

I object to the proposed Hills of Gold wind turbine power station.

I am the grandson of one of the owners of Lot 22 Morrisons Gap Road Hanging Rock. My maternal grandparents have owned this land for over 40 years and being a Gamilaroi man my ancestors have ties to this very land and its surroundings.

I feel a strong connection with this land through my maternal grandparents and through my paternal ancestral heritage.

The thought of the enormous destruction to the land, the fauna and flora causes deep hurt. The uprooting of our native animal's homes for a project that could be re-located in a less sensitive environment is reminiscent of the past uprooting of our traditional owners. This land was first cleared of its native people and now the government is considering clearing the land of the last remaining natives, our fauna and flora. Have we not learned from the mistakes of our past? The proposed works will be a forever scar on the face of the land.

The proposed project is at the wrong site.

'The Great Dividing Range or more correctly the eastern highlands, is not a true mountain range, but it dictates the drainage patterns and water availability of much of the central plains of eastern Australia. Australia's largest and most permanent river system, the Murray and Darling Rivers and their tributaries, has its headwaters in the highlands. These resource rich watercourses and their wetlands were a focus of Aboriginal settlement long before Europeans laid claim to the continent'. (source: Joanna Boileau, Thematic History of Nundle, Manilla and Barraba, 2007)

WATER

We have access to our own natural water sources on our property.

The creeks on our land are our only water source, we drink from our clean creeks.

During drought season water is scarce, we watch the rivers and creeks creep down and sometimes completely dry up.

In 2019 our neighbour (the major host) trespassed onto our property and installed a water pump in our creek without our permission.

The incident was reported to EPA and NRAR, we were advised not to tamper with the equipment but to keep records. The pump remained on our property for approximately 3 months.

The Applicant's response to water sourcing is:

The four viable options available to source the estimated 55 ML of water required for construction include:

- o Council water supply, with agreement with the relevant Council (s);
- o extraction from an existing nearby landowner bore, with agreement from the landowner;
- o extraction from a new groundwater bore; and
- o extraction from a surface water source (e.g. Chaffey Dam or the Peel River).

‘extraction from an existing nearby landowner bore, with agreement from the landowner’

Agreement from the landowner reads as an afterthought.

The nearby owner’s consent to extract from their bore should be their first thought.

Where will the water required for construction and maintenance come from? Will our water again be illegally extracted?

We don’t have any assurances that our water supply and quality will not be affected during the construction of road widening, new infrastructure and erection of enormous wind turbines, as well as the ongoing maintenance of the site for the next 35+ years.

If all our water sources are depleted what recourse do we have? Water is our scarcest resource. We need answers before approval not after.

CONSULTATION

The applicant has not conducted proper consultation. Consultation has been in the form of marketing and promoting the project as opposed to consulting with neighbouring land owners, hearing concerns and addressing issues raised.

Majority of the proponent’s consultation records are records of their marketing campaign.

I confirm that no face to face consultation has occurred with lot 22 owners.

The proponent identifies us as NAD 8 owners.

The below table was submitted by the proponent and uploaded to the IPCN website 14/02/2024.

2 Neighbour consultation

The Project has an extensive history of consulting with neighbours within 5km of a turbine, as well as neighbours out to 8km from a proposed turbine. The years of consultation has resulted in 16 neighbour agreements executed and those people now set to receive annual payments from the project. The interactions referenced in Table 1 include all emails, campaign emails, phone calls, in person meetings and any virtual meetings.

Table 1 - Non associated dwellings that made an oral submission during the Public Meeting

Dwelling Identifier	Distance from closest turbine (km)	Consultation History
NAD4 B & C NAD 8	B 2.73	<ul style="list-style-type: none">58 interactions with this landowner from March 2018 to December 2023
	C 2.52	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1 face to face meeting6 phone callsNeighbour benefit sharing program offered

The proponent lists NAD 8 along with NAD 4 B & C collectively.

NAD4 B & C are not associated with our property, they are different owners with different lot numbers, however we have been lumped together in the table of consultation.

This is deliberately misleading record presentation, it gives the appearance that we have all been consulted to a very detailed length when in fact it has been the opposite.

The table notes a total of 58 interactions, 1 of which was face to face, 6 were phone calls in a period of 5 years and 9 months.

There are 3 separate lots but only 1 face to face meeting, how is this adequate consultation in 5.75 years?

NAD 4 B - 405 Shearers Road	- 2 owners on title
NAD 4 C – Lot 2511 Shearers Road	- 1 owner on title
NAD 8 – Lot 22 Morrison Gap Road	- 6 owners on title
<u>Total</u>	<u>= 9 owners on title</u>

I confirm that there hasn't been any face to face meetings with lot 22.

We request clarification as to what the 58 interactions represent? Are these campaign emails? Consultation emails? Are these zoom meetings? This is very vague. Marketing emails are not a form of consultation.

Again, who exactly were they interacting with over the last 5.75 years?

This is one example of the proponent's ongoing misleading and deceitful conduct through inaccurate records. We request further investigation into these records in order to find the truth of the matter.

INACCURATE RECORDS

I refer back to this same table and note that our lot has been excluded from the distance column. Only NAD4 B & C are listed.

We are in fact closer to the proposed site, the closest wind turbine being 1.16 km.

This is another example of the deliberately misleading tabulation of information by the proponent through the omission of essential facts.

LAND ZONING

The existing land zoning is RU1 Primary Production.

The proposed use does not comply with many of local council's zoning objectives.

Tamworth Regional Local Environmental Plan 2010

Current version for 30 June 2022 to date (accessed 28 September 2022 at 01:14)

[Land Use Table](#) > [Zone RU1](#)

Zone RU1 Primary Production

1 Objectives of zone

- To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base.
- To encourage diversity in primary industry enterprises and systems appropriate for the area.
- To minimise the fragmentation and alienation of resource lands.
- To minimise conflict between land uses within this zone and land uses within adjoining zones.
- To permit subdivision only where it is considered by the Council to be necessary to maintain or increase agricultural production.
- To restrict the establishment of inappropriate traffic generating uses along main road frontages.
- To ensure sound management of land which has an extractive or mining industry potential and to ensure that development does not adversely affect the extractive industry.
- To permit development for purposes where it can be demonstrated that suitable land or premises are not available elsewhere.

2 Permitted without consent

Environmental protection works; Extensive agriculture; Forestry; Home-based child care; Home occupations; Moorings; Roads

3 Permitted with consent

Aquaculture; Cellar door premises; Dual occupancy (attached); Dwelling houses; Extractive industries; Farm buildings; Intensive livestock agriculture; Intensive plant agriculture; Kiosks; Landscaping material supplies; Open cut mining; Plant nurseries; Roadside stalls; Rural workers' dwellings; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 4

4 Prohibited

Amusement centres; Cemeteries; Centre-based child care facilities; Commercial premises; Crematoria; Depots; Eco-tourist facilities; Educational establishments; Entertainment facilities; Exhibition homes; Exhibition villages; Function centres; Health services facilities; Heavy industrial storage establishments; Home occupations (sex services); Industrial retail outlets; Industrial training facilities; Local distribution premises; Mortuaries; Registered clubs; Residential accommodation; Respite day care centres; Restricted premises; Service stations; Serviced apartments; Sex services premises; Storage premises; Vehicle body repair workshops; Vehicle repair stations; Wharf or boating facilities; Wholesale supplies

The purpose of the wind farm project is to generate electricity commercially and not for private use therefore must operate as a power station.

WHAT IS A WIND OR SOLAR POWER STATION?

A “wind or solar power station” is defined in the *Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Regulation 2015 (Regulation)* to mean a wind or solar farm that is recognised as an accredited power station as defined in the *Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000*.

This includes each component that comprises a solar electricity generation system and each component that comprises a wind power station, for example each wind turbine.

Importantly the infrastructure must be used for the purpose of generating electricity for a commercial purpose and, therefore, must be operated as a power station rather than for private use.

Land which contains a wind or solar power station on the surface of the land will not be considered vacant. That is, if a component of a wind or solar power station is on the surface of the land, the land will be treated as developed. For example, land that contains a wind turbine will be treated as developed. In contrast, land that only contains a component of a solar farm that is underground (e.g. an underground cable) will still be treated as vacant. This is because the location of the cable is unlikely to affect the use of the surface of the land.

SUMMARY TABLE OF TREATMENT OF LAND WHICH CONTAINS A DEVELOPED WIND OR SOLAR FARM

	Foreign persons		Currently a wind or solar power station owner or operator
	Land is currently used predominately for primary production	Land is not currently used predominately for primary production	In all scenarios
Developed wind farm	Agricultural land (and noting that in addition it is developed commercial land)	Developed commercial land	Developed commercial land

Does the proponent intend to apply to participate in the Large Scale Renewable Energy Target by applying to become an accredited power station?

When is a wind farm not a power station?

Developed commercial land use conflicts with land use within the existing zone.

Power stations

27 February 2019

RET

Power stations that generate electricity from an eligible renewable energy source can apply to participate in the Large-scale Renewable Energy Target (LRET) by [applying to become an accredited power station](#).

The [Renewable Energy \(Electricity\) Act 2000](#) and [Renewable Energy \(Electricity\) Regulations 2001](#) specify the requirements that a power station must meet for accreditation.

Once a power station has been accredited, large-scale generation certificates (LGCs) can be created for electricity generated from the power station's renewable energy sources. LGCs can only be created for generation that occurs on and after its accreditation start date.

LGCs can be sold to entities with liabilities under the LRET (mainly electricity retailers) to meet their obligations, or to companies looking to voluntarily offset their energy use or emissions.

The key steps involved with participating in the LRET (for power stations) are obtaining power station accreditation, creating LGCs, and maintaining power station accreditation. The graphic below provides links to further information on these steps.

Power stations can apply for accreditation until 2030 [when the LRET is legislated to end](#).

A list of accredited power stations is available on the [Register of accredited power stations](#).

TRANSMISSION LINE ROUTES

We would like confirmation that there are no plans intended to access our property for any purpose including transmission line routes. Also, are there any intentions to subject our land to any easements?

LAND VALUE

The proposed project will detrimentally affect our land value.

Our land is used as a lifestyle lot, the proposal to change the site from primary production to Industrial/Commercial power station conflicts with our land use.

The definition of Market Value according to the Australian Property Institute is 'the estimated amount for which an asset or liability should exchange on the valuation date between a willing buyer and a willing seller in an arm's length transaction.'

The pool of potential buyers after the wind farm is approved/completed will significantly decrease. This is evident by the overwhelming 65% (approx) against the project. Essentially shrinking our potential buyers market by 65%-99% creating considerably less competition/demand which in turn reduces the value/price, Basic economics tells us the higher the demand, the higher the price, the lower the demand the lower the price.

The property may become unsellable with the exception of one buyer being the proponent, creating zero market competition.

The uniqueness and natural environment of our location are what makes our land valuable and this will be undermined by the wind farm project having a closely situated turbine that is almost as high as the tallest building in the Sydney CBD over looking our property just 1 km away.

We have held this property in our family for over 40 years we are not willing sellers, a reluctant sale is not a true market value, and the only reason we would sell would be due to the wind farm project.

If this proposal was submitted over 40 years ago before we purchased our land we would not have purchased.

The effects on our land value caused by the wind farm project is catastrophic.

I implore the Commissioner and panel to reject the Hills of Gold Wind Farm Project in its entirety, at the bare minimum please remove turbines 64-70 inclusively.