

14 July 2024

To Commissioner Sykes and Commissioners,

I, **Katherine Anne Mackaway**, write to **OBJECT** to the Hills of Gold Wind Farm SSD9679.

I made a previous submission of objection to the Planning Department regarding the Hills of Gold Project and submit this objection with reference to the material currently made available for public scrutiny.

I deeply object to the Planning Department's change of position from their previous statement to the developer to remove 17 turbines from their plan and to now allow 15 of those 17 turbines to be re-instated to the development so that the developer has a financially viable project.

This is deeply concerning on a number of fronts:

- A Planning Department being swayed by big business being able to be profitable does not have the best interest of the general public, the environment, stable and economical future power production or regional communities in mind. The fact that set strictures can be so easily overturned means that faith in our Planning Department's ability to direct us into an environmentally sustainable future is betrayed. Developer's that cannot build a financially sustainable project within the well published guidelines should know that well before submitting an EIS. If they waste their time and money attempting to railroad their way through communities and the planning process, then it should be at their loss NOT result in a complete backflip by the very department who is tasked with ensuring ALL guidelines are followed.
- The precedent being set by this backflip is a horror to so many regional communities of our state. One does not need to look too far before seeing the number of regional towns fighting for their right to a

voice in how their communities look and work. There is genuine fear within generational and new farmers alike, that we are not going to have a right to conduct our business to the best of our ability as the blind progression of renewable energy projects are forced upon us. We have been told again and again that agriculture has significance and yet with voluntary acquisition being supported by the Planning Department in their backflip, the very real fear of mandatory or capital acquisition follows. We have worked too hard and for too long to provide global quality food, fibre and forestry to have the constant threat of renewables hanging over us. If this backflip decision is allowed to continue the precedence it sets is terrifying to every rural community under threat of these projects. The cost to tax payers of any type of acquisition of land should also be publicised such that the tax payer is aware of the additional cost to them that this rush for projects is costing them.

- It is the purpose of the Planning Department to ensure that all developments sit within the predetermined guidelines, and they should be resolute in that purpose. I am sure there are proposed projects that are situated in locations where communities are happy to host them and where the access to transport and transmission lines make much more sense both environmentally and economically without adjustment of the guidelines. These are the projects that need to be accepted and promoted.
- Allowing this change of planning stricture to take place sets a terrible precedent for the behaviour of other developers. In our own community and the communities of dear friends the constant complaint about developers is their inability to communicate in a fair and open manner with the whole community. They enter communities picking at small groups until they have a few interested parties and then treat the rest of the community with contempt. With the Hills of Gold project developers being pandered to in the fashion the Planning Department as been lowered to, no community is safe from the contempt of developers who are not really interested in providing a cheap electricity alternative. Their only interest is profit.

My thanks for allowing public scrutiny of this change of Planning Department guidance with respect to the Hills of Gold project. It is my deepest hope that the original Planning Department response will be reinstated and upheld. Every citizen of NSW should have trust that the Planning Department is resolute in their enforcement of the guidelines to which we should all be bound by.

Katherine Anne Mackaway