



Press release
January 12, 2022

Major Changes for Hills of Gold Wind Farm, as ENGIE Submits Response to Submissions

The development footprint of ENGIE's proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm near Nundle is set to be reduced by more than 200ha, with the proponents lodging its Response to Public Submissions to the NSW Government this week.

The document addresses matters raised during the public exhibition period, where more than 600 submissions were lodged by community members and local organisations.

ENGIE's General Manager, Asset Development, Andrew Kerley says a 41 per cent reduction in the development footprint is one of many changes made to the proposed project.

"We have undertaken a significant amount of additional site investigations and geotechnical work and as a result, five wind turbines will be removed, reducing the number to 65," he said.

"This will contribute to a 36 per cent reduction in impacts to native vegetation, as well as a 29 per cent reduction in impacts to koala habitat."

The reduction in development footprint and turbine numbers also ensures no significant impacts to cave-dwelling microbats and any sensitive soil types are completely avoided.

"Additional soil and water investigations were conducted by external consultants, which point to the proposed development area and terrain as being suitable for wind farm construction and operation," said Mr Kerley.

"The removal of turbines and relocation of access roads will also avoid high erosion risk areas and reduce the amount of earthworks needed."

A number of optimisations have been made to the project's Traffic Management Plan, which will see a 38 per cent reduction in daily project traffic movements through Nundle during the two-year construction period.

Traffic studies show there will be 310 project vehicle movements per day through Nundle, during peak construction, compared to the existing 845 vehicle movements, currently passing through the town.



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Head of the Peel Road has now been removed as a transport and construction route, with laybys on proposed routes for Lindsay Gap Road, Barry Road and Morrison Gap Road.

A bypass of Devil's Elbow has also been designed by an experienced civil engineering design consultant.

"Devil's Elbow will be the primary route option for oversize and overmass vehicles transporting turbine components," said Mr Kerley.

"This bypass will see these vehicles taken onto a private road, while allowing all other vehicles to continue on the existing roadway."

ENGIE has also been working with geotechnical consultants to assess and investigate heritage impacts, particularly near the Black Snake Gold Mine, which was a clear community concern highlighted during public submissions and in discussions with key stakeholders.

"It is critical that existing heritage sites in the community are preserved and protected and we've taken undertaken additional work to ensure these areas are protected and there will be no impacts to heritage sites," said Mr Kerley.

As part of further investigations into the proposed development's impact on tourism, the University of Newcastle was engaged to compile a report on wind energy and tourism.

The desktop study looked into the benefits and opportunities of wind farm tourism, concluding that '*there is very little academic evidence that the presence of wind farms has a significant negative economic impact on the tourism industry in rural localities*' (Dr Barrie Shannon, 2021).

It also stated that '*adventure tourism, eco-tourism and educational tourism incorporating wind farm infrastructure are emerging globally as key opportunities for rural localities*' (Dr Barrie Shannon, 2021).

"This report highlights that wind farms can provide massive opportunities for rural communities and often complement existing tourism markets," said Mr Kerley. If approved, ENGIE's Hills of Gold Wind Farm will generate enough renewable energy to power around 182,000 average Australian homes and reduce annual carbon emissions by 608,000 tonnes.

There will also be significant economic benefit to the region, with a Community Enhancement Fund committing to over \$3,000 per turbine, per year over the life of



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the project and a one-off \$150,000 construction fund to support community initiatives and projects.

The development will now be assessed by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

ENGIE's full Response to Submissions is available [here](#).

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About ENGIE

Our group is a global reference in low-carbon energy and services. Together with our 170,000 employees, our customers, partners and stakeholders, we are committed to accelerate the transition towards a carbon-neutral world, through reduced energy consumption and more environmentally-friendly solutions. Inspired by our purpose ("raison d'être"), we reconcile economic performance with a positive impact on people and the planet, building on our key businesses (gas, renewable energy, services) to offer competitive solutions to our customers. Turnover in 2020: 55.8 billion Euros. The Group is listed on the Paris and Brussels stock exchanges (ENGI) and is represented in the main financial indices (CAC 40, Euronext 100, FTSE Eurotop 100, MSCI Europe) and non-financial indices (DJSI World, DJSI Europe, Euronext Vigeo Eiris - Eurozone 120/ Europe 120/ France 20, MSCI EMU ESG, MSCI Europe ESG, Euro Stoxx 50 ESG, Stoxx Europe 600 ESG, and Stoxx Global 1800 ESG).

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