



Professor Mary O'Kane AC
Chair
Independent Planning Commission of NSW
GPO Box 3415
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Professor O'Kane

Crookwell 3 Wind Farm (SSD 6695)

In February 2015, the Department completed its assessment of the merits of the Crookwell 3 Wind Farm and referred the application to the then Planning Assessment Commission for a final decision.

In its assessment, the Department acknowledged that the project could have significant visual impacts on up to 8 residences near the turbines, but recommended approval due to the renewable energy benefits of the project. The Department's recommended conditions included granting voluntary acquisition rights to the owners of the 8 residences.

After reviewing the application, the Commission questioned several of the conclusions in the Department's assessment report and referred the application back to the Department for further assessment.

The Applicant subsequently amended the application and submitted an Addendum to the Environmental Impact Statement assessing the impacts of the amended application, which was exhibited in October 2016.

Since then, the Department has completed its assessment of the merits of the amended project, which has included detailed consideration of:

- the issues raised by the Commission;
- the issues raised in submissions on the Addendum EIS;
- advice from an independent visual expert;
- the consistency of the project against the land use objectives under the *Upper Lachlan Local Environmental Plan 2010* and the *Upper Lachlan Development Control Plan 2010*;
- cumulative impacts with other wind farms in the vicinity;
- the principles set out in the *NSW Wind Energy Framework*; and
- the need for the project in the context of the significant growth in the renewable energy industry in NSW over recent years.

After very carefully examining all these additional matters, the Department now considers that the environmental impacts of the project outweigh its benefits, and that the site is unsuitable for a large-scale wind farm on the following grounds:

- the project would result in unacceptable impacts on the landscape character and significant landscape features;

- the project would result in unacceptable direct and cumulative visual impacts on residences, public viewpoints and the surrounding landscape;
- the majority of submissions from residences in the local area object to the project and Upper Lachlan Shire Council maintains residual concerns about the impacts of the project; and
- the project is not consistent with the current land use zoning provisions.

Consequently, the Department considers that on balance the Crookwell 3 Wind Farm is not in the public interest and should not be approved.

I have attached a copy of the Department's assessment report and other relevant documents for the Commission's consideration, and would appreciate it if the Commission would now determine the application.

For further information or to arrange a briefing, please contact Mr Mike Young, A/Executive Director, Resource Assessments and Compliance, on (02) 8217 2091.

Yours sincerely



Marcus Ray
Deputy Secretary
Planning Services

23/04/2019