



## Trade & Investment



PCU030701

Office of the Director General

V11/3412

Mr Glen Snow  
A/Director  
Infrastructure Projects  
Department of Planning and Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001



Attn: Mr Toby Philp

Dear Mr Snow

Thank you for your letter of 18 October 2011 seeking comment on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Flyers Creek Wind Farm Project.

The Project raises no concerns from the perspectives of agriculture, forests or fisheries.

From the Resources' perspective, the current version of the Environmental Assessment (EA) incorporates earlier comments provided by the Department on the previous version. The Department is, however, concerned about the potential impact of the project on mineral exploration and potential future mining as the area has been, and will continue to be of interest to exploration companies (see attachment for detail). The EA indicates that some restrictions will be imposed on exploration activities, and that development of economic mineral resource within the subject land, should one be identified, would be incompatible with an operating wind farm.

In its submission to the EA, Cadia Valley Operations (CVO) has identified potential impacts of the project on its ongoing operations including possible alternative routes for the 132kV grid connection, continued reliability of supply to Cadia mines, and cumulative noise levels.

The Department would expect that prior to the final determination of the project application the proponent commits to ensuring these identified issues and impediments to future exploration or operational activities are avoided or minimised.

Should you require further information regarding these matters please contact either Gary Burton, Senior Geologist, Orange office, on 6360 5330 ([gary.burton@industry.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gary.burton@industry.nsw.gov.au)) or Cameron Ricketts, Assistant Director Minerals and Land Use Assessment, Maitland office, on 4931 6703 ([cameron.ricketts@industry.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cameron.ricketts@industry.nsw.gov.au)).

For further information, please contact Andrew Lewis, A/Executive Director Energy on (02) 8281 7403 or via email at [andrew.lewis@industry.nsw.gov.au](mailto:andrew.lewis@industry.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Paterson'.

Mark I Paterson AO  
Director General

10.2.12

# **Flyers Creek Wind Farm Environmental Assessment**

## **Comments by Resources & Energy Division**

This latest version of the Environmental Assessment (EA) has sought to address the shortcomings with respect to minerals issues which were apparent in the previous version. The proponent has acknowledged the concerns of the Resources & Energy Division of NSW Trade & Investment (formerly Industry & Investment NSW) and the potentially impacted mineral exploration companies who hold exploration tenements over the subject land.

The proponent has indicated in the EA that the wind turbines and electrical cabling will impose some restrictions upon mineral exploration activities such as drilling and geophysical surveys. Airborne methods in particular will be hampered. The proponent also states that the development of an economic mineral resource within the subject land, should one be identified, would be incompatible with an operating wind farm.

A large portion of the proposed wind farm area lies within the Forest Reefs Potential Resource Area, as indicated in our mineral resource Section 117 advice to Blayney Shire Council and the Department of Planning. The Forest Reefs Potential Resource Area encompasses the known extent of the Forest Reefs Volcanics — the same rock sequence which hosts the Cadia Valley Operations of Newcrest Mining Ltd — a world class gold-copper system which includes the Cadia East Orebody. Cadia East is one of the world's largest gold deposits and development for ore extraction is currently progressing. Once operational it will be the largest underground mine in Australia.

The Forest Reefs Potential Resource Area has been subject to mineral exploration for several decades and because of its high potential to host a large tonnage gold-copper deposit will continue to be an area of intense interest to exploration companies. This is acknowledged in the EA.

Mineral exploration is an ongoing and iterative process and it is not uncommon that orebodies are discovered only after several campaigns of exploration. The Cadia Valley system itself is one such case in point. Effective mineral exploration is dependant upon concepts of mineral systems, application of appropriate technology and the prevailing economic situation, all of which change with time. Just because mineral exploration has been undertaken without success within a given area, even after some considerable time, it does not automatically mean that the area has been comprehensively tested and does not contain an economic resource.

The Resources & Energy Division of NSW Trade & Investment acknowledges that the EA has more thoroughly discussed mineral resource issues. However, we consider that the potential impact of the proposed wind farm on mineral exploration and potential future mining within this highly prospective area is of great concern.

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