



Ms Nicole Brewer
Director Energy Assessments
Department of Planning and Environment

Via: Anthony.ko@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Brewer

I am writing in my capacity as the Director of the NSW Office for Veterans Affairs (OVA) to comment on the State Significant Development known as Paling Yards Wind Farm, application SSD-29064077. I note the application relates to the proposed development of a wind farm with up to 47 wind turbines and associated infrastructure.

I have been contacted by residents of the village of O'Connell about this development, to raise their concerns about potential damage and possible vegetation removal along the O'Connell First World War Memorial Avenue, which is noted as the access route for this project.

The O'Connell First World War Memorial Avenue is a significant and valued living war memorial dedicated to fallen soldiers of the First World War. The conservation of the Avenue should be prioritised in recognition of its significance as a memorial to O'Connell's First World War service people, its historic and social importance to the village of O'Connell, and its value as part of NSW's broader military heritage.

The Avenue is a planting of more than 150 Desert Ash trees located south of the intersection of O'Connell and Beaconsfield Roads, within the O'Connell heritage conservation area listed on the Oberon Local Environmental Plan 2013. It was planted by the O'Connell community around 1925-1927 as a living tribute to remember and honour those they had lost in the Great War. Almost 100 years later, the memorial is actively maintained by the community and is used in Anzac Day and Remembrance Day commemorative services. It is also notable that the NSW Government has provided funding to help protect and maintain the Avenue, on more than one occasion.

Each war memorial in NSW uniquely commemorates our state's military service, and together they represent a hugely significant record of our shared history. The OVA recommends that during the determination of this application, consideration be given to an alternate transportation and access route that does not impact on the O'Connell First World War Memorial Avenue. I also ask that the Avenue be included in any further heritage studies undertaken as part of this project.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Mackaness
Director Office for Veterans Affairs
Department of Communities and Justice

7 November 2023