

SUBMISSION

TO: Department of Planning & Environment
FROM: Swan Vale Community Group
RE: CWP Renewables Pty Ltd – Modified Application for
Sapphire Wind Farm (MP 09_0093 MOD 1)
DATE: 31st March 2016

On behalf of the Swan Vale Community Group listed below are points of interest and concern we would like addressed as part of the planning and approval process for the Sapphire Wind Farm located between Glen Innes and Inverell.

The Swan Vale Community Group comprise of families located between Waterloo Range to the east and Danthonia community to the west, mainly along the Gwydir Highway. This group will be significantly impacted by the implementation of these wind turbines.

Matters for consideration:

1. CWP Renewables have shown a **lack of engagement** with the Swan Vale community. There has been no community consultation but instead 1:1 meetings with some selected people along the highway. This has left some group members with a lack of trust and wondering who has been told what and/or offered what? We are requesting an open and transparent community meeting where everyone can be provided with the same information at the same time.
2. Further to Point 1 there is a perceived lack of trust. It would be expected that a global company such as this would show more **professionalism and consistency in engagement with a community** so closely involved in the project.
3. This modification is seeking approval for the increase in height of the turbines from 157m to 200m and an increase in rotor diameter from 126m to 140m whilst reducing the total number of turbines from 159 to 109. In the absence of detailed maps showing the exact locations of the turbines it appears the number surrounding the Swan Vale cluster has not changed significantly. Therefore, this **community stands to be further impacted by the increase in overall size** and little reduction in total number of turbines.

4. Also, the increased overall size would impact a **greater number of neighbouring properties** in terms of visual and noise impacts.
5. There is emerging evidence of **inequity in the matter of compensation**. In some cases it is absentee landholders receiving compensation yet those families who reside in the area and who will experience the visual and noise impacts will receive little or no compensation.
6. Some property owners have received **neighbourhood agreements** and some haven't.
7. All properties in this area are **operational farming enterprises**. The **criteria for compensation** appear to be based on the location of the residence and not in any way related to the actual property boundaries. Farmers spend as much time in the paddocks as they do at the residence therefore boundaries should be considered.
8. No map has been made available showing **exact locations of these turbines**. At this point of the planning process we would anticipate having GPS points at least so that the exact location is known.
9. There are no conditions in the original departmental approval relating to **community offsets** or compensation. This amended application provides an opportunity to impose conditions that will offset the detrimental impact by way of benefit or compensation to neighbouring property owners.
10. It is known from the experience of other wind farm developments and acknowledged by CWP Renewables that during the **construction phase, property values will decrease** and those within this Swan Vale cluster will be forced to sell at either a reduced value or hold out for many years for land values to return to existing value. There is a range of demographic of property owners in the area, some of whom were planning to sell in the next 2 – 5 years.
11. Further to Point 9 above, reduced land rates should result in **reduced council rates**.
12. Subsequent to the construction phase it is unknown whether the property values will return once development is completed. With both **Transgrid and Wind Turbines**, the **panorama will become overly cluttered** and reduce the long term appeal to potential property purchasers.
13. Very **limited mobile phone service** between Inverell and Glen Innes – how will this impact the construction workers and how has this not been addressed.

Requests from the Swan Vale Community Group

1. Open and transparent community meeting – everyone told all the facts at the same time to eliminate lack of trust and to ease the angst within the community. Matters addressed should include:
 - equitable community offsets and/or compensation to community members
 - provision of data and research regarding ‘noise’ impacts we are likely to experience – what are the safe exposure levels
 - how to address the clutter across our landscape – wind turbines and Transgrid towers and lines – offset by what?
 - Inclusion of conditions in the amended application to require community offsets and compensation to the satisfaction of the Swan Vale community
2. The criteria for compensation to be based on proximity of boundaries not just the location of a residence.
3. Provision of a mobile phone tower to service the Swan Vale community through lobbying government and telecommunication providers
4. Reduced council rates due to significant reductions in land values by lobbying local councils.

Yours faithfully



Phil Clayton

On behalf of

SWAN VALE COMMUNITY GROUP

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