

NSW Planning Assessment Commission Determination Biala Wind Farm Project (SSD 13_6039)

12 April 2017

The Planning Assessment Commission has granted consent to State significant development application (SSD 13_6039) from Newtricity Biala Proprietary Limited for the Biala Wind Farm Project, subject to conditions. The decision follows the public meeting in Crookwell on 2 February 2017.

In reaching this decision, the Commission carefully considered the concerns raised by the community at the public meeting and the Department of Planning and Environment's assessment report.

The Commission has responded to the community's disappointment over Newtricity's exclusion of a transmission line from the project, which would connect the windfarm to the electricity grid. Where the Department recommended a consent condition that required Newtricity to obtain a separate approval for a transmission line before starting construction, the Commission has instead included a deferred commencement condition. The deferred commencement condition represents a stronger requirement and it will prevent Newtricity activating the consent in any way, unless and until it obtains permission for a transmission line.

The Commission has also included several additional provisions in the consent, over and above the conditions recommended by the Department. The Commission has added further micro-siting restrictions so that turbines nearest to dwellings to the east of the project site are not permitted to be micro-sited any closer to those dwellings.

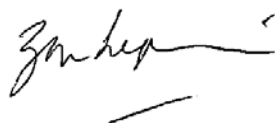
In addition and before making its decision, the Commission directed Newtricity to negotiate further with the landowner of a farm on Grabben Gullen Road about the impacts of construction on stock-crossing and lambing. While Newtricity reported that a full agreement could not be reached with the landowner, the Commission has accepted, on balance, the mitigation measures that Newtricity subsequently proposed. These include temporary traffic controls on Grabben Gullen Road during stock-movements, and a restriction on constructing three nearby turbines during lambing.

The Commission has also added provisions to the consent, which require Newtricity to consult with local school bus operators so that construction traffic can be delayed during school bus service times (or so that school buses can be escorted), and to prevent heavy construction vehicles from travelling on the main street of the Gunning town centre.

The Commission notes the benefits of the project as outlined by the Applicant, which include contributions to renewable energy, employment and capital investment in the locality, and accepts the remainder of the Department's assessment and recommendation for approval.



Mr Garry West (Chair)
Member of the Commission



Professor Zada Lipman
Member of the Commission



Dr Maurice Evans
Member of the Commission