

SUBMISSION – Hills of Gold Wind Farm Application NO. SSD 9679

I have lived in the Hanging Rock area for over 32 years and object to the development of the Hills of Gold Wind Farm on a section of the Great Dividing Range above the historic village of Nundle. Nundle is a tourist village with ever increasing numbers visiting the area to experience the 'Hills of Gold' heritage. If the proposed 230 metre high turbines were placed on the ridgeline above Nundle, they would be totally out of proportion with the natural landscape, towering above the village.

The section of the Great Dividing Range above Nundle is a high altitude/high rainfall area with magnificent old growth trees and unique flora and fauna. The area is also the catchment for the Namoi, Hunter and Manning Rivers and acts as a giant spring fed sponge with numerous small watercourses flowing into these 3 catchments, one of these being the Peel River, which supplies the large and growing city of Tamworth.

My concern is that the massive 25m diameter x 3-5m deep concrete tower foundations could have a disastrous effect on these water catchments. Each turbine base requires 500-900 cubic metres of concrete (EIS Page 42).

The Land & Soil Capability section of the EIS states "The north and west facing slopes of the Project ridgeline are attributed the highest limitation class, being assessed under the LSC scheme to be rated **Class 8**, having extreme limitations". It also states "Recommended uses restricted to those compatible with **the preservation of natural vegetation including water supply catchments, wildlife refuges, National & State Parks and scenic areas.** (EIS page 312). Given this information how could wind turbines ever be considered in these areas?

Another concern is that a section of the proposed windfarm is adjacent to Ben Halls Gap Nature Reserve, a 'Closed to the Public' National Park, reserved for scientific research. The wind farm would have a negative impact on the fauna in the Reserve, especially during the construction phase.

Turbines are to be located adjacent to the Nature Reserve, and many appear to be as close as 100 metres from the Reserve boundary. I could not find any specific distances in the EIS.

Areas of the ridgeline have been extensively cleared over the previous 20 years or so and continue to be cleared. The Developers have acknowledged there will be more clearing of native vegetation. (EIS P147). This will destroy yet more koala habitat and have a detrimental effect on the threatened species noted in the EIS.

Considering all the above, I think this area of the Great Dividing Range, with its remaining flora and fauna, must be preserved and NOT be the site for an industrial wind farm.