

29 January 2021

Anthony Ko
Team Leader Energy Assessments
NSW Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Ko,

Hills of Gold Windfarm Project – SSD 9679 – Muswellbrook Shire Council Comment

I refer to the Environmental Impact Statement, prepared for Wind Energy Partners, and *Appendix G, Traffic and Transport Assessment* prepared by The Transport Planning Partnership, for the Hills of Gold Windfarm Project SSD - 9679. Council appreciates the opportunity for comment.

The proposal seeks approval for the installation and operation of up to 70 wind turbines south east of Nundle and requires oversized load transportation of equipment and machinery through the Muswellbrook Shire LGA for a period of at least 35 weeks in the initial construction phase.

Council's submission is as follows:

1.0 It is noted that the crash history data included in the *Traffic and Transport Assessment* is for a limited area proximate to Nundle.

2.0 Traffic and Transport Assessment should have noted the information and recommendations of:

- a. Thomas Mitchell Drive Contributions Study (prepared by GHD for DPIE); and
- b. Muswellbrook Mine Affected Roads Network Plan Review (prepared by Bitzios Consulting and Northrop for Muswellbrook Shire Council).

3.0 Many of the roads and intersections identified in the *Traffic and Transport Assessment* for transport of oversized loads through Muswellbrook Shire have a known crash and fatality history. For example:

- Golden Highway;
- Thomas Mitchell Drive/Denman Road intersection;
- Thomas Mitchell Drive/New England Highway intersection;
- Bengalla Link Road;
- Bengalla Link Rd/Wybong Rd intersection;
- Wybong Road; and
- Kayuga Road.

4.0 Many of the roads are the designated access to mines and horse studs, carry high volumes of traffic at peak times and disruption to traffic can cause significant issues for these businesses. The businesses include:

- Maxwell Underground Mine;
- Mt Arthur Mine;
- Bengalla Mine;
- Mt Pleasant Mine;
- Mangoola Mine;
- Dartbrook Underground Mine;
- Coolmore Stud
- Darley Woodlands Stud
- Edenglassie Stud
- Balmoral Stud

5.0 Mt Pleasant Mine has commenced construction of a rail loop over Wybong Road, which will create changes to traffic conditions. Works have commenced and could continue to end of 2022.

6.0 The existing road alignment and constructed standard for sections of Wybong Road, Kayuga Road, Ivermein Street and Dartbrook Access Road are generally of a 'country road' standard with narrower lane widths, unformed shoulders, poor pavement, aged sealed surface, and drainage structures that will not support the proposed repeated heavy loads/turning movements. For example, the Rosebrook Bridge on Wybong Road has been assessed as inadequate structurally for supporting loads greater than local traffic (< 12 tonne mass limit). Several drainage structures and bridges along these roads also require upgrading to increase loading capacity.

7.0 Muscle Creek Bridge in Bell Street is speed limit restricted to 10km/hr due to concerns with the bridge load capacity. The load capacity of the railway bridge in Bell Street is currently being reviewed due to the age of the structure and the damage that has occurred from other oversized loads.

8.0 There are additional road restrictions in place for Wybong Rd during school bus hours, and for Bell, Victoria and Market St movements are limited to daytime transportation, except for school zone times.

9.0 In summary, **Council objects to the use of the roads** in Muswellbrook Shire that have been identified in the Environmental Impact Statement, as the roads are not appropriate for the proposed traffic generated by the proposal.

Council appreciates the opportunity to comment and would be pleased to provide additional information if requested.

Yours faithfully



Sharon Pope
Executive Manager Environmental and Planning Services