

3 February 2021

Contact: *Justine Clarke*

Telephone: *0457 535 955*

Our ref: *D2021/6914*

Anthony Ko
Department of Planning, Industry & Environment
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Dear Mr Ko,

Hills of Gold Wind Farm (SSD-9679) – EIS

Thank you for your Major Projects portal referral dated 12 January 2021, seeking WaterNSW's comment on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Hills of Gold Wind Farm. WaterNSW understands that the project will involve the construction, operation and decommissioning of a wind farm with 70 wind turbine generators, together with associated infrastructure.

WaterNSW notes that the subject site is located at the headwaters of the Peel River, with many tributaries on the site eventually flowing into the Peel River and then into the Chaffey Dam. Also, at the south eastern extent of the proposal, within the Hunter Catchment, Pages Creek forms the headwaters for the Glenbawn Dam catchment. Both Chaffey and Glenbawn dams are WaterNSW assets.

While the Chaffey Dam lake and its foreshores are popular for water sports and fishing enthusiasts, nature lovers, bushwalkers, campers and picnickers, the main purpose of the dam is to supply irrigation and stock needs in the Peel River Valley of northern NSW, and to supply water to the city of Tamworth.

WaterNSW has reviewed the EIS and determined that the proposal should not impact on our assets, being Chaffey Dam or the quality of water flowing into the Chaffey and Glenbawn catchments. It is considered that the mitigation measures outlined within the EIS will manage the project impacts adequately, including impacts to soil and water.

However, a number of WaterNSW water quality monitoring sites and the Pearly Gates gauging station (our ref: 419906) are located where culvert and bridge upgrades activities are proposed to facilitate heavy vehicle movements (Figure 4-4, Appendix O – Soil and Water, p31). Namely, the Peel River along Head of Peel Road, Woodleys Creek & Talbots Creek along Kirks Road and Woodleys Road, and Wardens Brook. As such, WaterNSW requires consultation during the detailed design phase to ensure no impacts occur to WaterNSW assets during construction.

WaterNSW suggests that the following conditions of consent be included in the determination, to specifically manage and monitor surface water quality and hydrology during construction and protect WaterNSW assets:

- An operating condition requiring that the Applicant ensures that the development does not cause any impacts on the Chaffey Dam or the quality of water flowing into the Chaffey and Glenbawn catchments.

- To ensure the adequate protection of WaterNSW water quality monitoring sites, access and equipment, WaterNSW must be consulted during the detailed design phase related to any road upgrade works that facilitate vehicle movement for the project.

Further, if any water access licencing is required, this should be obtained, once the preferred water supply option is determined.

WaterNSW requests the Department continues to consult with WaterNSW for any development that may impact on our assets, infrastructure or land, using the email address Environmental.Assessments@waterNSW.com.au. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact WaterNSW's Ms Justine Clarke at justine.clarke@waterNSW.com.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alison Kniha', with a large initial 'A' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

ALISON KNIHA
Catchment Protection Planning Manager