

23rd January 2021

Hills of Gold Wind Farm SSD 9679

ACKMA – the Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association – is an association concerned with the conservation, presentation and management of caves and karst. Land areas with caves and karst both private and public and its flora, fauna, geology and hydrology are interrelated and are a focus of our interests. ACKMA has members from five continents, with most members from Australia and New Zealand. Members include scientists, managers of show caves and karst areas, guides, rangers, and cavers.

The ACKMA membership includes organisations and individuals that have research, management and recreational interests in caves and karst. Karst is a term used to describe a landscape principally formed by the dissolution of rock and characterised by landforms such as caves, closed and underground drainage systems. As an organisation, ACKMA advocates and facilitates sustainable management of caves and karst and encourages public education and research and training to improve cave and karst management.

I write to express the Association's concerns about the Hills of Gold Wind Farm proposal, particularly the intent to clear some 487 hectares of vegetation -native and introduced- as well as direct and indirect impacts on the nearby Timor Caves and other geological features and also bats which roost in, and in forest around, the caves which they forage in the area proposed for the wind farm.

ACKMA acknowledges the commitment in developing alternative renewable energy.

**There is no doubt we need to consider the benefits of alternative energy
however, this should not be at the expense of destroying valuable existing habitat.**

The fauna species in this region are well documented as is the habitat essential to their survival. Wildlife does not recognise human borders of private and public reserved land. This is their home and that for their future generations while projects such as this have a life of decades - 50 years at best - before being dismantled or refurbished. In that time generations of wildlife are lost, some to the brink of their existence.

The proximity to caves means clearing and erosion will be part of the impact in the hydrological process associated with caves and karst let alone the loss of flora for all animals and the insects which are the food source of microbats whether they be forest dependant or cave dependant species.

ACKMA is firmly of the view this Hills of Gold Wind Farm renewable energy proposal on the basis it is intent on sacrificing valuable habitat and will have negative impact through hydrological processes on geological features such as fissures, grikes, sinks and caves.

Yours sincerely

Ian Eddison



President ACKMA

Andy Spate AM



Past President