

CALL FOR ACTION

HELP US PRESERVE OUR HILLS OF GOLD BY WRITING A SUBMISSION

If you love living at or visiting Nundle, Hanging Rock, Crawney and Timor please read the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm DA/EIS and state your objection during the public exhibition period from Wednesday December 2nd, to Friday January 29th.

The Hills of Gold Wind Farm DA/EIS is on public exhibition at the NSW government Major Projects website:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/9701>

A Submission of one sentence is more important than no sentence, so please don't feel overwhelmed by the volume of information in the EIS.

We encourage you to speak from your personal experience, your connection to the area, what you value and what you want to see protected. Fifty unique objections will escalate the determination to the Independent Planning Commission.

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members will staff a COVID-safe office at Nundle Guitars, 62 Jenkins Street, Nundle during the exhibition period to display personal and public photomontages, proposed transport routes, and assist with submissions.

The proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm is not a choice between fossil fuels and renewables, but a choice about environmentally sensitive siting of renewables.

The NSW Energy Infrastructure Roadmap and Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill 2020 identify the significance of community consent for proposed developments.

The majority of the Nundle and Hanging Rock communities have signed petitions opposing the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm and do not want to destroy the environment to save the environment.

HOGPI OFFICE ADDRESS:
(NUNDLE GUITARS)
62 Jenkins Street, Nundle

OPENING DATES:
Open Saturday 19 December 2020,
then every Wednesday and
Saturday in January 2021 including
Friday 29 January (last day for
submissions)
Sat 19 December
Sat 2 January / Wed 6 January
Sat 9 January / Wed 13 January
Sat 16 January / Wed 20 January
Sat 23 January / Wed 27 January
Fri 29 January

HOURS OPEN: 9am - 4pm

DETAILS: Have one of our community volunteers help you write and send your submission and help preserve the Hills of Gold.



NOW THE EIS HAS BEEN RELEASED WE KNOW:

VISUAL AMENITY

• The proponent Engie and its consultants' EIS rates the "Scenic Quality Classes of the Landscape Character Unit" as "moderate" with some areas "low moderate" and "moderate high". Please let the NSW state government know what the Nundle Hanging Rock landscape means to you.

VEHICLE MOVEMENTS

• In Chapter 12. Transport and Traffic, from page 225, we learn that for the estimated 13-month construction period Nundle and surrounds would experience an extra 240 daily light vehicle, worker bus, and truck movements (page 234).

• Currently 845 vehicles pass through Nundle, on average PER DAY. 12 trucks per hour. In the morning peak, 7am-8am, approx 38 cars through Nundle.

• During project types of additional vehicles: cars, mini bus, light vehicles, machinery trucks, water trucks. Total additional vehicles passing through Nundle during morning peak hour : 80 (over 13 months site establishment) and 141, 30 of these are trucks (13 months construction phase). Site establishment phase: extra 240 vehicles. Construction phase: 502 vehicles

In summary:

- Traffic passing through Nundle will increase from 845 vehicles per day to 1350/day over 2 year site establishment and construction phases.
- An additional 30 trucks/hr will pass through Nundle in the morning peak times.
- This means 1 vehicle every 20 seconds and 1 truck every 85 seconds.

OTHER ROADS

For Tamworth commuters (Nundle and surrounds to/from Tamworth):

- An increase from 46 vehicles per hour(vph) to 189 (1 vehicle every 20 seconds)

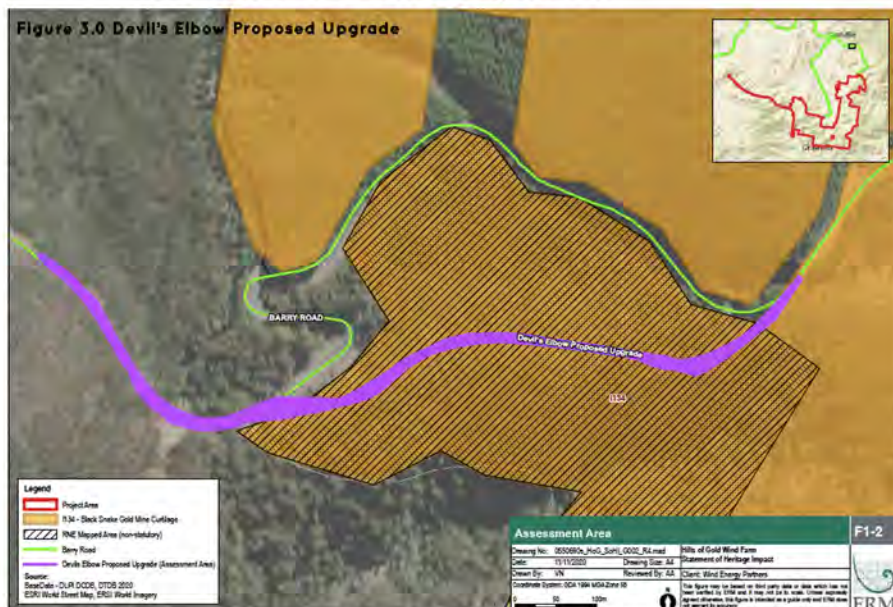
For Hanging Rock- Nundle commuters along Barry road:

- An increase from 10vph to 156 in the morning and in the evening peak, from 38vph to 184 vph.
- For Jenkins St-Crawney Rd commuters, your traffic will double.

ROADS / HERITAGE

• Page 238, outlines a Barry Rd and Morrison's Gap Rd northern route to the project area, **construction of a layby, and a deviation to bypass Devils Elbow on Barry Road.**

- The Northern Daily Leader, 5/12/20, reported on concerns about potential environmentally damaging impacts on European and natural heritage of the proposed bypass with a private road through Crown Reserves and Hanging Rock recreation areas impacting National Estate listed Black Snake Gold Mine tunnels, entrances and archeological remnants, and native vegetation.



The EIS outlines a potential southern route for blades and towers that includes loops within the village:

- **For Blade and Tower components:** Oakenville Street, Old Hanging Rock Road, Happy Valley Road, River Road, Jenkins Street, Crawney Road, and Head of Peel Road.
- **Shorter trucks would be able to bypass the centre of the town** by turning into Herring Street and Innes Street, then Jenkins Street to Crawney Road and Head of Peel Road.
- **An alternative route for blades that would use Herring Street, Innes Street, Gill Street, Point Street, Crawney Road and Head of Peel Road.**

Figure 3.45: Wind Blades Swept Paths Alternative Route South (Part1)





ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- (Page 147) states that 513 hectares of the Development Footprint will be disturbed or cleared for the transport route, wind farm, and transmission lines. Of that 513 hectares, 42% or 206 hectares of native vegetation will be cleared.

- The Permanent Development Footprint is land permanently altered as a result of installation and operation of Project infrastructure comprised of:- Wind Turbine Generator foundations; crane pads; permanent access roads, including the transverse track; transmission line and transmission line access roads; substation, switching station and other facilities; and road upgrades required for the transport haul route.

- It is unacceptable that old growth trees, some plantings pre-dating European settlement and others over 100 years old, could be cut down for a renewable project. Some of the plantings, including some of the tallest snow gums in existence, are extremely rare because of the elevation and overlapping of bioregions. They cannot be offset or rehabilitated because they don't grow anywhere else. It is a unique location.

- (From EIS Page 194) Thirteen threatened terrestrial fauna species were directly observed within the Development Footprint, including Koala, Greater Glider, Spotted-tailed Quoll, Southern Myotis, Large-eared Pied Bat, Little-Pied Bat, Eastern False Pipistrelle, Eastern Coastal Free-tailed Bat, Little Bent-wing Bat, Large Bent-winged Bat, Greater broad-nosed bat, Eastern Cave Bat, and Grey-headed flying-fox.

- The detailed habitat assessments identified a high likelihood of occurrence for an additional four fauna species; Booroolong Frog, Border Tick-tailed Gecko, Eastern Pygmy Possum and Squirrel Glider. The field surveys identified two species of raptor most at risk of collision, Nankeen Kestrel and Wedge-tailed Eagle”.

OBSTACLE LIGHTING

- (page 84 EIS)The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) may potentially require lighting where turbines exceed 150 m in tip height, as has been the case for other wind farm developments in NSW.

- The proposed turbine height for the project is 230m to blade tip. The potential night lighting requirements for the Project may include two flashing red obstacle lights per turbine required to be lit.

- The aviation lighting has the potential to be a noticeable element in the night time landscape from areas around Nundle Village that have exposure to views towards the Project Area.



COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND

The Community Enhancement Fund Committee would be made up of members located within 20 km of the physically built project, including indigenous representation: 2 x Nundle, 2 x Hanging Rock, 1 x Timor/Crawney, 1 x Wallabadah, 3 x Councils, 1 x proponent (non voting).

The three council members select The committee for a two year period, unless voted to extend. There would be two funding rounds per year, with Council involved in safe keeping and governance, managing independent auditing, and paid an administration fee of \$5K per annum. The committee would decide on applications, provided for projects outside of council's existing responsibilities (community events, road upgrades and water management), meeting “additionality” criteria ensuring existing services are “enhanced”. (From Appendix C.4)

The CEF would receive \$2,500 per operational wind turbine per year over the operational life of the Project.

HOW TO MAKE AN OBJECTION

ONLINE: Visit the NSW Government Major Projects Portal "Hills Of Gold Wind Farm - Application Number SSD-9679"

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/9701>

BY MAIL: You will need a **Cover Page** and a **Submission Page**.

Cover Page (Page 1) to include the following:-

Name: (your name)

Postal Address: (your postal address for confirmation by Department)

Personal Address: (Local addresses are important)

Director Energy Assessments

Planning and Assessment

DPIE

Locked Bag 5022

Parramatta NSW 2124

Date:

To whom it may concern

Re: Hills Of Gold Wind Farm Application Number SSD 9679

I am attaching my submission to the above mentioned development application.

I hereby declare that I object to the Hills of Gold Windfarm proposal ID no.SSD 9679

I would like my personal details withheld. **(optional)**

I have not made any reportable political donations in the previous 2 years.

(YOUR SIGNATURE)

Page 2: (Your Submission, Start with) OBJECTION

Your submission is your chance to say why you think this proposal should be rejected, or what you love about Nundle, why you are here, your thoughts, any knowledge you have about the proposal and any reason it should not go ahead. At the top of the first page please ensure you include the following:

I hereby declare that I object to the Hills of Gold Windfarm proposal ID no.SSD9679

SUBURB: (your suburb)

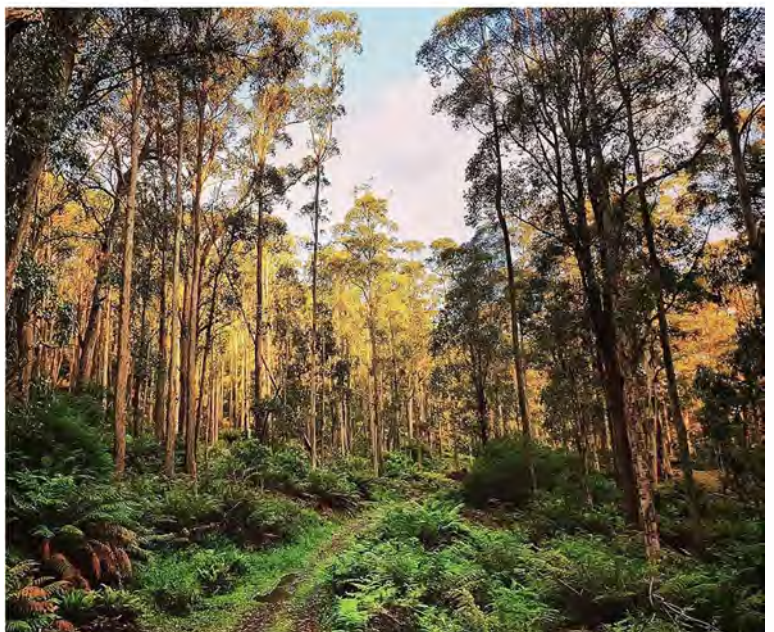
REASON FOR OBJECTION: (your submission)

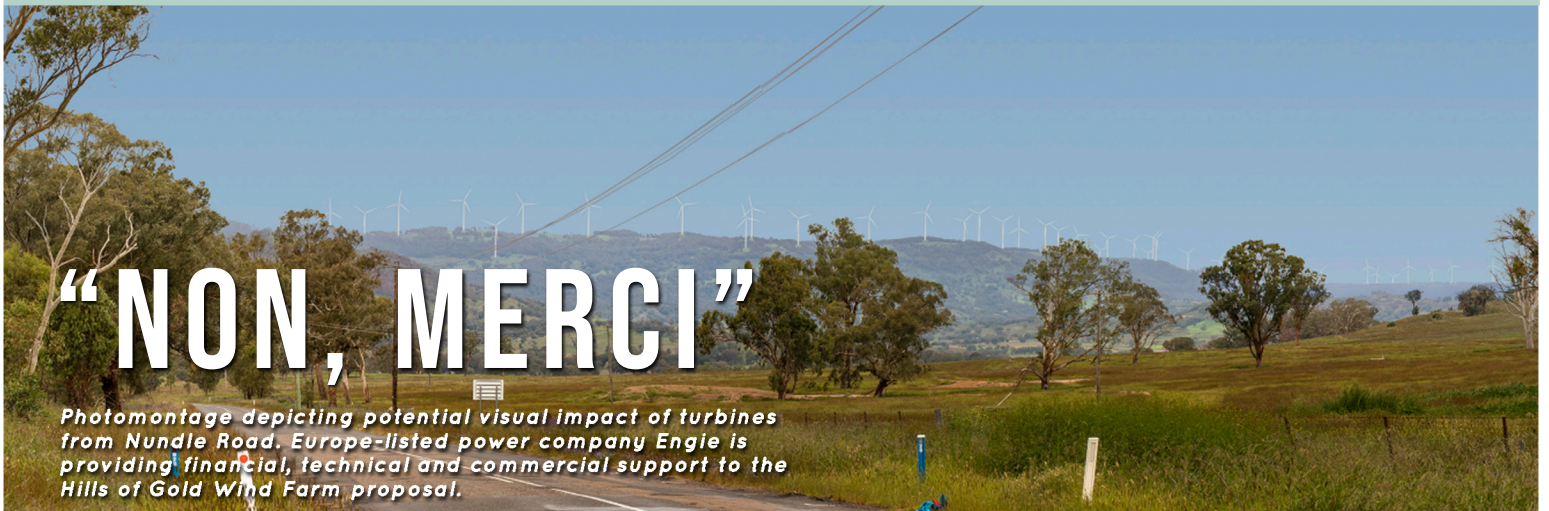
(PS. Do not include any personal details you do not wish to be made public)

There is no limit to the number of submissions you can lodge with the Department as long as they cover different points.

Submission starting points/ideas:

1. Explain your connection to the area.
2. Why you love living here or visiting here and what is special about it and your way of life.
3. If this Project is approved, how will it affect you from day to day or on special occasions?
4. How will it affect plans or dreams you have for your property or life? Your children or grandchildren?
5. Any general or specific comments about the EIS?





Photomontage depicting potential visual impact of turbines from Nundle Road. Europe-listed power company Engie is providing financial, technical and commercial support to the Hills of Gold Wind Farm proposal.

WIND FARM PHOTOMONTAGES WORSE THAN EXPECTED

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members have reacted angrily to the first photomontages released for Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd's proposed 78-turbine wind farm from Hanging Rock to Crawney Mountain.

Photomontages for seven locations in and around Nundle and Hanging Rock have been uploaded to the Hills of Gold Energy website. The photomontages range in distances from wind turbines from 1.4 to 14.8km.

The number of wind turbines visible from the seven locations vary from 10 on Nundle's main street, to 30 at award winning The DAG Sheep Station and Hanging Rock Look-out, 18 from Nundle Cemetery, and 40 on the western approach to the village on Nundle Rd. The document doesn't state a figure for wind turbines potentially visible from Morrison's Gap Rd.

Community Consultative Committee members have taken community feedback to the proponent via teleconference.

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc president John Krsulja said members reacting on social media were sick with anxiety after seeing the photomontages. "For more than two years we have all imagined what the proposed wind farm could look like from our

homes, properties and daily movements in and around Nundle and Hanging Rock," Mr Krsulja said.

"The photomontages are worse than any of us had visualised and the potential impact even greater. Key community viewpoints, such as the intersection of Lindsays Gap and Nundle Rds, Nundle Recreation Ground, and Nundle Recreation Club, have not been presented."

Mr Krsulja said members were disappointed and concerned by the quality of the photomontage images, which appeared to be washed out, not in focus, and not a true reflection of what the eye sees.

"Members feel deceived by the images that appear to make the turbines look less imposing, and do not give an indication of the potential environmental impacts to plants, animals, soil, and water from transport, clearing and construction.

"The community has been consistently told by the developer that the wind turbines won't be seen from Nundle. It is clear that the character of the existing heritage and nature-based landscape will be industrialised by this proposal."

PROPOSED TURBINE NUMBERS REDUCED AND NEIGHBOUR AGREEMENTS OFFERED

There have been significant changes to the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm announced in April. Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd has released a revised turbine layout, reducing the number of proposed turbines from up to 97 to 78. This is closer to the original number of 70 proposed at a meeting in February 2018 when the project was first made public. This is predominantly because some neighbours included in the 97 figure had not agreed to be part of the project.

Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd has also announced a Neighbour Benefit Sharing Agreement, offering neighbours within 5km of the proposed project area \$1,500 to \$6,000 annually in compensation, with individual agreements for residences where required.

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members believe no amount of compensation is adequate for the loss of quality of life and impacts to the environment over the proposed 35-year life of the project.

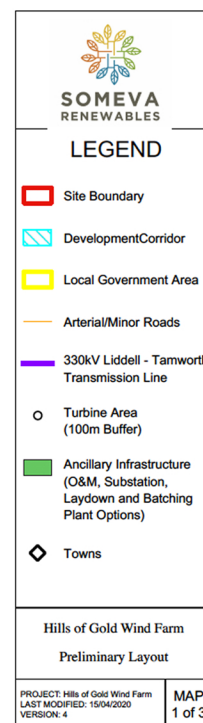
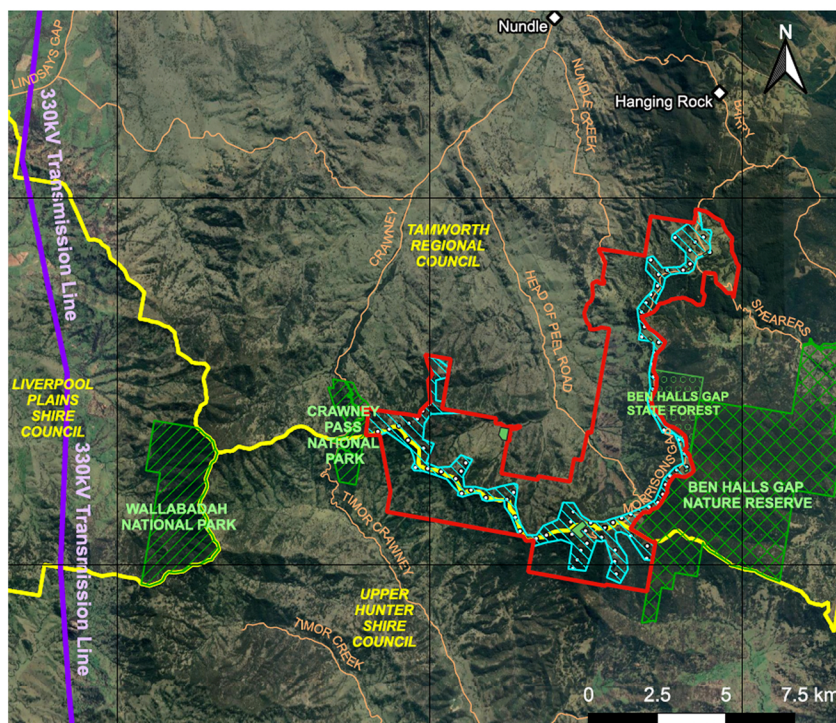
The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's 2016 Wind Energy Framework is a useful reference for landowners and makes it clear that:

"THE PROPONENT SHOULD BEAR ALL REASONABLE COSTS, INCLUDING THE LANDOWNER'S COSTS FOR INDEPENDENT ADVICE ASSOCIATED WITH ENTERING INTO THE AGREEMENT OR UNDERSTANDING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE AGREEMENT"..."

The Framework includes a requirement that:

"LANDOWNERS ARE PROPERLY INFORMED OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF ENTERING INTO SUCH AGREEMENTS, AND HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE AND SCALE OF THE PREDICTED IMPACTS, THROUGH THE PROVISION OF RELEVANT NOISE AND VISUAL IMPACT PREDICTIONS."

Under the Framework, there is no obligation for landowners to enter into an agreement with proponents, and even if they choose to do so, an agreement



can be reached at any time, including after the Department's assessment report is published or even after a planning approval is granted.

In a 2018 email the Department's Nicole Brewer writes that "...the Department is still obliged to assess the impacts of any project on the environment as a whole, regardless of whether there are agreements in place with landowners. It is only where there is a potentially significant impact (e.g. noise, visual, etc) on a particular residence that the Department gives further consideration to additional mitigation, and in these instances, the presence of an agreement becomes a relevant consideration for the assessment. That is, if the landowner has agreed to accept an impact in exchange for some kind of compensation, it is not the role of the Department to second guess that agreement."

The Department encourages landholders to read the detail of any agreement to understand what they are agreeing to, and whether it infers they accept the impacts associated with the financial offer.

Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd is expected to lodge its Development Application and Environmental Impact Statement with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in mid November.

MEMBERS QUESTION NOISE ASSESSMENT

Last month Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members submitted 29 questions regarding noise and vibration impact assessment on local properties to Hills of Gold Energy Wind Farm proponent Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd.

At a general meeting in early March members raised concerns about feeling pressured to agree to host noise monitoring equipment and submitted the questions to increase their understanding of potential implications for them and their families.

The noise and vibration impact assessment consultancy is Sonus Pty Ltd. A copy of the questions and responses is available at <https://www.hillsofgoldenergy.com/news-and-updates>

GOVERNMENT WANTS MORE INFORMATION ON IMPACTS TO PROTECTED FLORA & FAUNA

The state government has issued supplementary Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS) in response to a federal government determination that the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm is a controlled action under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

The Supplementary SEARS includes a request for "Further information...to determine the extent of potential impacts to



Pic: Koala (Phascogale cinereus) joey Photo: J Turbill/DPIE

the following protected matters from impacts associated with transporting project components to the proposed site."

It lists 13 critically endangered, endangered, and vulnerable plants and animals "likely present and significantly impacted" in the proposed project area, and 24 species potentially impacted by transporting components to the proposed site.

The species include the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot, Euphrasia arguta, and White Box-Yellow Box-Blackely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland ecological community, endangered Booroolong Frog, and vulnerable koala.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND WORKSHOP

Members of the Hills of Gold Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee were invited to attend a workshop aimed at brainstorming what form a proposed Community Enhancement Fund may take.

Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd has since confirmed that the proposed CEF would not exceed \$2500/turbine, despite a reduction in the number of turbines proposed.

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc president John Krsulja said he left the workshop none the wiser about what the community was being offered, or how the Community Enhancement Fund would be administered.

"It felt morally wrong and uncomfortable to be there given that the majority of Nundle and Hanging Rock residents have signed a petition opposing the proposal," he said.

"No final decisions were made and representatives of Tamworth Regional Council and Liverpool Plains Shire Council indicated they needed to refer discussions to their bosses.

"It was suggested the fund potentially would not be used by individuals or businesses, but community groups most likely in areas impacted by the proposal. Based on the experience of Upper Hunter neighbours the proposal could be delayed even up to 10 years, and the community would not receive a cent until the last turbine was operational."

SITE VISIT

Six community members on the Hills of Gold Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee visited the northern section of the proposed wind farm site in February.

It was an eye-opening experience and brought home what a magnificent location it is and how it should not be altered for industrial development.

The site is very narrow in parts and borders Ben Halls State Forest and Ben Halls Gap Nature Reserve. It is hard to believe that wind turbines up to 230m high to blade tip would be allowed in such close proximity to environmentally sensitive locations.

Pic: Outlook from the northern end of the proposed wind farm site. CCC members have asked for a second site visit to include the southern and western portions of the proposed development.

JP DECLARES MAJORITY OF RESIDENTS OPPOSE WIND FARM

In a presentation to Tamworth Regional Council in December, Hills of Gold Preservation Inc revealed it has a Justice of the Peace statutory declaration that "the majority of Nundle and Hanging Rock residents and landholders do not want wind turbines in view or hearing of people's homes or work places."

If you would like to sign the petition, a copy is included. Please return to Teresa Eather, Treasurer, HOGPI, C/- Nundle PO.

The statement was part of a 20-minute briefing about the group's research, meetings, and submissions made in the previous 22 months relating to potential environmental, social, and financial impacts. HOGPI president John Krsulja said members were disappointed with omissions in Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act referral to the Federal Government.

"The proponent did not provide all the Lot Numbers of properties potentially involved in the proposed project area, and stated that the site is not mapped bush fire prone despite ePlanning Spatial Viewer indicating otherwise."

WEP has since released potential lot numbers associated with the proposal to CCC members in May, stating that not all

landholders have agreed and they are subject to environmental assessment. "WEP has not reached an agreement with all landowners of these lots and the lots are part of investigations including social and environmental studies, and the majority of these lots will not be pursued based on the study outcomes."

BEN FORDHAM LIVE 2GB

Thanks so much to Ben Fordham for getting behind our fight to preserve the beautiful heritage Hills of Gold, plants, animals, soil and water from industrial wind turbine development. Have a listen and let him know how special Nundle, Hanging Rock and Crawney are to you ben@2GB.com

<https://www.2gb.com/ben-fordham-goes-into-bat-for-little-town-with-special-place-in-his-life/?fbclid=IwAR2vldM1KhZ6ZUhKu-lah15lWFEn1RM0paJHDB7pKBHoK42Y7xWps8lOpo0>



Ben Fordham has great affection for Nundle, having visited several years ago and purchased a row of cinema chairs.

VOL 1 - SEPTEMBER 2019

HILLS OF GOLD

PRESERVATION INC.

Newsletter

THE CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE
OUR BEAUTIFUL

Hills of Gold

NATIONAL WIND FARM COMMISSIONER
VISITS NUNDLE & HANGING ROCK

"Crawney Road"

A SONG INSPIRED BY THE HILLS OF GOLD

HOGPI 2018/19 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

NUNDLE · HANGING ROCK · CRAWNEY · BOWLING ALLEY · TIMOR



PRESIDENTS REPORT

Thank you to our members and supporters who have contributed to research, public and ordinary meetings, and fundraising since Hills of Gold Preservation Inc was formed in April 2018.

The executive of resident and landholder group Hills of Gold Preservation Inc was returned at its Annual General Meeting held last month [August 8].

The returning executive is president John Krsulja, deputy president Brian Tomalin, secretary Sharon Csanki, treasurer Teresa Eather and community members Ian Worley Snr, Megan Trousdale, and Natasha Soonchild.

It was a significant shock for many people in our community to learn early last year that a developer, Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd, proposed up to 97 wind turbines on the mountain between Hanging Rock and Crawney.

It has taken a lot of reading, networking, meeting, and writing to understand the potential impacts of the proposed wind turbines and to share our concerns with the developer, State Government, and local community.

The support of Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members has been reassuring and consolidated our resolve to find out as much as possible about how wind turbines have impacted other communities.

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members held a public meeting at Nundle Memorial Hall in September, and lobbied to attract Department of Planning, Industry and Environment representatives to host a public meeting in October.

On the same day the Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd Preliminary Environmental Assessment (Scoping Report) was released on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Major Projects website: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/9701> <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/9701>

The first Hills of Gold Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee was held on June 12. The committee is made up of three representatives of Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd, three representatives of Tamworth Regional Council, Upper Hunter Council and Liverpool Plains Council, representatives of Hills of Gold Preservation Inc John Krsulja, and Nundle Business Tourism and Marketing Group Inc Megan Trousdale, and community representatives Ian Worley, Margaret Schofield, Peter Schofield and Marcia Ajani. Alternative members are Bruce Moore, Ed Hughes, Nick Bradford, Selena Sylvester, Teresa Eather, and Megan Carberry.

Minutes are published online https://docs.wixstat-ic.com/ud/ddde62_063049d530f247e6b11fb98e43ea054.pdf

The next CCC meeting will be held on Wednesday September 18 and community members are encouraged to contact CCC members with any points they would like discussed.





Pic: Part of Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd's proposed project area visible from Nundle Rd.

Discussion at the meeting revealed:

- the overall lack of progress over the last 15 months and the consequent lack of detail on issues such as the proposed turbine layout, transmission line route/grid connection, and DA/EIS progress

- Preliminary Environmental Assessment identifies 42 residences/DAs within 3km of the proposed project area (Page 45, Figure 6-2, many within Hanging Rock village, and on Morrison's Gap Rd, and Barry Rd, Hanging Rock);

- request for confirmation on whether administration of the Community Enhancement Fund would be a Section 355 committee of council;

- request for details on modelling for proposed construction and ongoing jobs.

- Jamie Chivers confirmed that he is a director of Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd and he is one of its shareholders.

- details on most common concrete slab foundation construction, sizes generally between 17 to 20m diameter and 2-3 metres depth, with 15-20m underground pylons and underground cabling;

The meeting raised the potential visual impact of the proposal. The Preliminary Environmental Assessment goes into detail about where turbines would potentially be visible from including Hanging Rock Lookout, Barry Rd, Morrisons Gap Rd, Shearers Rd, Nundle Creek Rd, Mountain View Rd, Timor Crawney Rd, and Crawney Rd.

It states that, "Turbines located within this [Rolling foothills] Landscape Character Area have the potential to become the **dominant visual feature** in the landscape..." and that from the Southern Edge of Nundle and Nundle Town, "It is anticipated that wind turbines would potentially be visible along the ridgeline in the distance."

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc has had feedback from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment that the Wind Energy Guidelines recognise that there are circumstances where dwellings or key public viewpoints located above the 'Preliminary Assessment Tool line' (being 3 km for a turbine height of 220m) may require further consideration due to topography or other landscape features.

"It is expected that the EIS will assess the visual impacts to dwellings and other sensitive receivers located beyond 3 km from the nearest proposed turbine," a department representative outlined.

"In preparing the environmental impact statement, the Applicant should consider the elements of the landscape important to the community, including public and private viewpoints. These areas of importance should be shared with the Applicant for inclusion in the Visual Baseline Study."

JOHN KRSULJA

Facebook Hills of Gold Preservation - Nundle, Hanging Rock and Crawney
<https://hillsofgoldpreservation.net.au/>

NATIONAL WIND FARM COMMISSIONER VISITS NUNDLE & HANGING ROCK

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc invited National Wind Farm Commissioner Andrew Dyer to Nundle and Hanging Rock late last year and he visited in March. Mr Dyer visited the proposed project area and met with 10 Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members.

The National Wind Farm Commissioner's 2017 Annual Report (8. Site Selection, 8.1 Observations, pg 44) states:



“...WE HAVE FOUND THAT LOCATING TURBINES ON TOP OF HILLS OR RIDGES, WHILE OPTIMUM FOR CAPTURING THE WIND RESOURCE, CAN HAVE GREATER IMPACTS ON VISUAL AMENITY, MAY LEAD TO SPECIFIC NOISE AND SHADOW FLICKER SCENARIOS FOR RESIDENTS IN THE VALLEY BENEATH, AND MAY HAVE OTHER IMPACTS ON THE COMMUNITY. ACCESS ROADS FOR HILL RIDGE WIND FARMS CAN ALSO BE INTRUSIVE AND SIGNIFICANTLY CONSTRAIN THE AVAILABLE FARMING LAND IN THE AREA...

THERE MAY BE OPPORTUNITIES TO SELECT AND PRIORITISE WIND PROJECTS, FROM THE CURRENT PIPELINE OF WIND ENERGY PROJECTS, WHICH BETTER BALANCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROJECT BY THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY...”



Pic: DPIE Public Meeting, October 2018

Mr Dyer shared his extensive knowledge about wind farms throughout Australia and some of the experiences of communities that have been through the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment State Significant Project assessment process.

He listened to Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members' concerns and provided references for future research.

Listen to National Wind Farm Commissioner Andrew Dyer's interview on ABC New England North West:
<http://nundle.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/190311-Wind-Farm-Commissioner-123ABC-64kBit.mp3>

and read his Annual Report:
<https://www.nwfc.gov.au/publications/2017-annual-report>
<https://www.nwfc.gov.au/publications/2018-annual-report>

AUSTRALIAN WIND ALLIANCE BEHAVIOUR DISAPPOINTING

The Hills of Gold Preservation Inc was disappointed with the behaviour of Australian Wind Alliance representatives Andrew Bray and Charlie Prell in our community in March.

Andrew Bray and Charlie Prell requested a meeting with the Hills of Gold Preservation Inc executive at short notice. They asked us to share our concerns and then broke the trust we showed in giving them the courtesy of a meeting by using our concerns against us in media.

We do not want an ongoing debate with AWA, however we note its obvious bias and dripping condescension towards anyone who does not share its agenda.

This makes it clear AWA is unable to be an impartial assessor of local attitudes, which its representatives pretend to be, and its inability to provide impartial advice to the community.

A positive that came out of Hills of Gold Preservation Inc raising members' and supporters' concerns with the AWA was removal of the toxic Facebook page Nundle Renewable Energy Park Discussion Forum.



Australian Wind Alliance's Charlie Prell and Andrew Bray during their Nundle/Hanging Rock visit.



Department of Planning and Environment, executive director, Resource Assessments David Kitto and NSW Farmers Association president James Jackson.
Source: The Armidale Express.

NSW FARMERS' FORUM HEARS RENEWABLES CONCERNS

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and NSW Farmers' Association representatives hosted a forum at Armidale exploring landholders' concerns about large scale solar and wind energy developments in the New England region.

A major theme was the need for developers to have greater transparency when entering communities and negotiating with potential renewables and transmission line hosts, and the wider community. Other issues raised were concerns about impacts on land values, insurance risk, and future development opportunities.

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc called for a Best Practice model to be developed to encourage better and meaningful community consultation.

A report will be written following forums at Armidale, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga.

CROOKWELL 3 WIND FARM REFERRED TO IPC

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment referred Crookwell 3 Wind Farm to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) for final decision, saying it should be refused due to significant cumulative visual impacts on the landscape and residents.

Mike Young, Executive Director of Resource Assessments, said the proposal is for the construction and operation of a new wind farm with 23 turbines up to 157 metres in height approximately five kilometres from Crookwell in the Southern Highlands.

"We considered this project on its merits, and our recommendation to refuse it draws on extensive community consultation and advice from an independent visual expert," he said.

"When it comes to visual impact, lots of factors need to be considered – from windfarm distance to residential areas to distracting blade glint and turbine flicker.

"We acknowledge the proponent has made changes to reduce impacts and has reached agreement with a number of landowners, but our independent visual expert has advised there would still be significant visual impacts on up to 27 residences."

Mr Young said the NSW Wind Energy Framework, introduced by the NSW Government in 2016, set clear and consistent rules for wind farm development.

"The Framework recommends turbines this size should be more than 2.1 kilometres from residences, but in this case 17 of the 23 proposed turbines are less than that, with some residences as close as 1.1 kilometre.

"The proposal is also inconsistent with local planning controls,

which classify more than two-thirds of the proposed site as an environmental management zone. Overall, our assessment concluded the site is fundamentally not suitable for a large-scale wind farm."

The IPC will review the Department's assessment before making its final decision.

SHOOTIN' SADIE FUNDRAISER

Thank you to more than 100 guests who attended the inaugural Nundle production of one woman show, Shootin' Sadie, written and performed by Natasha Soonchild.

The fundraising event was exceptionally well supported raising more than \$4000, with event profits complemented by community members donating plants, artworks, jewellery, and garden tools for a secret auction.

Guests were effusive in their praise of the whole night, but particularly Natasha Soonchild's and John Krsulja's performances.

Last performed at the Sydney Fringe Festival in 2013, Natasha revived Shootin' Sadie to raise funds for Hills of Gold



established to research, assess, and inform good decision making regarding a wind farm proposal from Hanging Rock to Crawney.

A Charles Sturt University Communications graduate, Natasha wrote Shootin' Sadie conjuring the Western genre she always wanted to perform. She was joined by director Gwenda Hague, who is also her mum.

Playing an incredible 12 characters, the 45-minute rollicking tale, is an epic Wild West adventure drawing on the aural tradition of story telling.



INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING NEAR MUDGEE

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc attended the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) Hearing for the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm Modification in June.



Picture: Crudine Ridge, Aarons Pass Road (Uncleared)

Crudine Ridge is an interesting case because it raises the issue of vegetation/habitat clearing required for transporting wind turbine components. This will need to be assessed from the New England Highway to Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd's proposed project area.

The Preliminary Environmental Assessment proposes accessing the project area via Hanging Rock/Morrison's Gap Rd, or Head of Peel.

Work on the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm was stopped late last year after residents raised the alarm that while permission was given for the developer to clear 50 trees in 20km along Aaron's Pass Road, hundreds of trees were cleared in just 3km. The developer applied for a Modification enabling additional clearing and it was approved by the IPC.



Picture: Crudine Ridge, Aarons Pass Road (Cleared)



"Crawney Road"

It's more than just a sunrise
over Crawney Road
The morning light beckons a new day
Through the rolling hills of gold like
a passage back in time
Blows a wind no man can contain

There's a rustic old farm house
just below the pass
Tired and old but it's loved just the same
I can't help but wonder as
the seasons change
Will it always remain

Crawney Road the valley of ideas
Escape the ordinary inhibitions disappear
It's everything and all I know
It comes together in a beautiful way
Crawney Road

You can listen to the magpie on the wire
Gravel under footsteps
if you care to walk a mile
From patchwork to the old exchange
Nundle and the great dividing range
Crawney Road

You can paint it if you want to
You can sing under its sky
Why would you want to change it
We are just a stitch in time

Crawney Road the valley of ideas
Escape the ordinary inhibitions disappear
It's everything and all I know

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"Crawney" painting by Natasha Soonchild ©