

## **Hills of Gold Wind Farm Development Application Number – SSD-9697**

Nundle is a quintessential hamlet typical of small communities settled amongst the Great Dividing Range. It is a spot, that I often visit for its picturesque landscape and quaint village atmosphere. But like so many other localities on the range, it is threatened by heavy industry, on an unprecedented scale, by wind development.

The Great Dividing Range is Mainland Australia's most productive, biodiverse, and substantial topographic feature. Extensive areas have been developed for agricultural and pastoral uses, and the parts too rugged for agriculture are used for forestry. There are over 90 National Parks and Reserves that encapsulate the greatest biodiverse forests in Australia, which apart from being home to critically important ecosystems, also provide enjoyment to thousands of people including many tourists seeking relief from the built environment.

But governments are recklessly offering up this rich, biodiverse region to build wind farm developments on, potentially transforming it into an industrial wasteland.

Why then is government singling out the most valuable rural and natural environments like the Nundle Hanging Rock, Crawney and Timor locations to be handed over to developers to destroy – it makes no sense.

For there are vast arid regions in the Far West where the sun shines relentlessly and the wind blows constantly day in day out, providing a reliable source of renewable energy and where land holders would welcome these developments as an additional source of very much needed income.

This particular wind farm is extremely site sensitive, in that the developer proposes to build sixty four 6.2MW skyscrapers on top of a 1200-1400 high metre part of the range, which is only 3 to 8 km from Nundle and Hanging Rock Villages and neighbouring Ben Halls Gap Nature Reserve and Crawney Pass National Park. Endless kilometres of service roads with batters the width of a football field, due to the topography, will need to be cut through pristine forests, rendering the landscape to that of a moonscape.

But apart from this destruction, there are a number of other extremely important issues in to consider, namely:

Infrasound: As turbines become larger and larger, infrasound is becoming an increasingly bigger issue and more and more people are getting ill or having prolonged sleep deprivation from its effects. In order to establish the level of infrasound, peak signals, as opposed to average signals need to be measured as the peaks are what is impacting on not only the physical and mental health of human beings, but also on farm animals and native fauna. Impacts from these large 6.2mw turbines, as proposed for the Hills of Gold Wind Farm, will be far more significant than the smaller 2-3mw turbines presently in operation elsewhere in Australia. It is now well recognised by doctors that 10 and 30% of people react to it, across a distance of 20klms or more, causing insomnia, heart problems, stress, fear and depression to name a few. Not to mention the effects on the mental health of the thousands of nature fauna in this sensitive area and its particular effect on the 'fright and flight response' of these animals.

No one really knows exactly what amplitude these new generation turbines will be emitting. But modelling probability and common sense would suggest that a 6.2mw turbine will exceed the critical amplitude threshold of 80db chronic exposure level of infrasound, well over a distance of 20klms,

which could present as a health problem to any human or animal living within a distance of 20kms of a turbine. That of course would encompass the township of Nundle and its localities.

**Birds and Bats:** Contrary to the remarkably low mortality rates mendacious consultants, continue to advise government bureaucracy of, these monsters will in fact be chomping up an average of 200 birds and 400 bats annually, including god only knows how many raptors, per turbine annually (Ornithologist Bernd Koop 2012). And given the proliferation of birds and bats in this area that incidence could be far higher. Multiply that by 64 turbines – government and developers then have the mass slaughter of 12,800 birds and 25,600 bats for this one project alone annually on their conscience.

**Koala Habitat:** Thousands of native fauna will be ungraciously displaced from their natural habitat with the clearing for roads and turbine sites, including 46.2 ha of Koala habitat. This is totally unacceptable given that they are now classified as an endangered species.

**Bisphenols A and S** – The turbine blades are made up of epoxy resins containing these toxic chemical compounds, which when unconfined are a ticking time-bomb. These endocrine disrupters are shed into the air as a fine dust every time the blades rotate. Unfortunately this dust is finding its way into water systems, polluting farm dams and town water storage supplies world-wide. So why wouldn't it finish up in Nundle's (Tamworth's).

**Traffic:** Years of chaos will be caused by traffic congestion, disruptions to emergency services and commercial transport links. Based on statistical information there will be an additional 311 daily vehicle movements, including 156 trucks rumbling through the quiet little township every day. Nundle will be grid locked – Ambulances, post, domestic food supplies, livestock transport, agricultural supplies, machinery and tourism, which Nundle relies on, will be at a standstill.

**Stranded Assets:** With the absence of decommissioning bonds being mandated on the developer, who will be footing the bill to decommission these turbines, pay the land fill costs for the turbine blades and decontaminate the soil so future generations of farmers can continue to produce food.

I strongly object to the development and I truly do feel for all the people and wildlife that will lose a peaceful and serene environment under dark night skies, to aviation lighting.

Ian McDonald

Grazier & Conservationist