project is approvable, subject to the recommended conditions of consent. I have attached a copy of the Department's assessment report and other relevant documents for the Commission's consideration.

If you have any questions, please contact Iwan Davies on 02 9274 6296 or via email at [iwan.davies@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:iwan.davies@planning.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Iwan Davies".

Iwan Davies

**Director**

**Energy Assessments**