

Objection to Hills of Gold EIS and subsequent amendments:

**A. I am objecting to this Hills of Gold project for its specific impacts on the following grounds:**

1. **Industrial scale development in a predominantly rural area.** Converting the rural environment into an industrial style landscape. Where are the development controls over appropriate land use? This is designated prime agricultural land and wind “farms” such as this are converting it, without any due consideration to the existing value of this land by providing food and fibre. There are other areas of less agricultural value to be used.
2. **Size of “farm”.** I acknowledge that the no of turbines has been reduced. However, irrespective of the number of turbines proposed, this is still a significantly large development.
3. **Significant environmental destruction during construction.** The process to build this farm is to the detriment of the environment.
  - a. **Roads.** To transport the very long blades, large components, batteries and other infrastructure, new roads will need to be built or enlarged and land reclaimed. This will require huge quantities of road materials and water to be sourced and transported, resulting in traffic disruptions, road damage, increased levels of dust and changes in watercourses and reduced road safety. I don’t trust the capability of local gov’t to control and manage this. The proximity to a National Park and sourcing the materials from a quarry within the park is environmental vandalism.
  - b. **Turbine pads.** To build the pads sufficiently large enough to house these turbines, huge quantities of concrete need to be transported and poured. How are these ‘plugs of concrete’ to be dismantled at the end of the farms’ life? How is this good for the environment?
  - c. **Road network between turbines, transmission lines.** This network of roads will fragment the habitat of animals and put further pressure on already struggling communities to breed and live. Many in the NE community are working hard to establish habitat corridors for wildlife at great time, effort and personal expense. These roads seem to be at odds with these environmental aims.
4. **Environment impacts of this size and capacity are either know to be negative or largely still unknown.** Our birds, koalas, bats, wombats, bees, soil health and waterways are particularly sensitive to these sorts of changes. Covering our productive land with huge turbines, network of connecting roads, transmission lines and substations cannot be healthy for future farming uses nor the environment.

The negative impacts include:

- a. **changes to wind patterns on the weather, and aerial animals** especially those who use thermals for flight such as our raptors and those who use sonar to navigate such as bats,
- b. **destruction of habitat,** (goes without further explanation)
- c. **fragmentation of animal thoroughfares,**

- d. **turbine vibrations** within the soil on living organisms eg worm and nematode health. Our soil health is of paramount importance especially for farmers, our nation and the Earth, all of which rely economically and physically on the soil for its ability to absorb carbon, to be healthy enough to be productive, and to ultimately sustain life.
  - e. **Potential leaching or shedding of toxins** into our waterways, wind currents and soils of toxic chemicals (paints and resins) that turbines and batteries are made of. This may not only ruin our landscape and endangers our wildlife but limits future productive land use, possibly rendering our land uninhabitable.
  - f. **Negative impact on Tourism prospects.** Our area is scenically beautiful and interactive. Covering it in Renewable Energy (RE) projects is ruining that industry.
  - g. **Livestock health.** Horses, cattle and sheep are particularly sensitive to changes in wind, smells and sounds including infra sound.
5. **Causing long term discord within our community.** Majority of community is against this project. Neighbours will have opposing opinions and objectives (eg money vs health) and this will cause fighting. It is typical of many communities with RE projects. This will leave lasting possibly generations of discord. Some of these communities have had generation of connections. This is not in line with the objectives of NSW 'stronger country communities programme' but in fact helps to fragment and creates dysfunctional communities.
6. **Uncertainty for landowners** relating to future land use, entitlements, responsibilities, decommissioning, access rights, stock management, livestock health etc.

**B. I am objecting to this Hills of Gold project for its contributing effects to the CUMMULATIVE IMPACT on the following grounds:**

The impacts listed in A. above also have a cumulative impact on the NE area. The following list of impacts/comments are in addition to those above.

- 1. **Unfair and disproportionate burden on our NE region to provide such large energy capacity requirements.** The "capacity" is not the actual power that is provided to end users as most of the energy is not generated due to periods of low or high wind and most is lost in transmission to end users. This RE capacity ratio is normally approx. 30-40% of other energy sources and as such is not reliable, nor consistent nor efficient, leading to misinformation and unrealistic expectations on its ability to provide our power needs.
- 2. **Having so many RE projects in area will ruin our landscape and future land use.** There is potential for the products that go into the making of the turbines to be toxic and unstable. Shedding of the paints and resins is highly likely and could be spread on the wind currents over large areas of land rendering them unproductive and possibly legally uninhabitable for humans, animals including livestock.

3. **Unknown technological advances and obsolescence.** The lifespan and thus the obsolescence of this RE technology is unknown and highly likely will result in our beautiful landscape littered with RE waste.
4. **Economic and employment gains are not assured.** RE's are not the cost savings that are advocated. This is especially so when one factors in the capital costs of government subsidies, cost of upgraded and/or new infrastructure including transmission lines, and storage projects etc.
5. **Jobs will mainly be generated in the building phases** and not during the ongoing production phase. The net Energy Industry employment is probably negative as jobs are being lost in the existing traditional energy markets.
6. **Rate of Regulations Updates, on all levels of government, aren't keeping pace with the rate of Development approvals.** We have 1 chance to get this right, why rush it? It's the wide west out there in RE land. Get the correct rules and regulations in place, then transition to RE. I would rather pit my chances against the possible future risk of sea levels rises of just several cm's over several future centuries, against the immediate destruction of our environment, land productivity, and communities and loss of power, food and fibre security.
7. **Supply of materials and labour - bottlenecks and shortages.** These RE projects will put added pressure on costs of housing and rentals, materials, water and waste infrastructure, farm and industry labour and general household prices.

## IN CONCLUSION:

RE, such as this wind 'farm' will only generate intermittent, inefficient, costly and unreliable power at great long term and irreversible damage/expense to our:

- environment (our air, our water and our soils - those very things that sustain us - we should be going out of our way to help),
- social and community fabric,
- physical health,
- livestock and animals, and
- economy and businesses.

Cumulative risks far outweigh the possible gains (if any).

I implore those in the power to:

- control these RE project,
- consider the scale and number of projects in our NE region,
- to pay attention to the disparity of RE risks to RE rewards and
- to show restraint, and caution when considering the approvals.

Our future is in your hands. Don't put it at risk please.