

Submission to IPC on:

DPHI Response to IPC Questions - Hills of Gold Wind Farm SSD-9679 - July 2024

I could not be any more unenthused at the prospect of reading through more Hills of Gold Wind Farm documents. This is my fourth public submission in objection to this egregious industrial scale electricity generating development. I wanted my fourth submission to be as professional, emotionless and factual as possible, however, respectfully, it is not.

I fear my conscientious efforts to disclose my personal experience with this project have done nothing except publicly disclose information about myself and my family that under any other ordinary circumstances, I would choose not to. Sure, I could have made my submissions anonymously, but I felt it disingenuous to do so. My decision to speak up was motivated by fear of leaving some rock unturned, providing a portal to a loophole for the opportunistic Applicant to bolster their argument that their renewable energy development is 'a good project'.

Over the course of the assessment of this project, we've witnessed qualified experts, respectively recognised in their various fields of expertise, raise alarming concerns over discoveries relating to discrepancies or absence of vital information necessary for the decision makers to be able to make informed decisions about the project. The condescension shown by the Applicant hasn't been restricted to qualified experts, I have also been subjected to the Applicant's condescension from my own personal experience with dealing with them. I think they would prefer I call it 'consultation'. As well as the negative experience of dealing with the Applicant there has also been the general public casting aspersions on my character of being nothing but 'a bloody NIMBY' for raising legitimate concerns about what the Applicant's are proposing to do to our community.

During a discussion at Nundle earlier in 2024 between a Someva representative and a relative of mine, the representative made it clear that despite the determination made by relevant government authorities on the fate of the project, that they were busy preparing to take the matter to court regardless. This, to me, is a very good indication of the Applicant's level of disrespect for the NSW assessment process and our community. Do people really have to wonder how this project has irreversibly fractured our community when this is how the community and the assessment authority are treated by the Applicant?

Imagine finding out the land you own, to which you have great emotional attachment to, is about to possibly become collateral damage from a watershed moment in NSW Government decision making history where a condition of development consent enables a French owned retail company to acquire your land as a means to mitigate the anticipated unacceptable adverse impacts on your land from their activities. The inclusion of the recommended condition of consent enabling a large private beneficiary to acquire land to mitigate their planned activities is incomprehensible. The imposition of this condition will set a precedent for future development. It is providing the catalyst of infinite possibilities for property developers in NSW needing to mitigate unacceptable adverse impacts caused by their projects on the built & natural environment. This is not within the public interest moving forward and makes a mockery of the NSW planning system.

The DPHI have, 'come out swinging' in their response letter to the IPC because the Applicant has now 'forced' them into this position of last resort by imposing the condition due to the lackluster attempts made by the Applicant with their 'consultation efforts':

*"The Applicant is now placing the burden on the decision maker to resolve this matter against the wishes of the previous landowner by requesting a condition enabling the Applicant acquisition rights. The Department notes there is no other energy project currently in the system where an applicant is forcing the burden of resolving such matters onto the decision maker."*

What about the landowner they're referring to? what about the irremediable position the condition is forcing them into? The phrase 'damned if you do and damned if you dont' comes to mind. How has this SSD application been allowed to progress to this stage in the assessment process without resolution of this particular matter, it seems to be carrying quite a hefty weight in determining the project's viability. Instead of a resolution through genuine consultation, it appears the proponents have used their public platform to spout what seems to be misinformation in an attempt to discredit the landholder and 'force' a resolution.

Also in the DPHI's response letter, there is a deviation from the current Wind Energy Guidelines (for State significant wind energy development, 2016). The 2023 Draft Wind Energy Guidelines have been used to justify reinstating turbines 53-63, as the current Guidelines lack assessment methodology for assessing the visual performance objectives. The current Guidelines also include private acquisition of property as a last resort mitigation measure for unacceptable impacts, where the Draft guidelines do not include this. So if consideration can be made to the Draft guidelines on some matters, is it acceptable to deviate from them to justify a mitigation measure that is no longer considered an acceptable solution.

The DPHI's response letter suggests that the transition to renewable energy isn't particularly going to miss this project should it not proceed as there is a significant generating capacity from others in the pipeline, *"...with close to 22,000 MW nameplate capacity in the planning assessment pipeline in NSW."* The project with 62 turbines is expected to contribute 372 MW of generation capacity towards NSW's goals (according to the IEAPET advice) which only equates to a 1.7% contribution.

I am sure that I have not left the IPC wondering how exasperated I've become with the assessment of this project over the last 6 or so years. Instead of trying to put it into my own words, I would like to draw on the closing comments from the DPHI's response letter, from which also leaves very little doubt how exasperated they've become from their dealings with the Applicant and their Hills of Gold Wind Farm project.

I ask the IPC to please determine SSD-9679 with rejection.

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