

Brett Gorman

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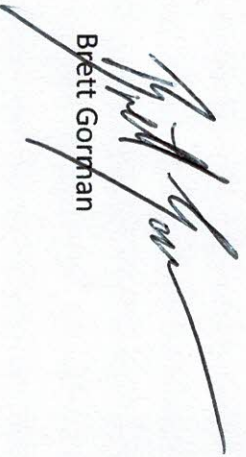
Director – Energy Assessments
Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bags 5022
Parramatta, NSW, 2124

26 January 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: HILLS OF GOLD WIND FARM APPLICATION NO.9679

- I am attaching my submission to the above-mentioned development application.
- I hereby declare that I **OBJECT** to the Hills of Gold Wind Farm proposal ID No. SSD 9679
- I do not require my personal details withheld.
- I have not made any reportable political donations in the previous 2 years.


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SUBMISSION FOR OBJECTION

I strongly **OBJECT** to the Hills of Gold Wind Farm proposal ID no. SSD 9679

I moved to Nundle in October 2017 because of the beauty and tranquillity of this area. I was amazed by the heritage of the area and what it has to offer people. I was sick of the traffic and construction on the Northern Beaches of Sydney and thought I had come to Nundle I was in paradise.

I purchased the Jenkins Street Guesthouse (the old bank) and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars restoring it. We have six (6) queen size bedrooms for guests and the business keeps getting better with an excellent occupancy rate, even with the current climate. Many customers being return guests and usually bring friends with them when returning.

I would not have purchased this property and business if I had known about the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm application. It will destroy the peace and quiet of Nundle Village and my business. Many of our guests come from New England and upper Hunter areas for a quite romantic getaway, I doubt if they will return.

Our guests as well as many thousands of other people come to Nundle for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Bush walking
- Bird watching
- Gold prosecuting
- Trout Fishing
- Golf
- Motor bike trail riding
- Mountain Cross bike riding, and
- Shopping
- Picnicking
- Camping
- The peace, quiet, beauty and heritage of the area.
- People using Nundle as a stopover when travelling.
- Using Nundle as a meeting place for families from all over NSW and the other states.

If the Hills of Gold Wind Farm application is granted, it will kill tourism Nundle and my business which I have successfully built up, will fail. I have no doubt that this will happen as I have spoken to nearly all my guests about the proposed wind farm, not one has said they will return to Nundle once the construction commences of the roads and the Wind Farm.

People will not use Nundle as a stopover when travelling behind heavy vehicles to get here will put considerable extra time on their trips. I know because I ride motorcycle, motorcyclist will not be attracted to Nundle and the Hills of Gold because of the increased heavy vehicular traffic and congestion.

When I explain to our guests about the application for the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm, they have all been shocked and disappointed at such a proposal and all voice an opinion the proposed wind farm will destroy this area and the reasons they love to come to Nundle.

They have expressed concerns over the heritage area of the old gold mines (especially the Black Snake Gold mine) the many magnificent caves, the walking tracks such as the two-mile walking track. It appears they will not be having access to these areas especially during construction and what damage will be caused to these areas, will they be there or even accessible in the future, will they be destroyed?

I think more import from talking to our guests who are environmentalist and nature lovers is their concern of the impact of the road and turbine construction will have on the local bats, birds, koalas, spotted quolls population and the tender environment of the Hills of Gold.

Now you hear the excitement in our guest voices when they return to our Guesthouse from a day trip in the areas of the proposed Wind Farm and road construction areas, they talk about rare animals and birds they have seen or exploring the old mine sites and caves. Always showing us the spec of gold, they have found, talking about it as if it was a gold nugget.

One of the most common questions I am asked by our guests," why here when there are so many other suitable sites in Australia where they will not destroy or impact on the beauty and heritage of that area".

I tell them I really cannot answer that except I believe it is greed of landowners who will benefit from the turbines and power lines on their property, especially the major landowner who will have most of the turbines on his property. The major landowner benefits financially from the turbines on his property, but he also has a large construction company, and he will benefit financially from the construction on the roads and building of the turbine sites.

I have no doubt if these landowners where not receiving a considerable financial benefit from the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm, they would not support the application. I object to the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm application it will destroy my business I have work so hard to build and the reasons that brought me to Nundle.

So how can we ensure that my business and other business will not be financially affected, that tourist will not be turned off coming to Nundle and the Hills of Gold? The answer is do not grant the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm application.

TRANSPORT & TRAFFIC

Who likes waiting at traffic works? I have been stuck on the New England Highway behind vehicles transporting turbine blades to the Northern New England Region. This is frustrating and a major inconvenience not being able to pass them for lengthy periods.

The two sealed roads into Nundle, Lindsay Gap Road and Nundle Road, these are not in good condition as shown in the applicant's application and I think they have photographed the only part of the roads that do not have damage to the road or edges. Nundle Road does have posted 50, 60, 80 & 100 kph speed signs, to say there are not posted speed signs in the Environmental Impact Statement submitted by the applicant for the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm is incorrect, this is so wrong and misleading. So, what else is wrong and misleading in the applicant.

Now it is bad enough getting stuck behind logging truck, cattle trucks and the heavy wide loads with earth moving equipment that usually goes to the major landowner's property. It is hard and dangerous to pass any these large trucks, there are no overtaking lanes and several one lane bridges. There will have to be major roads upgrades just to get the blades to Nundle and the proposed wind farm sites.

The construction of the roads is going to massive causing major inconveniences to motorist travelling to and from Nundle.

The planned traffic route which will pass straight outside my guesthouse will impact greatly on three (3) of my guest rooms which are approximately 4 metres from Jenkins Street and the parking of our guests which is street parking on Jenkins Street outside the Guesthouse House. We have been given three (3) proposed routes but cannot get a definite answer from the applicant on the route to be used.

The noise and vibration from the heavy will destroy the peace and quiet we now offer our guests. If the vibration caused structural damage to my Heritage Listed Building, who would repair it or compensate when the business I have built up fails.

The impact vehicle moment will impact of the local nurse's office, a pre-school, a primary school, the community pool, bus stop for children going to the High Schools in Tamworth and several other businesses in Nundle. My major concern is the safety of the children going to the schools and using the pool and going to the local IGA supermarket to get ice-creams and lollies. I see this every day as I am next door to the IGA supermarket.

Are the elderly and people who have disabilities going to be able to still park directly outside supermarket to get their groceries or when visiting the local nurse?

The applicant in my opinion has not given an accurate figure of the number of buses bring the children to and from the surrounding areas to the bus taking them to Tamworth. I do not believe in the figures of vehicle movement or the time frame for construction given by the applicant can be relied upon, I have no doubt what the applicant has stated is the minimum figure of extra vehicle movement through Nundle.

There are too many variables, currently the turbine blades are too long to go through Muswellbrook. What happens if they cannot build a Muswellbrook bypass? Do they split the blades into two lengths and re-join them at the wind farm site? How often do major construction works go many months or years past their proposed construction date?

Even if you take the applicants figures, which from my own observations is not correct on average vehicle moment unless it is a terribly busy day for Nundle. The applicant has stated traffic passing through Nundle will increase from 845 vehicle per day to 1350 vehicles a day. A further 30 trucks during morning and afternoon peak times, that means one extra vehicle every 20 seconds, and 1 truck every 85 seconds. This is totally unacceptable and what happens if they must split the turbine blades? How many more heavy vehicles will have to pass through Nundle and all their support vehicles? From my own observations I believe the applicant has over inflated the current amount of vehicle passing through Nundle, especially during peak times.

How can we ensure the residents of Nundle will not be affected by the traffic from the construction of the Wind Farm? The answer is do not grant the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm application.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

I have installed 68 solar panels on my business and residents. I believe in renewable energy and encourage other people to do the same. The majority of people I have spoken to object the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm because of the impact it will have on tourism, people's lifestyle, businesses, environment impact on biodiversity of the area and will lose a lot of the endangered animals, and vegetation.

In my guesthouse I have not have one person say they support the application for the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm and whole heartedly disagree with the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm application being granted.

Many of the people who are for the application will gain significant financial benefit from the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm, especially one landowner who will have most of the turbines on his property. The other people are for the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm work for the landowner or will benefit financially from of the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm. There are few people who support the application who will or not currently receiving a financial gain from the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm.

Many signs have been erected on the fences of local resident indicating they are "Friends of the Wind Farm". I have been told that on some incidents the signs where erected on some resident's fences without being asked to have it put on their property. One elderly gentleman told the person putting on his fence to take it down, then later received an intimidating phone call from the major landowner for not allowing the sign to be placed on his fence. Other residences being paid to have the signs displayed on their properties.

I believe that Australia must transfer from fossil fuel generation to renewable energy or some other source. But the renewable energy like the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm should not be placed in the middle of a tourist and heritage area such Nundle and the Hills of Gold. The proposed wind farm will in my opinion destroy both our tourism, heritage, our beautiful landscape, the peace and quiet of the area and my most importantly my business.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL BENEFITS

Honestly, there will be little to no benefits to the people of Nundle and Hanging Rock in the jobs created during construction or operation of the wind farm. All employable people have employment. The unemployed people in my opinion do not have any skills or training that would gain them employment during construction and long-term service and maintenance jobs created. I have tried to get unemployed people to work in my café and guesthouse and they just do not want to work. They may turn up for a couple of days, then they just do not turn up. Our business is not the only business in Nundle with this problem.

I agree mainly one landholder will become a very wealthy person because of the Wind Farm and small handful of other landowners will benefit financially, not the greater community. Many people in the community will be suffer financially because of the wind farm, from loss of business to property value.

People will not come to see the wind farm if it is built. Wind farms in the New England region are being built everywhere. What would make the Hills of Gold wind farm so unique that would make people travel to see them, except the devastation of the Hills of Gold. It has been stated by a spokes-person to a landowner, the wind farm will not attract tourist.

SITE SUITABILITY

We have been told that the area is a class 'C' area, where class 'A' is an ideal area for wind farms. So why not place the wind farm in a class 'A' area. From my understanding a soil study has shown the fragile nature of the soil where the proposed wind farm will be constructed and the impact the construction will have on the area and water catchment area. We cannot allow this to happen, the application for the proposed Hill of Gold Wind Farm must be rejected.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There has been no real effort by WEP or ENGIE to liaise or work with the community. Every time we have spoken to him and ask him a direct question, they can never give you a direct answer, or even follow it up and get back to you. It has been bullying and intimidation by the major landowner and his follower to make sure you don't upset them or their plans.

NOISE

The applicant has submitted noise and vibration assessment, this assessment states that residents will be affected by noise during all phases of construction during standard hours from site set-up and civil work, road construction, excavation and foundation construction, electrical installation and turbine delivery and erection. and outside standard construction hours from such thing as batching plant and concrete pouring. As they have stated in the assessment all the figures, they have given are predictions and we all know how many predictions are wrong.

The people of Nundle and Hanging Rock should not be affected by any increase in noise. I believe there are so many flaws in the Sonus Noise & Vibration Assessment that it cannot be relied upon. I have a major concern from the reported subsonic noise emitted from the turbines and the effect it does have on people's health. There are so many articles on this type of noise, so why put the Wind Farm near any populated area.

How do we ensure residents of Hanging Rock or Nundle will not be affected by construction noise or noise from the turbine and transformers? The answer is do not grant the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm application.

COMMUNITY ENCHANCEMENT FUND.

I think Jamie Chivers spoke-person for the applicant got it right at the first public meeting for the proposed wind farms, he told everyone at the meeting the community will receive a yearly compensation fund and then went on to call it community enhancement fund.

From what I believe this will be shared with three different council areas, so how much will the worst affected areas such as Hanging Rock and Nundle really receive.

It has been stated by the major landowner, some of the money from the funds can be used to build man-made snow ski slopes at Hanging Rock, a skate park in Nundle for kids. But really has is this fund going to benefit the greater community.

The great attractions we have e.g. Hanging Rock Christmas in July, Hanging Rock Garden Market, Go for Gold Festival, Nundle Dog Race, Picnic in the Park, Art Show which are fund raisers, these will disappear and the tourist dollars they bring into the villages. It is the business owners which are the driving force behind these events. If these businesses close because we are not getting the tourist money spent the villages, the community will not have the driving force to keep these events happening.

The Community Enhancement Fund is as Jamie said "Compensation" that will kill the Nundle and Hanging Rock community and will only benefit a small percentage of the community who think they will gain something out of the fund.

OBSTACLE LIGHTING

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority usually require lighting where turbine exceed 150 metres, the proposed turbines at Hills of Gold Wind Farm will be 230 metres. These lights will be a noticeable element in the night-time landscape and will be clearly seen from my guesthouse and the village of Nundle. The clear nights at Nundle are beautiful and full of stars, I have no doubt with the aviation lights on the turbines this will disappear.

So how do we make sure we can see the stars clearly at night? The answer is do not grant the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm application.

BIODIVERSITY

The environment impact statement has identified threatened fauna, trees and animals in the development footprint of the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm development footprint. The illegal land clearing that has already been taken would have had an effect the Biodiversity of the area. To now say that will be minimised as much as practicable through the design phase is too late. The only way to ensure the biodiversity of the area is not further affected, is to refuse the application for the Hills of Gold Wind Turbines. If the landowners were not as greedy and in clearing land illegally, then the fragile biodiversity may have had a chance.

So how do we fix the biodiversity of the area? The answer is do not grant the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm application, without any further clearly of land and construction of the Wind Farm the area may recover.

BUSHFIRE

As we are all aware the major bushfires, we had in NSW last year. In this region and around the Hills of Gold we had major bush fires for nearly three months. From memory there where three helicopters operating out of Nundle Sports Oval constantly during daylight hours water bombing the fire areas. I do not recall how many fixed winged aircraft where water bombing the fires in the Hills of Gold at the same time. They will not be able to operate near a 230-metre turbine.

So, what happens next time we have major bushfires in the area, do we let Hanging Rock and Nundle burn. The answer is do not grant the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm application, so the aircraft can fly in these skies.

IN CONCLUSION.

There are so many reasons not to grant the application for the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm which far outweigh the benefits to granting the application.

I believe the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm will adversely affect hundreds of thousands of people that live and come to Nundle and Hanging Rock areas. I believe if the application is granted Nundle businesses suffer financially, which will affect the local community.

A wind farm could be built in a location that is more suitable then in the current proposed location that will not adversely affect so many people and businesses.

The Australian Government can still achieve their desired renewable energy target, but not for the gain of a small handful of people to the detriment of the many in the community. Are there any other Wind Farm applications been granted that will affect so many people.

I am happy to appear at any tribunal or court to give my opinion or answer any question in relation to this submission.



Brett Gorman