

Director - Energy Assessments
Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment
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To whom it may concern,

On 19th March, 2018 Nundle Business Tourism and Marketing Group Inc (NBMTG) members voted to “oppose the Hanging Rock/Nundle industrial wind farm proposed by Wind Energy Partners.”

This motion has never been challenged in nearly five years, noting that Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd has since been bought by Engie.

NBMTG Inc members met with two WEP representatives on 27th October, 2020. Two of the 12 NBMTG members present expressed support for the Hills of Gold Wind Farm. The remaining 10 members present raised concerns about Transport, Overstated Jobs Figures, Tourism Economy, and Community Enhancement Fund.

I was the NBMTG Inc representative on the Hills of Gold Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee from June 2019 to October 2022. I attended nine out of 10 CCC meetings and attended two updates. This was an extraordinarily stressful ordeal. It required a lot of reading beforehand to be informed about the proposal, and to be able to ask meaningful questions. I felt belittled and patronised by the proponent’s representatives when asking questions about the proposal. Volunteers should not have to feel like this when they are representing and acting in the best interests of their community.

The Hills of Gold Wind Farm Amended Development Application continues to propose unacceptable impacts to tourism businesses at Nundle, Hanging Rock, Crawney and Timor.



Nundle street trees provide a spectacular autumn backdrop to the Great Nundle Dog Race.

One of the greatest insults is the proposal to remove street trees planted by past generations of Nundle Garden Club members.

The Nundle street trees are a source of enjoyment and beauty for residents and visitors, as well as providing welcome shade and coolness in the village in summer, and spectacular colour in autumn.

Nundle's street trees are often featured in photography for tourism marketing.

The entrance to Nundle is particularly appealing and yet the proponent proposes creating a raised road across a paddock behind the pub for oversize overmass blades, connecting Oakenville and Jenkins Streets. Is this blade access required for the life of the project?

This would have a detrimental impact on residents and visitors to Nundle. The Jenkins St/Crawney Rd option has other problems, two major bridges have not been assessed for load capacity, there is environmentally sensitive land between the road and project area, and there is an unresolved land claim. Roads proposed for steep country have no detail provided.

The alternative blade transport proposal, Nundle Loop, is not possible because landholder permissions are not in place.

Further disruption to residents and visitors from road works required, to make the roads from the New England Highway to the project area passable for OSOM and heavy vehicles, has not been adequately assessed for impacts on tourists and Nundle businesses.



The visual impact of the proposed 64 wind turbines on the 1200-1400m range is well documented in previous submissions.

However, the proponent has not listened to the despair of the majority of the local population about how this would impact their sense of place.

It is not good enough for visual guidelines developed in Sydney to determine at what distance from wind turbines we will be impacted.

Even at 12-20km distance from wind turbines, at the intersection of Lindsay's Gap and Nundle Roads (photograph provided), the local majority of community members are distressed at the proposed transformation of the range that they hold so dearly. It is the vista that makes them feel like they are home.

This is the vista of the range that contributes to the economy of Nundle, Tamworth and neighbouring centres by attracting visitors.

The NSW Government SEPP Amendments: Renewable Energy and Regional Cities safeguards major regional centres, restricting utility-scale wind development within 10km of a commercial core, and 5km of residential areas.

This same protection is not offered to smaller centres, despite the Infrastructure SEPP Amendments recognising that wind farms can have significant visual impact and contrast with the natural environment in which they are situated.

It states that utility-scale renewables can “alter the character, scenic quality and people's enjoyment of the landscape.” Policy amendments should be made to protect the character and visual landscape quality of highly scenic areas like Nundle and Hanging Rock with a pre-existing tourism industry.

The proposed wind farm is 50km from major regional centre Tamworth, yet has the potential to impact on the liveability of the city as it aims to achieve 100,000 population.

Nundle is a small town with a surrounding population of 600 people. As a result of its high scenic beauty, Nundle is a year-round destination for visitors.

The visual and landscape features of Nundle and surrounds are important contributors to the social and economic value of the Tamworth region and provide a vital contribution to the rural character of the area.

It is important for attracting the Visiting Family and Friends tourism market segment to Tamworth, as well as intraregional and intrastate tourism.

Recognising the importance of protecting the high scenic beauty of Nundle would also serve to benefit the future growth of Tamworth.

The Tamworth Regional Visitor Economy Plan states that Tourism is worth almost \$300 million annually to the Tamworth economy, directly employing more than 1200 people.

NBTMG Inc members are enthusiastic to contribute to the Visitor Economy Plan and help encourage visitors to stay longer in the region. I attach a link to NBTMG Inc's first ever destination video which highlights the distinctive character of Nundle and Hanging Rock.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1kA-jJe8G0>
<https://nundle.com.au/>

The video was shown for the first time at the Visitor Economy Plan and Tamworth Tomorrow strategy launch last month.

NBTMG Inc members have proven themselves to be proactive, entrepreneurial, and collaborative over the group's 11-year history.

I recently spoke at a NSW Small Business Month Business Breakfast hosted by Liverpool Plains Business Chamber because Nundle is admired for its tourism popularity. It was a chance to reflect on what our community is doing well, working with Visit NSW, Destination Tamworth, and neighbouring Local Government Areas, communicating on socials, pooling member marketing funds to advertise cooperatively, promoting each other's businesses, referring customers, and mentoring new business owners.

The Hills of Gold Wind Farm proposal has made the work of our group more difficult as some relationships have strained, and there is not the motivation for opponents to work side by side on community events.

However, the majority of members remain optimistic about the future of Nundle without a wind farm. Business owners are innovating with investment in digital video marketing collateral, planning new infrastructure, and there is discussion about establishing a philanthropic fund to create sustainable tourism activities that make the most of the natural environment, without destroying it.

Megan Trousdale
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