

Submission in support of SSD-9679

Prepared by M Sydenham

I wish to comment on the reasons why I am in support of the Hills of Gold Wind Farm.

SUITABILITY OF SITE

- **SUSTAINABILITY**

Building wind farms on the top of mountain ranges is a perfect location as mountain tops are windy much of the time, night and day. For over ten years, since 2012, wind monitoring feasibility studies have been undertaken at the proposed site. The consistency and reliability of this natural resource makes it an excellent site for this project.

- **CONSTRUCTABILITY, SOIL AND WATER IMPACTS**

(Reference: Assessment Report SSD 9679, Appendix M)

The DPE used independent experienced experts to undertake a thorough review of the proposed wind farm and to provide geotechnical advice on the suitability of the project with regard to water and erosion concerns and accessibility difficulties.

The experts confirmed that the Developers are using sound engineering practices in the design, construction and operational stages to avoid water and soil erosion. During construction there will be site teams and third party assessors checking and providing early identification of potential future problems which will be promptly addressed. At completion, there is a review of the works and any defects will be rectified.

It is unlikely that the Developer would invest millions of dollars in a project unless they were confident regarding the suitability of the site and their ability to mitigate potential soil and water impacts.

- **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND BIODIVERSITY**

(Reference Assessment Report SSD 9679, paragraph 6.5.7)

Detailed environmental impact studies have been undertaken and turbines have been removed by the Developer in response to the recommendations.

The Developer could have chosen to purchase the required biodiversity offset credits on the open market but they have chosen to survey and propose biodiversity stewardship sites on properties adjacent to the development area. Surveying and setting up these

biodiversity sites is a significant cost to the Developer. However, it will financially benefit local landholders and will bolster the biodiversity security of our region.

The wind farm will be improving the environment by providing renewable energy and will also be protecting our natural environment in perpetuity through the establishment of these biodiversity conservation areas.

This follows the principle of Ecologically Sustainable Development as it relates to both Intra- and Inter- generational equity (ec.nsw.gov.au/preston_principles of economically sustainable development).

COMMUNITY IMPACT

- **ECONOMIC/PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT**

As a registered psychologist (PSY0001241146) who lives in Hanging Rock and practices in Tamworth, my clients through the years have included many residents from the greater Nundle area.

Within our community there are people struggling with the increased cost of living and few local employment opportunities. Economic benefits provided by the project, such as jobs and electricity subsidies, could help alleviate their financial pressures, improving mental health, not only for the depressed individuals but also for their family members.

I have witnessed the mental health impacts on farmers struggling to survive droughts, floods, bushfires and pest plagues. Most have bank loans and risk losing their land whenever factors beyond their control occur. Turbine hosting, neighbourhood and biodiversity conservation agreements will reduce levels of anxiety by providing farmers with some economic stability to withstand setbacks. This helps farmers to be able to keep farming, thus contributing to food security for the nation.

More job opportunities create wealth and more workers in the area means more money being spent in local businesses.

The community enhancement fund offers ongoing opportunities for better services for locals. These are currently lacking especially for children, the elderly and young families. Funding of new and different events or attractions will attract new tourists to the area. Nundle has stagnated and an injection of capital from the wind farm developers will make our lovely village even better.

- **VISUAL IMPACT**

Every new development has a visual impact. Wind turbines are large but considering the aspect of perspective, they appear smaller when they are in the distance on top of mountains.

We know from the experience of living close to the proposed development site for eighteen years, that the mountains are often shrouded in mist which will obliterate the view of the turbines for many days of the year.

Living in Shearers Road, we will need to drive between seven turbines located along the southern end of Morrisons Gap Road. Our landscape will definitely change and I look forward to being able to have close up views of these stately structures, blades gracefully moving, contributing to a much bigger vision of clean, green energy for our planet.

In conclusion, I strongly support the IPC endorsing the DPE Recommendation for Approval of SSD-9679. In my view, the benefits for the environment and the economic improvements for our community and beyond, provide a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a change towards a more sustainable future for us and our descendants.

M Sydenham