

22 November 2012

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure
23-33 Bridge Street
Sydney NSW 2001

By online feedback form:

http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=3722

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Clean Energy Council submission regarding the Crookwell 3 wind farm in NSW

The Clean Energy Council is the peak body representing Australia's renewable energy and energy efficiency industries and has around 600 members. Its priorities are to:

- create the optimal conditions in Australia to stimulate investment in the development and deployment of world's best clean energy technologies;
- develop effective legislation and regulation to reduce energy demand and improve its efficient use; and
- work to reduce costs and remove all other barriers to accessing clean energy.

The Clean Energy Council advocates the development of policies on behalf of its members at federal, state and local government levels and promotes understanding of the industry and its potential through channels such as industry events, forums, conferences, newsletters and publications.

The Clean Energy Council welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in support of the proposed Crookwell 3 wind farm project. Please find attached a summary document produced by the Clean Energy Council which outlines some of the benefits of wind energy in Australia¹.

Wind power will bring economic benefits to New South Wales

New South Wales has a vast resource potential for wind energy and currently hosts 11 per cent of the nation's installed wind capacity. The wind industry is of huge economic importance to the state not only through the creation of jobs during the development, construction and ongoing operation of a wind farm but also throughout the supply chain including the manufacturers and suppliers of products and services to the industry.

NSW stands to gain more than \$6 billion of new wind investment and around 4,000 jobs over the next 10 years if planning decisions strike the right balance between community input and regulatory certainty.

¹ Available at: <http://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/cec/misc/gwd>

This significant economic benefit comes at a low cost. Research shows that the main policy driver for wind energy development, the Federal Government's Renewable Energy Target (RET), has only a small impact on power prices.

Currently, wind energy is the most cost-efficient renewable energy source available. Upgrading old infrastructure like poles and wires is responsible for 40 per cent of household power bills. In contrast, large-scale renewable energy projects like wind farms and hydro-electricity contribute only about 2 per cent to household power bills.

Community consultation is an essential consideration for wind farm proponents

The wind industry accepts the need for effective standards for wind projects and the need to engage and communicate with communities during the whole process of wind farm development and construction. To this end, the Clean Energy Council and its members have committed to develop a range of community engagement tools. These are planned to be completed in 2012 and include:

- Updating the existing technical guidelines for wind farm development
- Development of comprehensive best practice guidelines for community engagement
- Development of a community expectations handbook outlining the wind development process
- Comprehensive research into community attitudes to wind development to help the industry to better understand the key concerns and drivers of these concerns in communities

The community engagement best practice guidelines demonstrate the wind industry's ongoing commitment to involving local communities in the development and management of wind farms. The document has been compiled by an independent expert consultant, and outlines an industry-endorsed approach to engaging members of the community throughout the life of a wind farm, from site selection to construction, and through to decommissioning.

Wind farms are popular

In January 2012 CSIRO released a report called "Exploring community acceptance of rural wind farms in Australia: a snapshot"². The CSIRO found that "There is strong community support for the development of wind farms, including support from rural residents who do not seek media attention or political engagement to express their views."

A recent independent survey carried out for the Clean Energy Council by QDos found that 77 per cent of people surveyed across Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia (including regional areas containing wind farms) saying they supported the development of wind farms.

² Available at: <http://www.csiro.au/Organisation-Structure/Flagships/Energy-Transformed-Flagship/Exploring-community-acceptance-of-rural-wind-farms-in-Australia.aspx>

Wind farms bring social and economic benefits to individual landholders, communities and the State

Wind power has the potential to bring significant economic benefits to New South Wales. A recent independent report by consultants SKM³ indicates that wind farms generate significant extra funds for local suppliers, contractors, shopkeepers, community facilities and more, with up to 12 extra ongoing jobs created as a flow-on effect of having a 50 MW wind farm locally. Wind farm companies reinforce these effects by making every effort to locally source materials like crushed rock, cement, sand and gravel, as well as transport and plant hire.

The report found that a typical 50 megawatt wind farm pays host farmers some \$250,000 per year, is constructed by workers who spend up to \$1.2 million locally, and contributes up to \$80,000 annually to community projects.

Wind farms bring additional income to farmers

Wind farming can help farmers generate vital extra income, make better use of marginal farming land, and insure against market downturns. Hosting five wind turbines for the Capital Wind Farm near Lake George in New South Wales has made it possible for Peter and Bev Keatley to stay on their property and make it viable to pass on to their son. Peter is proud of his role in providing clean energy, and calls the wind farm income – \$10,000 per turbine per year – ‘my super’⁴.

Wind power will play a crucial role in New South Wales meeting its renewable energy target and reducing carbon emissions from the electricity sector. It is vital that the Department of Planning and Infrastructure supports the development of all forms of renewable energy in New South Wales and takes advantage of the significant economic benefits of wind power.

If you have any further questions please contact Alicia Webb via telephone on 03 9929 4118 or by email at alicia@cleanenergycouncil.org.au

Yours sincerely,



Alicia Webb
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Clean Energy Council

³ Available at: www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/cec/misc/gwd

⁴ Country Style magazine, January 2012