

14th May 2014

Submission to NSW Department of Planning

In relation to The Paling Yards Wind Farm

I am making this submission as a resident of the local area and my property is some 9kms from the proposed Paling Yards Wind Farm.

By way of background, I chose my property in this particular district predominantly for its prime grazing land. The district is of great natural beauty hosting some of the most scenic land in NSW. The proposed wind farm site is surrounded National Park and I have great difficulty in understanding how a proposal like this can be approved in such a location. A more acceptable, ecological and sustainable use of the land would be for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to make a compulsory acquisition resulting in joining up the Abercrombie National Park.

When I purchased my property I took great care to research the council zonings which indicated the area was zoned rural and would remain rural. Had I attempted to build a wind farm at the time, it would not have been permitted, so I do not believe that it fair and reasonable that permission can now be given to an individual land owner for this type of development. This is a substantial deviation from the current use of the land and this change in use will have a detrimental effect on all other land owners with a 20km radius. I believe that a substantial change in the use of land resulting in a detrimental effect for other land owners, should seek unanimous consent from all land owners within a 20km radius before any approval can be given.

There are many reasons for opposition to this type of development, but I have listed the main ones below:

1. Noise and Vibration

I am advised that wind turbines can be heard for up to a 10 km radius. I am within that zone and do not believe that I should be subjected to an increase in noise and vibration levels. I further believe that this form of pollution will have significant effect on the wildlife in the national park which surrounds the proposed site. I believe that an ecological assessment conducted by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service should assess the proposed development and provide their findings and recommendations to the NSW Planning Department.

2. Drying Effect

It is well known that turbines increase the drying effect for a 20km vicinity downstream of the turbine. As I am located within 10kms, I believe I will be affected. The loss of soil moisture creates a man made drought. This will have detrimental effect on soil moisture/fertility and will reduce the carrying capacity of my property. A study by US researcher, Somnath Baidya Roy suggests that the effect of a turbine's wake on the hydro-meteorology, takes over 20 kilometres downwind of the turbine to diminish.

Thus the area of land affected by an individual turbine could be considered as a strip of land 500 metres wide and 20 kilometres long, i.e. 1,000 hectares.

In an earlier simulation Baidya Roy estimated that the average loss of soil moisture from a wind farm could be as much as to 0.3 millimetres per day (110 millimetres per year).

If this proposal is approved I believe all land owners within a 20km radius should be compensated for the loss of earning potential resulting from a decrease in soil moisture.

3. Increased Bushfire Risk

The proposed Paling Yard Wind Farm site is surrounded by the Abercrombie National Park. There is an increased risk of bush fire due to the increase in dry fuel from the drying effect outlined in the point above. This increased risk affects everyone in the district.

There is also an increased risk from the number of vehicles accessing the property to perform the construction phase and ongoing maintenance.

If fire were to spread into the Abercrombie National Park, the effect would be catastrophic. The park is some of the most difficult terrain in NSW and connects through to other national parks, which form the largest area of bushland in NSW.

Wind farms mean that bushfire cannot be fought with aircraft. Therefore any outbreak of fire will develop into a potentially large fire because of the inability to jump onto an outbreak quickly with aircraft.

Local land owners would have no protection from such a large and devastating fire. There would be mass destruction of wildlife, farm animals, dwellings and other farm improvements. There is great potential for loss of human life as there are very few roads in and out of the district, most of these roads are surrounded by bush.

4. Unsuitability of Roads

The main road between the town of Taralga and the Paling Yards proposed site is totally unsuitable for large transportation vehicles. The road is narrow, windy and has a very narrow creek crossing. The road surface is poor and there are often accidents due to the numerous blind spots in the road. It would be negligent of the NSW Planning Authority to authorise the use of the road for the transportation of materials and turbine components. An examination of the road from Goulburn to

Taralga will reveal the level of damage caused by transportation vehicles in the construction phase of the Taralga Wind Farm. Any development proposal should include the cost of a full road upgrade and replacement at the end of the construction phase.

5. Drop in Land Values

There have been many reports which prove that non host properties nearby wind farms suffer a reduction in the value of their property. The most recent report I have read was authored by Peter Reardon, Real Estate Consultant and Registered Valuer located in Goulburn NSW, titled The Impact of Wind Turbine Developments on Surrounding Rural Land Values in the Southern Tablelands NSW. This report makes a summary finding "This report provides clear evidence that this type of development has resulted in a negative impact on marketability and the value of properties to varying degrees. **Discounts in value as identified of 33% and 60% in the market place cannot be ignored**". Further, the report contains a statement by a local real estate agent.

Mr. Allan McDonald (Principal of Professionals Real Estate) stated;
"We have had a number of agreed sales fail to proceed, after purchasers had been informed of wind farm developments, nearby to properties that we have been trying to market. It would appear that many prospective purchasers consider them to be a blight on the landscape and aesthetic appeal of properties, similar to that of large transmission line easements".
In the instance of many areas within the Fullerton and Golspie districts, there are large areas of scenic unspoilt grazing land which offers tremendous views and aesthetic appeal. Proposed development that will visually impede these scenic rural views, is already having a detriment to the marketability and sales of rural residential and lifestyle properties".

The full report can be found at http://docs.wind-watch.org/Reardon_Impact-of-Wind-Farm-Development-on-Land-Values_2013.pdf

Any drop in land value that is attributed to a wind farm development should be compensated to the nearby land owner. As the radius for damage is some 20 klms, I believe that all landowners in that radius should be adequately compensated for loss of land value and all future earnings. I have fundamental difficulty in accepting that the proponent land owner can benefit significantly from a development, but all other land owners in the district suffer a loss. Until a proper form of compensation arrangement can be agreed, no development should be approved.

The final point I would like to make is that I cannot believe that approval is being considered for 55 of these significantly taller (tallest) turbines on such a relatively small parcel of land. These turbines are situated too close to each other and more than double the numbers that should be approved for any development. It appears that the proponents of this development have only one consideration in mind – profit and only profit. There has been no consideration given to the effects on nearby properties, the National Park and wildlife. Any birds trying to fly from one side of the Aberdrombie National Park through a natural flight path to the other side of the National Park will most certainly be shred to pieces.

I believe the ecological and detrimental effects to nearby land owners should stop this development from proceeding any further.

