

I am Selena Sylvester and our family home is NAD 33 [REDACTED] of Peel Road. Along with my husband John I am a director of our Family farming business Sylvester Cattle Company and our children work in the business alongside nine valued employees. We purchased Wombramurra Station in 2004 after a long and thorough search through NSW, QLD and Victoria to find the right place. The unique fertile valley that runs along the Peel River surrounded by the majestic ridgeline which is habitat to countless and varied flora and fauna attracted us to the Property. The area was quiet and peaceful and night sky is amazing. Water was a feature of the property and the size allowed future subdivision with magnificent views and house sites.

The Hills of Gold Wind Farms Proposal Changes all this.

Section 233 taken from DPE Assessment Report Recommendations IPC

The Department acknowledges that the assessment process has been protracted and very difficult due to inherent site constraints, substantial community opposition, major amendments to the project requiring additional exhibition, and delays in information being provided by Applicant. Surely this is a project sited in the wrong location.

Before I continue, I would like to draw attention to the NSW Map of wind resources found in the current draft guideless which clearly demonstrates there are many other potential locations to satisfy the transition to renewable energy.

At the Bush Summit in Tamworth August 2023, I met with the Prime Minister and discussed the Hills of Gold Wind Farm he stated rural communities like ours need support and our views need to be recognised and encouraged me to follow up with The AEIC review which I attended in Tamworth and discussed at length the issues with this project and ways the process could be improved with Andrew Dyer the commissioner. The Prime Minister also facilitated a meeting with the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP Minister for the Environment and Water and also passed my correspondence to the Hon Chris Bowen Minister for Climate Change and Energy. After numerous attempts on my behalf, I am still waiting for these meetings to be confirmed.

The visual and noise studies carried out by the proponent from our house inadequately address the impacts on our residence the suggestion of using vegetation for screening is unsuitable. We have the most visually impacted non associated residence in the project being 3 sector of 60 degrees exposure (section 117 DPE Assessment) however as we are recorded as 5.51km from the closest turbine ie outside the blue line this doesn't seem to matter. As stated in the report commissioned by the DPE by O'Halloran we will likely see all of the turbines from different areas on our property and over 30 from our residence. Our night sky will also be polluted by the 28 turbines that require lighting. As in line with the DPE recommendations we request removal of turbines 53 to 63 and 9 10 and 11 as a

minimum We also have two other residences on our property that currently have Transit DAs in place and houses onsite waiting for DA to be finalised by Tamworth City Council. Both these residences will be within 5 km of a number of turbines and from a visual and noise perspective are highly impacted We requested photomontages wireframes and noise assessments to be carried out from these sites and removal of turbines 53-63 and 9-11. As noted on the Map we also have Preliminary DA in place on two other blocks of Wombramurra the commissioners have heard from William and Skye in their presentations to the IPC. One of these house locations will be 1.5km from the closest turbine and extremely close to the transverse track and the other will be a similar distance of the turbines. This further backs up our request for removal of turbines 53-63 and turbines 9-11 and in addition WTG6, WTG12, WTG22,WTG39 and WTG40

I Agree with DPE comments in the Assessment Report Recommendation to the IPC

turbines dominate the landscape at NAD 33 our home

The Visual Assessment Bulletin states a development should not dominate the existing visual catchment.

However, I totally disagree with information in Table 11 stating vegetation screening would be adequate mitigation which is contradicted by advice given in Bush fire safety Table 17 which states

RFS also expressed concern about the potential for any additional landscaping proposed for visual mitigation at dwellings to create a bushfire risk. The Department has recommended conditions requiring the Applicant to consider bushfire risk (including the provisions of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019) when implementing visual mitigation.

The only satisfactory outcome is removal of all turbines this would also address our concerns of noise impacts at all our dwellings that have not been evaluated or have been inadequately addressed.

As landholders on both sides of the Head of Peel Road a major concern to us is use of Head of Peel Road and the associated Right of carriageway granted over Kirks Road. In the Assessment report Head of Peel Road is noted as emergency access only and we have sought clarification from both the DPE and the proponent regarding this. We have not received any confirmation detailing what this will mean. We would like the commissioners to look further into this and are happy to grant access through the right of carriageway for emergency services only which include fire, police and ambulance however this does not extend to any service vehicles as part of the proposed project.

Being a Veterinarian protection of threatened and endangered species plus every day animal welfare are a huge concern to me. The Mitigation processes suggested by the

proponent I feel are totally inadequate given the sensitive location of this project. It is difficult to train native animals to use wildlife corridors as we use pedestrian crossings. The way animals learn is through experience and this can often result in misadventure with lethal consequences. I agree with the DPE recommendation for removal of turbines 24, 28,42 and would like to add WTG 39 for reduction in biodiversity impacts.

I question the section 219 in the Assessment Report Recommendations to the IPC which states

*The project would generate a credit liability of 5,770 ecosystem credits and 9,362 species credits requiring offset under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme for the project.*

This appears to be associated with the 184ha of clearing required for the project as Stated in the DPE Assessment Report Recommendation to the IPC

I cannot find where the biodiversity offset credits which are noted in the report and on the Engie website as being associated with unauthorised land clearing that has already occurred within the project footprint are accounted for and I ask the commissioners to seek clarity on this arrangement so a transparent, honest information can be presented to the community.

I would like to challenge the standard construction hours as noted by the DPE and request construction and transportation only to occur on weekdays for socio economic community reasons.

We are not prepared to sign any neighbourhood agreements in relation to this project as we feel the impacts of all the unidentified risks are too great.

### **This Project should not be approved on policy grounds**

Our Parliament and the State's planning authorities are already well aware of the community outrage caused by poorly considered and inappropriately sited Renewable Energy (**RE**) projects.

This is such a project.

The establishment and delineation of **specific RE zones** is a welcome step in addressing the harm which badly planned RE projects have caused and are still causing to the roll out of policies designed to reduce our carbon footprint.

In this case the IPC must ask itself: what purpose does a designated RE Zone serve if RE projects are supported outside those Zones by the very authorities which have created them?

RE Projects that are proposed to be developed **outside** clearly designated RE zones, as here, produce at least 3 unwelcome consequences:

- They squander community goodwill and perpetuate outrage.
- They create precedents which undermine the message of government that it listens to, and responds appropriately to, communities that are called upon to bear the brunt of the sometimes very intrusive infrastructure needed to reduce carbon emissions for a wider benefit.
- They endanger the trust which we all place in orderly planning and development in NSW as administered by bodies including the IPC.

RE projects which seek consent outside RE Zones do not warrant the support or encouragement of our planning authorities.

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**What if the IPC nonetheless considers that this Project should be approved outside the New England REZ?**

While we are opposed to this project for the reasons already submitted and repeated here today, if the IPC is nonetheless minded to grant project approval, it should only do so on the basis that it is conditioned as follows:

Deferred commencement condition

1. Consent for the project shall not operate unless and until the applicant for consent has demonstrated that it has binding agreements in place for all access routes traversing any private land, including private roads, to and from the project site for the construction, operation and maintenance of the project works.

## Operative conditions

2. If any works are carried out by or on behalf of the consent holder which result in, or are likely to result in, any of the impacts listed below on or which affect land adjoining the project site, the consent holder must take immediate steps to avoid or mitigate those impacts; rehabilitate, repair or remediate the land so affected; and/or compensate the affected land owners where avoidance, mitigation or other measures are inadequate:
  - a. intrusive noise at any dwelling house;
  - b. excessive dust;
  - c. loss of access to upstream water;
  - d. soil erosion;
  - e. weed infestation;
  - f. fires of any kind;
  - g. stock disease transmission;
  - h. breaches of any Biosecurity Protection Plans; and/or
  - i. damage to any property improvements.
  
3. Where any land neighbouring the project development site has dwellings (or approved dwelling sites) located on it and the construction, operation or maintenance of the approved project works causes any adverse amenity impacts and/or results in a diminution in the value of that land by more than 20% as assessed by a registered valuer, the holder of the approval for the project shall comply with any request by that affected landowner for acquisition of that neighbouring land conformably with the Voluntary Land Acquisition Process<sup>1</sup> under the State Government's "Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy."

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<sup>1</sup> [Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://www.nsw.gov.au)