

27th November, 2022

To whom it may concern,

**RE - HILLS OF GOLD WIND FARM APPLICATION NO. SSD 9679**

I am writing regarding the revised Development Application and the response to submissions to the Department of Planning Industry and Environment (DPIE) by Engie Australia & New Zealand for the proposed **Hills of Gold Wind Farm** at Nundle & Hanging Rock NSW.

Whilst I concede the need for renewable energy such as wind and solar and support this for the future I strongly believe that in this instance a project of State significance such as this one **should not be built** adjacent to the historical town of Nundle and Hanging Rock.

I have taken into consideration the revised DA provided by ENGIE and **strongly oppose this project** due to the following reasons;

1. The proponent refuses to recognise that the overall site, surrounding areas and the community they have chosen for this project **is not the right fit**. The latest revised DA has not addressed many of the issues raised by a concerned community in the previous submissions.
2. Major issues such as the management of water runoff, landslips and water supply for the purpose of construction have been ignored. With such vast land clearing, stockpile areas, major excavation, large scale construction, road modifications and constant vehicle movements, the amount and quality of water runoff will be difficult to manage. With the unprecedented weather patterns of late this is a real concern. Contaminated or silted water running into the river systems and then downstream into the Chaffey Dam will upset the balance of nature unless strictly monitored. Locals as well as the residents of Tamworth are aware of the impact. The amount of water needed to dampen dust, produce concrete and maintain construction safety standards has to be questioned yet again. Will the supply of water retained on site as stated in the DA be enough? Where and how will it be stored? Will the water kept for use impact the quantity and quality of downstream water flow? All of these issues should be resolved prior to the approval phase with complete transparency for residents, for all scenarios, both flood and drought.
3. The new proposal for the use of the State Forest Crown Land quarry area is inconclusive. Information provided in the DA doesn't give assurance that the Western operation area alone will suffice the construction needs. The DA states (Note 4.2.2) that the Eastern quarry area would only be used should the quarry materials demand from the Project exceed anticipated extraction from the Western Operation Area. This information should be realised prior to construction, otherwise what is the point of these reports with such ambiguity remaining.
4. It is estimated that 1366 one way trips to site (Table 6-6 & Table 6-7) will take place. If this estimation can be calculated then why is there no confirmation on whether the Eastern Operation quarry will be used?

5. The reports provided in this DA submission still leave many elements of the proposal remaining as subject to further assessment. Road options, access roads, substation locations, plus the use 33kV and/or 330kV overhead lines for BESS/ Batching/Substations plus water storage areas.
6. The visual impact of the changes has not been addressed adequately. It now seems that motorists travelling southwards along Crawney Road will likely have intermittent and temporary views of the hardstand infrastructure as wells turbines & powerlines. According to the report the road is predominantly characterised by dense patches of roadside vegetation which will help screen these views. (Note 6.3.2.6). As a frequent user of this road I am disappointed at the cavalier approach to destroy such a beautiful scenic route out of Nundle in order to gain approval for this proposal.
7. The implementation of the Western connector road and Transverse track to the turbines/powerlines will create a devastating impact. The reports often use the word 'could' to refer to matters relating to this. The topography and soil is hardly conducive to this form of construction (turbines, powerlines and access roads) without extensive remodelling and remediation ie. cutting, filling and stabilising soil. Soil run off and erosion of the edge of a mountain cutting, the clearing required to reinstate this, the visual impact upon the ridge line, the biodiversity impacts (regardless of how big or small), all 'could' be a real possibility and should be considered by whoever is to approve this project.
8. The new proposed routes in and around Nundle are an insult to the community. The entrance to Nundle is currently picturesque and lined with established trees which enhance the township and should remain as is. Taking a portion of the land behind The Peel Inn and the corner of Jenkins and Innes St will produce dust, construction noise, local traffic delays and inconvenience to the community. According to the Statement of Heritage Impact - Peel Inn it is referred to as a temporary road (refer to point 5.1).  
How long is temporary and what will replace it and where?  
Will this be rebuilt again for decommissioning?  
Will there be a need for large vehicles for ongoing maintenance issues?  
More inconclusive information.....  
The proposed routes (Route 1 Blade Route & Route 2 Nundle Bypass) encompass an area prone to flooding. This raises concerns for locals regarding the behaviour of flood water, and heavy vehicle access during wet weather periods.
9. Nundle prides itself on its history and tidy town. The Peel Inn is not the only building worthy of a mention, in fact most of the businesses in Nundle are operating out of old or historical buildings. There are many others such as the Courthouse (museum) in Nundle, The Dags on the Crawney Rd, the cemetery at Hanging Rock and many more. The fragile condition of some of these should be respected and considered and traffic routes designed accordingly.  
Also, industrial icons such as wind turbines do not really compliment the history.

Other comments I would like to make relating to the proposal, the process and procedure;

1. I have travelled along the Crawney Road for many years and in more recent times I have noticed two freshly graded access roads which appeared. It is now obvious that these are the proposed option access roads for the trucks to gain access to the site. Clearly this has been considered prior to the more recent amended DA and have been purpose built.
2. One particular landowner allegedly is acquiring many of the properties that will be impacted by this proposal.
3. Land clearing has been taking place for several years now in areas that have clearly been earmarked for this proposal.
4. A construction sponsorship fund of \$150,000 to support community initiatives during construction has been offered by Engie. Community enhancement funding of \$3,000 per turbine per annum for the operational life of the Project is also offered.  
Does this not take place after the proposal is approved?  
Engie have already sponsored seven groups and given funding (reference current Engie Newsletter). This should not be allowed in Corporate or Government sanctioned developments such as State Significant Developments.... before approval has been granted!
5. This proposal has created a substantial monetary gain for some, whilst others live with the promise of further employment, more schools and better facilities and infrastructure. Oh, and the promise of cheaper rates for electricity. I personally don't want Nundle to change.
6. Engie expressed that it posted out notices (Refer 5.2.3 Amendment Report No. 2) to locals as part of its community consultation process. I have a letter box which is an obvious landmark and to date have not received any correspondence from Engie regarding this proposal.
7. Engie's community hub is now in town. For those who don't know this proposal has not yet been approved it appears by the flag and signage (Figure 5.1 Amendment Report No. 2) that it already has. Nowhere does it state that it is a community hub for a 'proposal'.

The locals of the area have endured the ongoing proponents determination to continue with amending the original proposal in order to gain approval. The community was told in the early days that if the majority of locals oppose the project it will not go ahead. Clearly this is not the case. What other surprises will ENGIE put forward before they realise the Hills of Gold Wind Farm is not right for this location.

I would appreciate your interest in my concerns and ask that you consider supporting the majority of local residents in any way possible to help dismiss this proposal.

Sincerely yours,      Local Landholder - Nundle District