



HILLS OF GOLD PRESERVATION INC.
87 JENKINS STREET NUNDELE NSW 2340

Director - Energy Assessments
Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta. NSW 2124

January 21st, 2023

To whom it may concern,

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members object to proposed Winterbourne Wind Farm ,
Walcha NSW SSD- 10471.

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members have come to know members of the Walcha community through membership of Responsible Energy Development for New England, and attending forums hosted by NSW Farmers Association, Department of Planning and Environment, and EnergyCo at Walcha, Uralla and Armidale.

The Hills of Gold Wind Farm and Winterbourne Wind Farm proposals share similarities:

- neither has local majority social licence;
- both have the potential to impact flora and fauna protected by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act;
- both neighbour environmentally sensitive national parks;
- both have experienced poor community consultation, including relevant First Nations consultation.

It is an unacceptable burden that our regional neighbours have been presented with a 'fluid document,' placing the onus on volunteer residents and landholders to use their micro local knowledge to identify errors, inconsistencies and omissions in an Environmental Impact Statement written by paid consultants. Meanwhile, as long as proposals tick the right boxes (no matter how badly) they proceed through the planning assessment process.

This is a familiar experience and one that will be repeated many times over in NSW as renewables companies scramble for limited remaining transmission capacity before building of the New England REZ network expansion commences.

What is missing in this process is Strategic Planning, to work with Local Government Areas to identify appropriate locations for renewables. Instead it is left to private enterprise to follow the path of least resistance and progress proposals through the Assessment Pipeline whether they have social licence, are located in environmentally sensitive areas, or represent poor value for NSW Consumers.

Volunteers in rural communities opposing inappropriate renewables developments must sacrifice years of lost productivity and personal time to understand the National Electricity Market, Renewable Energy Zones, DPE Assessment process, and individual proposals.

The Renewables and Rural Australia Report, by the Australia Institute and University of Sydney's Sydney Environment Institute, identified that renewables proposals that create conflict could delay the clean energy transformation and harm energy security.

It is not enough to hope that poor developers walk away from proposals without social licence. The social capital cost is too great for small rural communities, whose health and prosperity depends on cooperation, collaboration, and sense of place.

Yours sincerely,

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc Volunteer Executive
John Krsulja, Brian Tomalin, Megan Trousdale, Teresa Eather, Natasha Soonchild, Selena Sylvester, Ian Worley