

22 July 2024

Attention: Ellena Tsanidis  
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure  
Locked Bag 5022  
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

*Via Major Projects Portal*

Dear Madam

**Re: Junction Rivers Wind Farm – Submission for Application SSD- 30448824**

I write on behalf of Murray River Council to express in principle support for Windlab's development application with the following comments:

*Council acknowledges that there are major shifts in the way energy will be produced into the future- with renewable energy targets, incentives and investments driving these changes, both globally and locally.*

*In Australia, renewable energy projects are continuing to emerge across the country, including near and in our region, and thousands of kilometres of transmission lines will need to be provided to facilitate the shift.*

*More locally, Murray River Council is situated to the north of the Renewable Energy Zone in Victoria near Kerang, to the south of the REZ near Hay, and southwest of Dinwan Substation connection point near Deniliquin with the main Wagga Wagga to South Australia transmission line running roughly parallel to MRC in the north.*

*As such, we continue to be surrounded on all fronts, with the delivery of both renewable projects and the inevitable transmission infrastructure steadily increasing.*

*Council will continue to advocate for the best possible outcomes for the Murray River Council community as renewable energy projects continue to evolve across our region.*

*Although projects such as solar and wind farms are of State Significance over which Council has no statutory power, we will continue to engage with project developers as a key local stakeholder.*

*Whilst recognising that Council has neither the legislative authority, expertise or appropriate resources to be involved in depth, we will:-*

- Insist preliminary information from developers clearly addresses the scale, location, lifespan and impact of potential renewable energy projects. We want to see that all 'checks-and-balances' are in place and are effectively communicated to local communities.*
- Insist the developers offer clear and thorough information on the likely economic, environmental and community impacts that these projects may have. This is not only about loss-of-land or amenity; what actual impacts will these projects - particularly wind farms - have on local agricultural product over the longer term.*

- *Encourage developers to offer information around direct community benefits and potential offsets for affected communities, including but not limited to financial compensation or support for community initiatives.*
- *Encourage communities to look beyond 'small improvement' projects funded via any community benefits programs and instead look towards long-term sustainable pathways for education, health or similar in the aim of addressing services that are declining or aren't currently available in our LGA.*
- *Encourage ongoing consultation with landholders to ensure any questions they have are adequately answered prior to progressing.*
- *Insist First Nation's peoples are appropriately consulted as key stakeholders.*
- *Remain engaged in the developer's community engagement processes with the view to being an active participant, alongside the community.*
- *Recognise that, as a local government organisation, we are not appropriately resourced to meet the rapid increase in the demand for support when these projects arise; both in addressing potential challenges and helping to maximise opportunities for the community. The complexities of dealing with multiple different energy projects at any given time puts resource constraints on the organisation and limits our ability to adequately service each affected community.*
- *Continue to advocate for utilisation of existing infrastructure and transmission routes when projects connect to the grid to minimise the impacts to existing land use.*
- *Strongly encourage local communities to educate themselves on all facets of a proposed renewable project. Council is generally brought into the process at the same time as the public, so it is imperative local landholders fully engage with any information straight from the source when it's available, as only they can assess the full potential impact on their land and/or product.*

*Murray River Council has become uniquely positioned within the state as one of the few Local Government Areas classified in the Renewable Energy Zone. From an investment attraction strategy perspective, this classification elevates our profile, drawing attention from multinational and international investors, bolstered by support from both state and federal governments.*

*While it remains crucial to advocate the concerns of our ratepayers, this classification also presents a significant opportunity to leverage the benefits associated with being part of the REZ, so we must ensure that all opportunities are explored.*

Please note that these comments are in addition to planning and/or infrastructure comments that relate specifically to this application. These matters will be addressed by Murray River Council's Planning Department in due course. Should you require further information, please contact me via [admin@murrayriver.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@murrayriver.nsw.gov.au) or 1300 087 004.

Yours Sincerely,



**Sarah Ryan**  
**Director Community & Economic Development**