

**Minutes:** Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Hills of Gold Windfarm Community Consultative Committee (CCC)  
Held at the Tamworth Regional Council Office, Nundle

**Wednesday 12 June 2019**

**Members Present:** Michael Chamberlain (MC) – community representative, Kay Burnes (KB) – Tamworth Regional Council, Donna Ausling (DA) - Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Christine Robinson (CR) – Upper Hunter Shire Council, Megan Trousdale (MT) – Nundle Business Tourism and Marketing Group representative, Margaret Schofield (MSc) – community representative, Marcia Ajani (MA) – community representative, Michael Stranger (MSt) – Someva representative, John Krsjula (JK) – Hills of Gold Preservation Inc representative, John Willcox (JW) – Inclusive Engagement / Someva representative, Simon Chivers (SC) – Someva representative, Jamie Chivers (JC) – Wind Energy Partners representative, Ian Worley (IW) - community representative

**Apologies:** Nil

**Independent Chair:** David Ross (DR)

<b>Agenda Items</b>	<b>Who to Present</b>
1. Introductions and apologies	David Ross
2. Declaration of pecuniary or other interests	David Ross and all
3. Introduction to the CCC process and guidelines	David Ross
4. Overview of the proposal	Jamie Chivers
5. General Business	All
6. Next Meeting – 18 September 2019	All

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/By Whom
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b></p> <p>Meeting commenced at 6:30 pm. DR welcomed all and commented that he had received more committee applications for this CCC – 23 in total – than any other he has been involved with. This was a sign of great local participation and spirit. He noted that he had allowed Wind Energy Partners (WEP) to have four representatives present for this meeting in order to give the committee an understanding of the WEP project team; however, in future meetings, WEP would only be allowed to have three representatives present.</p> <p>Furthermore, while a community representative was allowed to attend via the phone because it was important for them to be involved in this initial induction, this would not be allowed in the future as there are numerous alternate CCC representatives who are keen to play a role; namely: Bruce Moore, Edward Hughes, Megan Carberry, Nick Bradford, Selena Sylvester and Teresa Eather.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Declaration of pecuniary or other interests</b> – The chair advised that he is paid a fee to chair these meetings.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Introduction to the CCC Process and Guidelines</b></p> <p>DR gave a presentation on CCC roles, the process for taking minutes and the code of conduct.</p> <p><b><u>CCC Roles</u></b></p> <p>Key to the role for the CCC members is the necessity to be a conduit between the community and the committee, sending information out and bringing information into the committee. Should a CCC member be unable to attend, they are to notify DR who will arrange for an appropriate alternate to attend instead. Should a council representative be unable to attend, Council can nominate an alternate.</p> <p>DR must be independent, allowing all members to raise their views and questions and ensure that all issues are properly considered. DR committed to allowing CCC members to provide feedback on his independence every three or four meetings.</p> <p>WEP / Someva representatives must provide timely and accurate information to the CCC. Responses to meeting actions are required within 28 days.</p> <p>With respect to observers, the guidelines state that DR would have to seek feedback from the committee before deciding whether to let an individual be an observer. In the case of Hills of Gold, DR declared that he had knocked back requests for observers for the present meeting in accordance with Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) guidance that individuals who are on groups already represented on the CCC cannot attend.</p> <p>A discussion was then held on observers before the committee unanimously agreed that no observers would be allowed at CCC meetings. This decision could be revisited in the future.</p>	

	<p><b>Introduction to the CCC Process and Guidelines (continued)</b></p> <p><b><u>Minute Taking</u></b>  DR noted that the minutes would be a summary of each meeting’s proceedings, rather than a transcript. Draft minutes would be provided for review within a week. Members would then have a week in which to provide comments.  DR noted that there had been a request for meetings to be livestreamed. After a discussion on this, the committee unanimously agreed that the minutes would be the sole record of meetings.  The minutes would also be uploaded to the WEP website [<a href="https://www.hillsofgoldenergy.com/ccc">https://www.hillsofgoldenergy.com/ccc</a>]</p> <p><b><u>Code of Conduct</u></b>  DR reminded members that all, including himself, were to comply with the code. Should anyone not comply, they can be given warnings. Three warnings and people could be removed from the committee. Furthermore, if a member misses three consecutive meetings without an appropriate reason, they can also be removed.  With respect to media interest, DR is the only committee member who can talk on behalf of the entire CCC. Should the situation arise, members can talk to the media on their own behalf (or on behalf of the group that they represent) but not on behalf of the committee.</p>	<p>MT to provide DR details of local media contacts so that they can be informed of the CCC’s commencement</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Overview of the Proposal</b></p> <p>JC introduced himself, confirming that he is a Director in WEP, which has four shareholders. He gave a presentation, summarising the proposal. This commenced with a timeline of works required to get to a decision on the proposal.  A Preliminary Environmental Assessment has been prepared by WEP and lodged with DPE [<a href="http://bit.ly/2KtvONI">http://bit.ly/2KtvONI</a>]. The PEA has been distributed to government agencies who have provided requests for further detailed assessments.  This information was used to create the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). It is anticipated that it will take about two years to prepare the Development Application (DA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before public exhibition occurs. Exhibition of the assessment document is for a minimum of four weeks for interested people to make submissions. WEP must then respond to the submissions before a determination is made.  MT noted that a copy of the PEA is to be placed at the library shortly.</p> <p><b><u>What is Proposed</u></b>  Up to 97 turbines are proposed ~ 410 MW generated. This will require: upgrading existing roads and creating new roads; up to two substations and underground cabling between turbines and 24 km of overhead powerlines; and an operations and maintenance building. Foundations can be slab, pile or rock type depending on ground conditions. The slab type is most common with slab sizes generally between 17 to 20m diameter and 2-3 metres depth. This will be determined through the assessment process.</p>	

## Overview of the Proposal (continued)

A discussion was then held about how deep the 33 kV cables would be buried with some members concerned that cables may not be buried deep enough. JC noted that the cables would be encased and buried to comply with Australian standards. Furthermore, a resistivity test would identify the cable diameter and depth.

Some land agreements are still being finalised so the boundary of the proposal has also not been finalised. Turbines would be delivered from Newcastle.

JC noted that the proposal would reduce the wholesale cost of energy and provide more renewable energy in the national electricity market.

Questioned on whether WEP would “walk away” if they don’t get an investor, JC responded that the company needs an investor with expertise in construction and operation. Further questioned on whether the PEA or future environmental assessments would be funded by a private investor, JC could not comment, citing commercial-in-confidence.

A committee member questioned whether the grid would cope with both Hills of Gold and the Walcha wind farms? JC responded that the Integrated Systems Plan is produced by AEMO in conjunction with TransGrid to manage consistency of flow [<http://bit.ly/31N1OkZ>].

Other benefits from the proposal were noted by JC including: a reduction in coal fired power; 34 operational jobs forecast and 272 construction jobs; renewable energy for 193,000 homes; a community enhancement fund (CEF) for \$2,500 per turbine; and a general economic injection into the regional economy by associated landowners and those employed by the project.

Questioned on whether the figures quoted were based on a “worst cast scenario” of 97 turbines, could the number of turbines decrease, JC said yes.

Members of the committee noted that there are 42 dwellings living within 3 km of the project area.

A member questioned whether the ridge line is a good place to build turbines, based on the Nation Wind Farm Commissioner’s Report. JC noted that the key requirement for best placed wind turbines is where the wind is strongest and most consistent – this is usually on ridge lines but there are other considerations. DR noted that the National Wind Farm Commissioner could be invited sometime to discuss this as well.

A discussion was then held on who administers the fund. A section 355 committee, a council advisory committee or an environmental trust? Furthermore, questions were raised with respect to the risk of the CEF disappearing should an investor come on board. JC observed that the company would need to enshrine the CEF into the DA conditions. A member expressed concern how Nundle or Hanging Rock groups were to believe they could borrow funds against the CEF to build infrastructure like heated pools, retirement homes, funding for clubs etc.

### **The SEARs**

A detailed environmental assessment will need to be undertaken in a number of specialty areas; namely, landscape and visual, noise, biodiversity, traffic and transport, hazards and risks, heritage, water and soils, waste, social and economic. Consultants have now been engaged to work on survey and design work to satisfy the SEARs.

WEP to present at next meeting on forecasted calculations

DR and JC to identify who administers the CEF [see s5.2.1 of <http://bit.ly/2MY90ax>].

	<p>A concern was raised about how the company can do an EA if they don't have agreements in place, particularly if some agreements are being disputed and boundaries between the prominent host landholder property and Ben Halls Nature Reserve is in dispute and may change?</p> <p>JC noted in response to questioning by a member about potential turbine or transmission line host landholders that he couldn't disclose where agreements have been finalised as these are commercial in confidence. This discussion then turned to potential future conversations at the CCC meetings, including having a site trip, having a presentation on heritage and biodiversity issues and the methodologies employed to conduct such surveys, as well as inviting the National Wind Farm Commissioner to attend. A member requested that all CCC members be granted access to the potential development site to see the location of proposed turbines identified in the PEA to gain insight. JC noted that this is private property so access may not be granted.</p> <p>As a consequence of that discussion, biodiversity and heritage are to be the focus for the next meeting.</p>	<p>JC to look into a site trip for our Nov / Dec meeting</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>General Business</b></p> <p>A discussion was held around the anticipated visual impact associated with the proposal. Some members believed that there would be an impact, citing what the PEA had identified. They were concerned that the proposal would be a dominant image in the area. Other members believed that the proposal wouldn't be as dominant, with just some parts of the area impacted. JC noted that a more detailed landscape and visual assessment is required as part of the SEARs, which will call on the preparation of visual montages.</p> <p>A member handed out a media release from DPE about the Crookwell 3 Wind Farm (close to Crookwell 2 Wind Farm). The proposal has been referred to the Independent Planning Commission for final decision saying it should be refused due to significant cumulative visual impacts on the landscape and residents. The CCC member observed that not all wind farm proposals are a fait accompli.</p> <p>Finally, a member asked WEP if they were aware of a possible DA to build within the project area and the possibility of ten turbines being removed. Would this affect the project? JC noted that WEP was aware of the DA and would wait and see.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Next meeting date</b> - Wednesday 18 September 2019 at 6:30pm.</p>	

**Meeting Closed: 8:55 pm**

**Appendix 1: Actions**

<b>Page No</b>	<b>Action No</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date Raised</b>
3	1	MT to provide DR details of local media contacts so that they can be informed of the CCC's commencement	12 June 2019
4	2	WEP to present at next meeting on forecast calculations	12 June 2019
4	3	DR and JC to identify who administers the CEF	12 June 2019
5	4	JC to look into a site trip for our Nov / Dec meeting	12 June 2019



**HILLS OF GOLD  
ENERGY**

**Community Consultative Committee  
June 2019**



**SOMEVA  
RENEWABLES**

# Wind Energy Partners

- 100% Australian Owned
- Principals have a track record in the power sector, renewables, construction and law.



**SOMEVA**  
RENEWABLES

- 100% Australian Owned
- Development Management including planning, technical, and construction advisory
- Track record of 300MW of wind advisory in Australia and 550MW of Wind investment and construction internationally

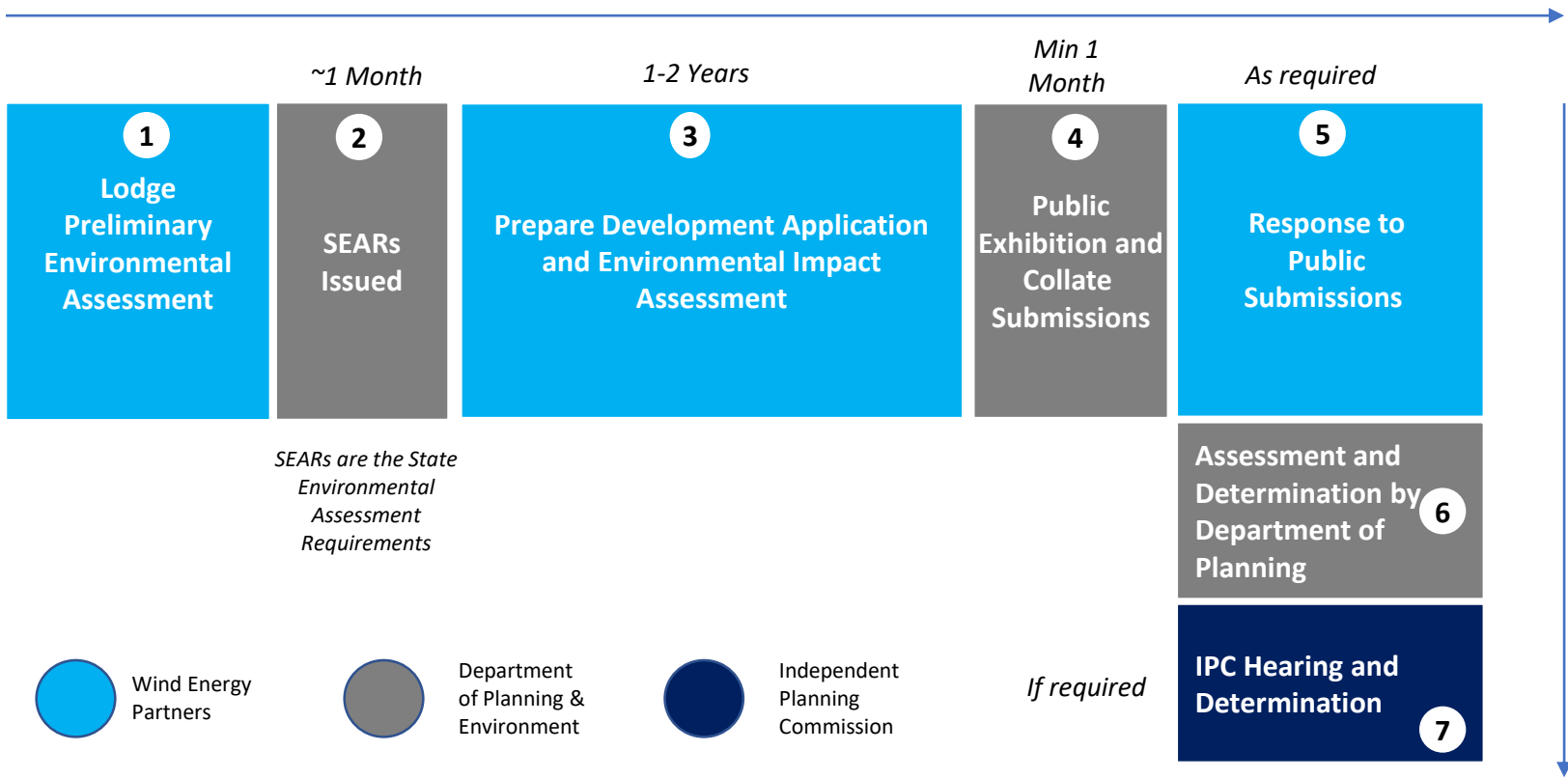


- Locally owned (15km north of Nundle)
- Community Engagement
- Experience in energy sector and recently successful wind project near Goulburn





# The NSW State Significant Project Planning Process



Notes:  
 The Department of Planning & Environment may request any additional information at any time and *timeframes are estimates and subject to change*



# What does the PEA cover?

**Project  
Description**

**Proposal  
Need**

**Alternates  
Considered**

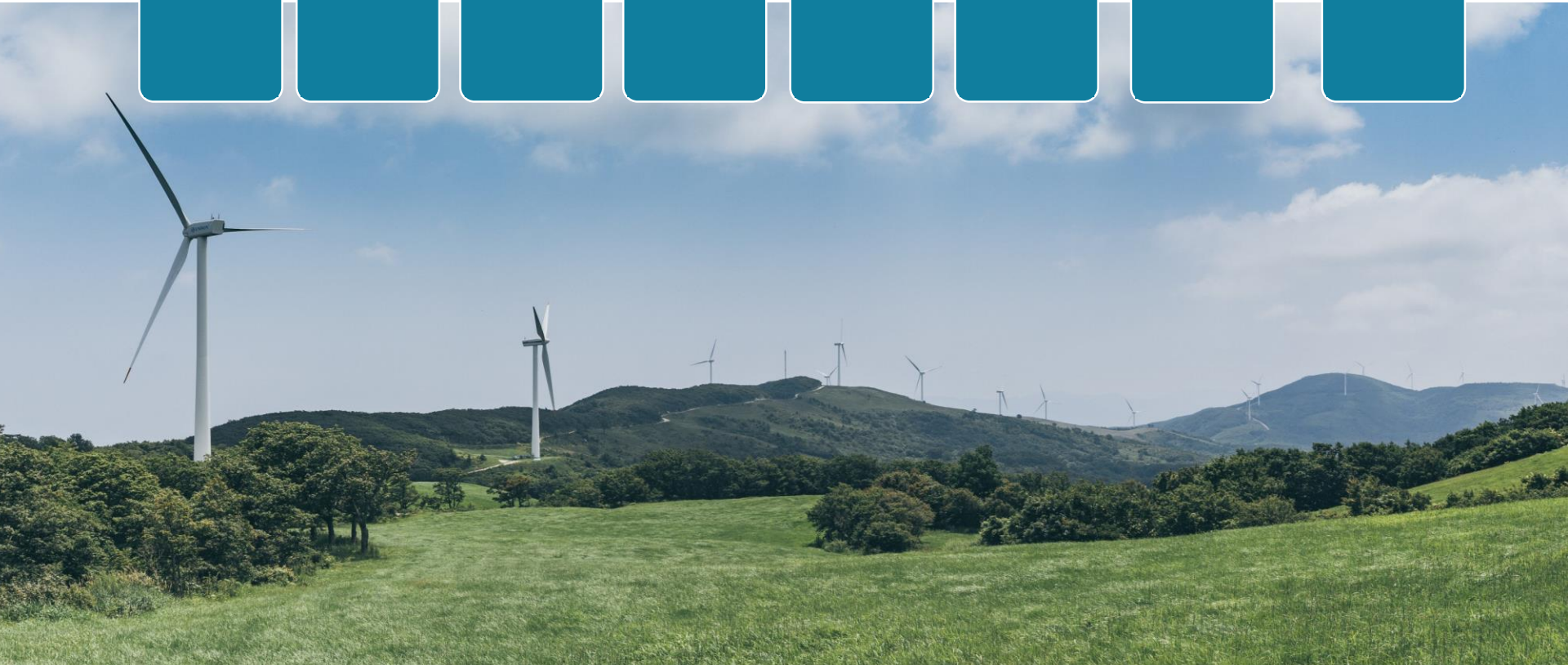
**Preliminary  
Landscape  
and Visual**

**Preliminary  
Noise  
Assessment**

**Community  
Consultation  
and Local  
Planning  
Regulation**

**Transport  
overview**

**Rapid  
Biodiversity  
Assessment**





Up to 97 Wind Turbines  
~410MW



Upgrading Existing Tracks + New Tracks



Up to 2 Substations + Underground + 24km  
Overhead Powerlines

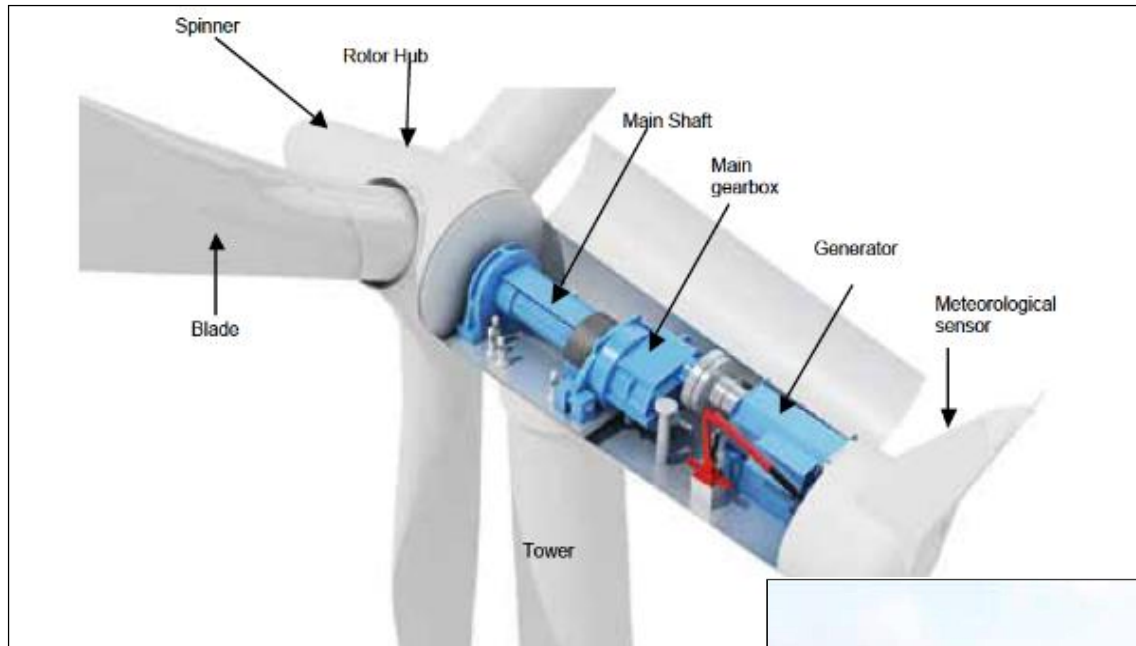


Operations and Maintenance Building





# About the proposed wind turbines



Hub Height between 130-155m

Maximum Tip Height 220m

Blades between 65-80m





# Early Concept Boundaries and Development Corridor



## Boundary



Hills Of Gold Boundary



## Construction Corridor



Construction Corridor



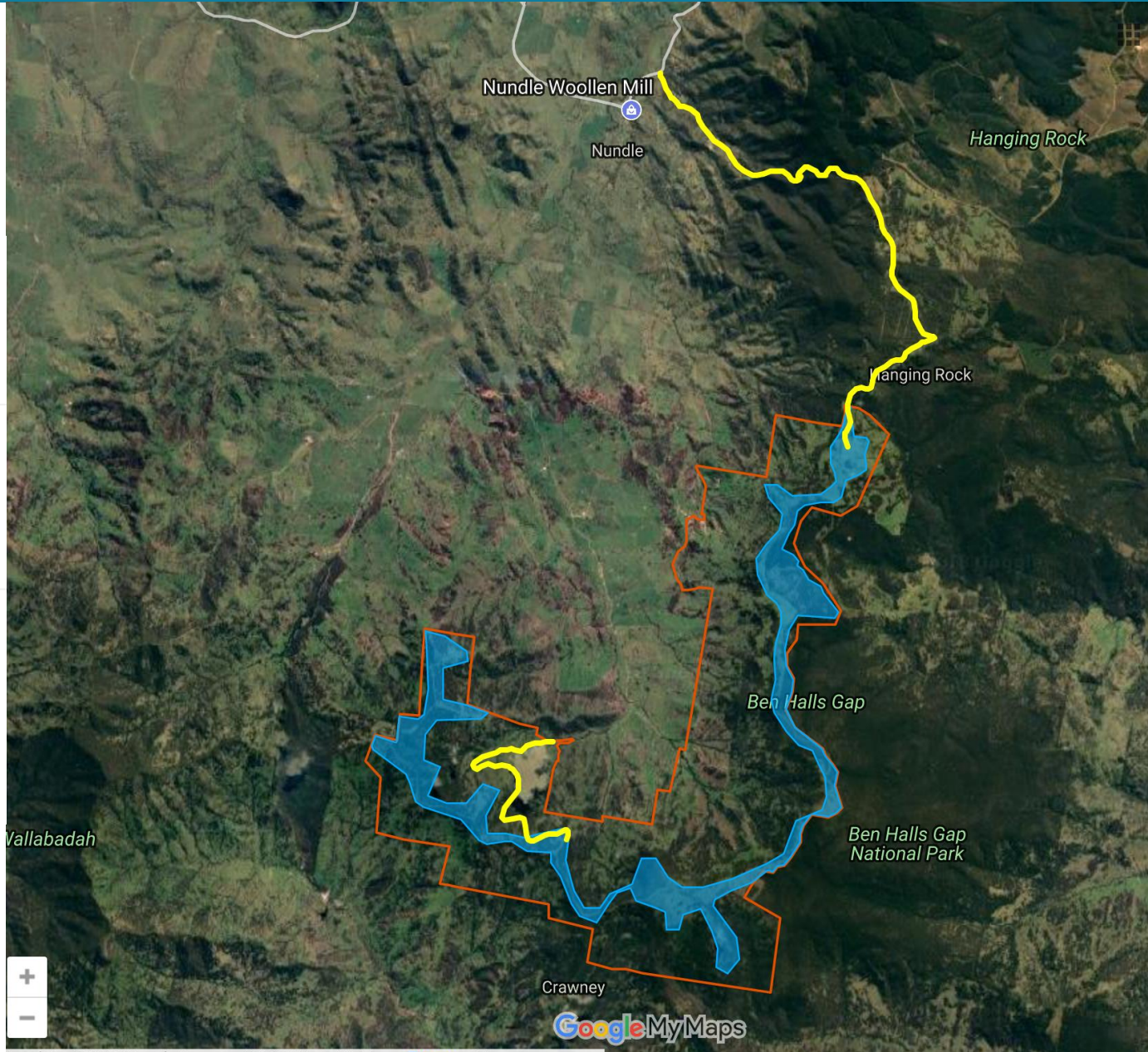
## Site Access Route



Site Access 1



Site Access 2



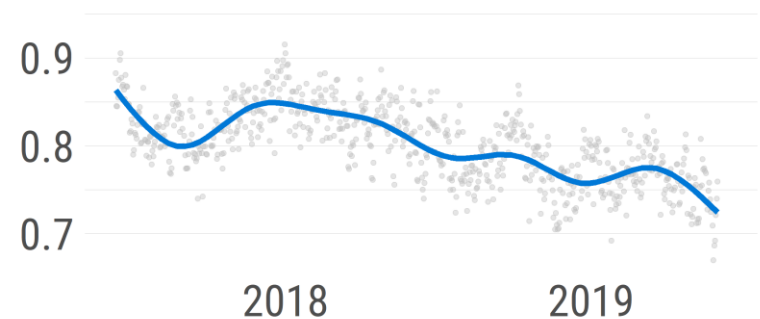


# The Project Need

Australian Global Emissions Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hills of Gold Energy will support Australia meeting our global emission target by avoiding almost 1.2m tonnes of CO2 per annum</li></ul>
Reducing the Cost of Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expected to support a reduction in the cost of wholesale electricity and provide more renewable energy into the district</li></ul>
Replacing Coal Fired Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a viable replacement for old coal fired power stations such as Liddell, Bayswater and Vales Point.</li></ul>
Transition Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An opportunity for growing regional jobs for increased rural migration and as traditional power sector jobs</li></ul>

## Carbon intensity of generation

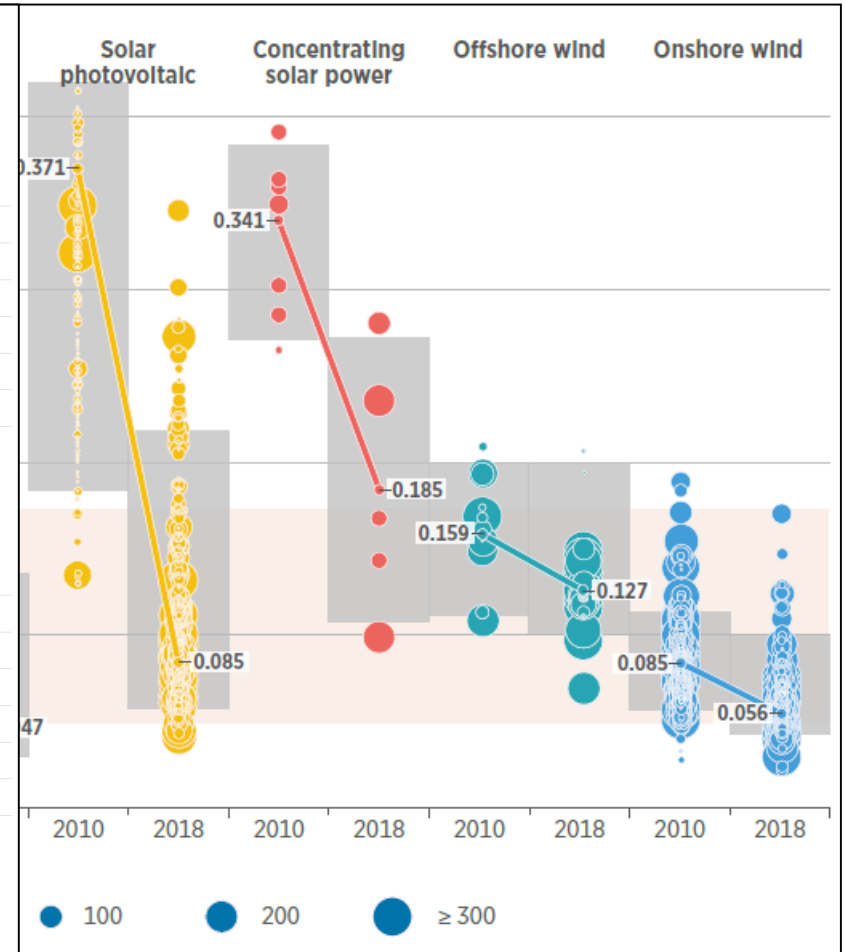
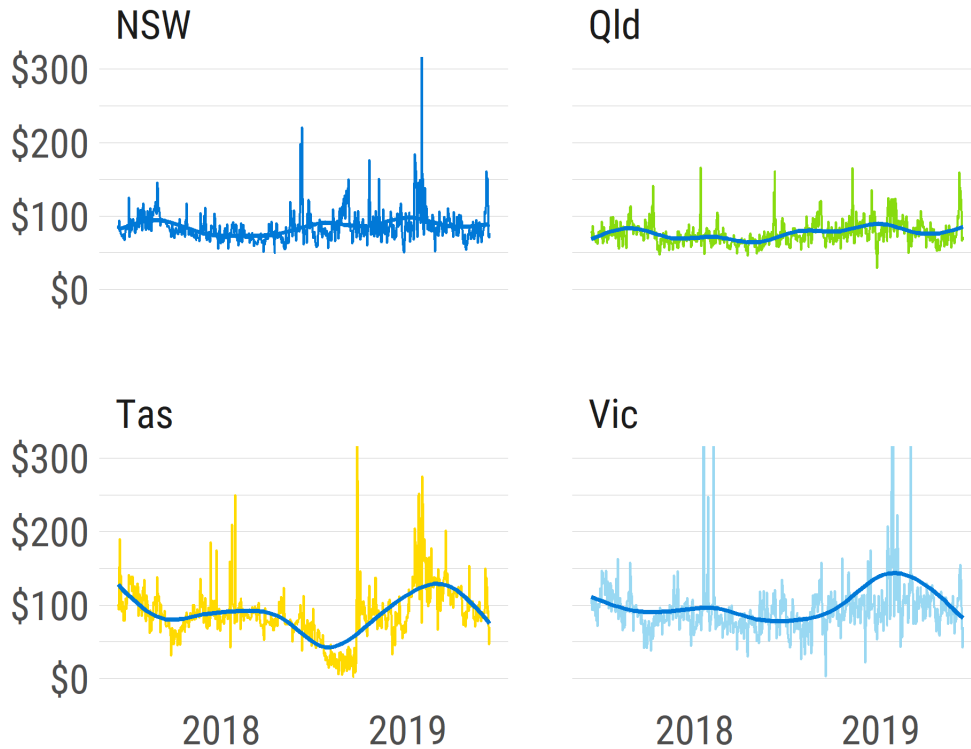
tCO2e/MWh, National Electricity Market





# Cost of renewables is reducing further – some data

## Daily average wholesale electricity price





# Why wind in the Hills of Gold?

## **Optimal wind resources**

Strong wind speed observed through 8 years of wind monitoring on multiple met masts. The proposal site is considered feasible as it exhibits a high wind resource for NSW.

## **Suitable Land**

Use of predominately existing agricultural use ridgelines and desirable ridge orientation with existing access tracks in existence.

## **Local Residents**

The site has been selected due to relative isolation of the site and low population density in the region reducing the potential impact particularly around noise, visual and potential shadow flicker impacts.

## **Local impacts minimised**

Limited residents located within 4km of the site boundary and commitments to further investigate impacts on those living within 4km.

## **Proximity to electrical network**

24km from 330kV TransGrid Liddell to Tamworth transmission line, with capacity to accept the generation capacity following consultation with TransGrid.

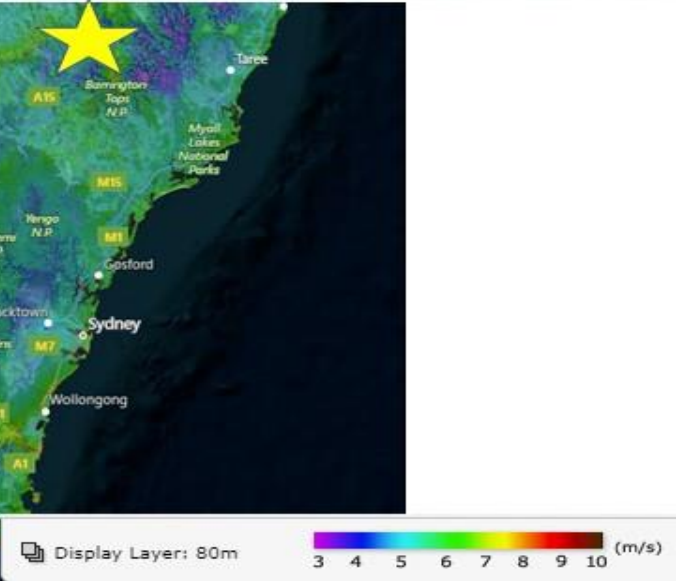
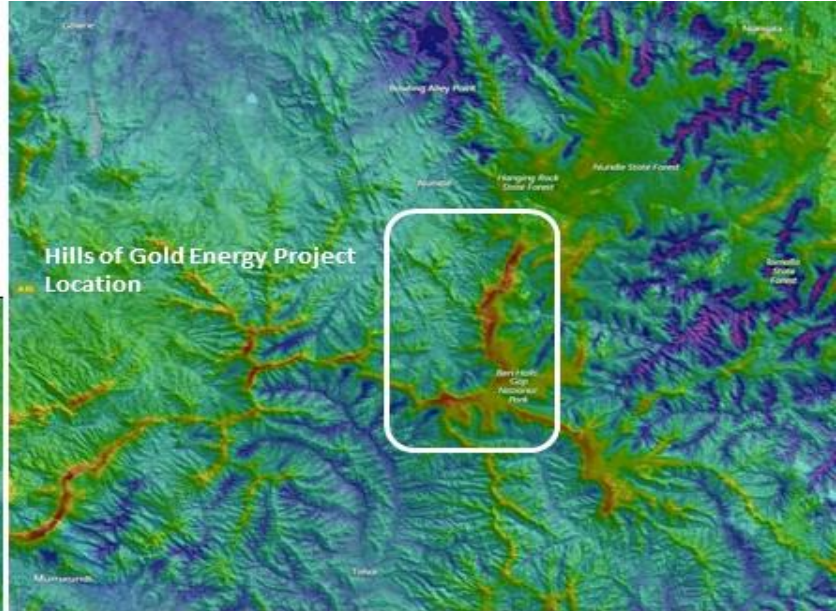
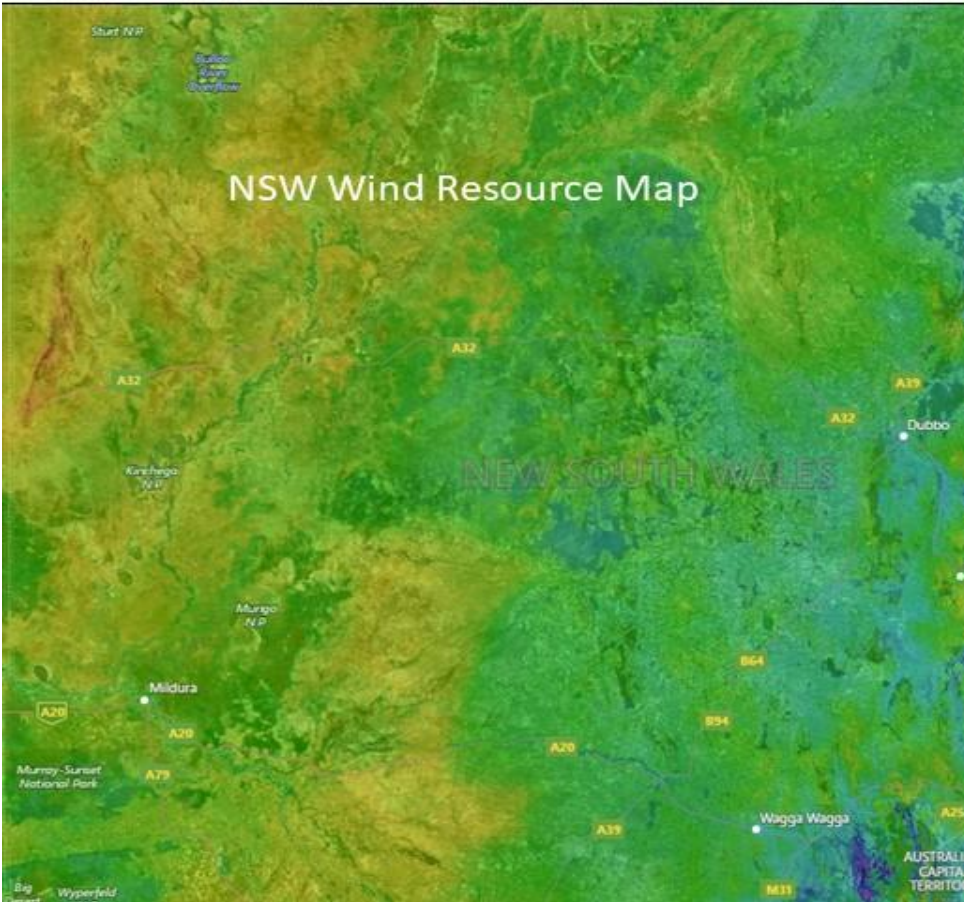
## **Regional Skills**

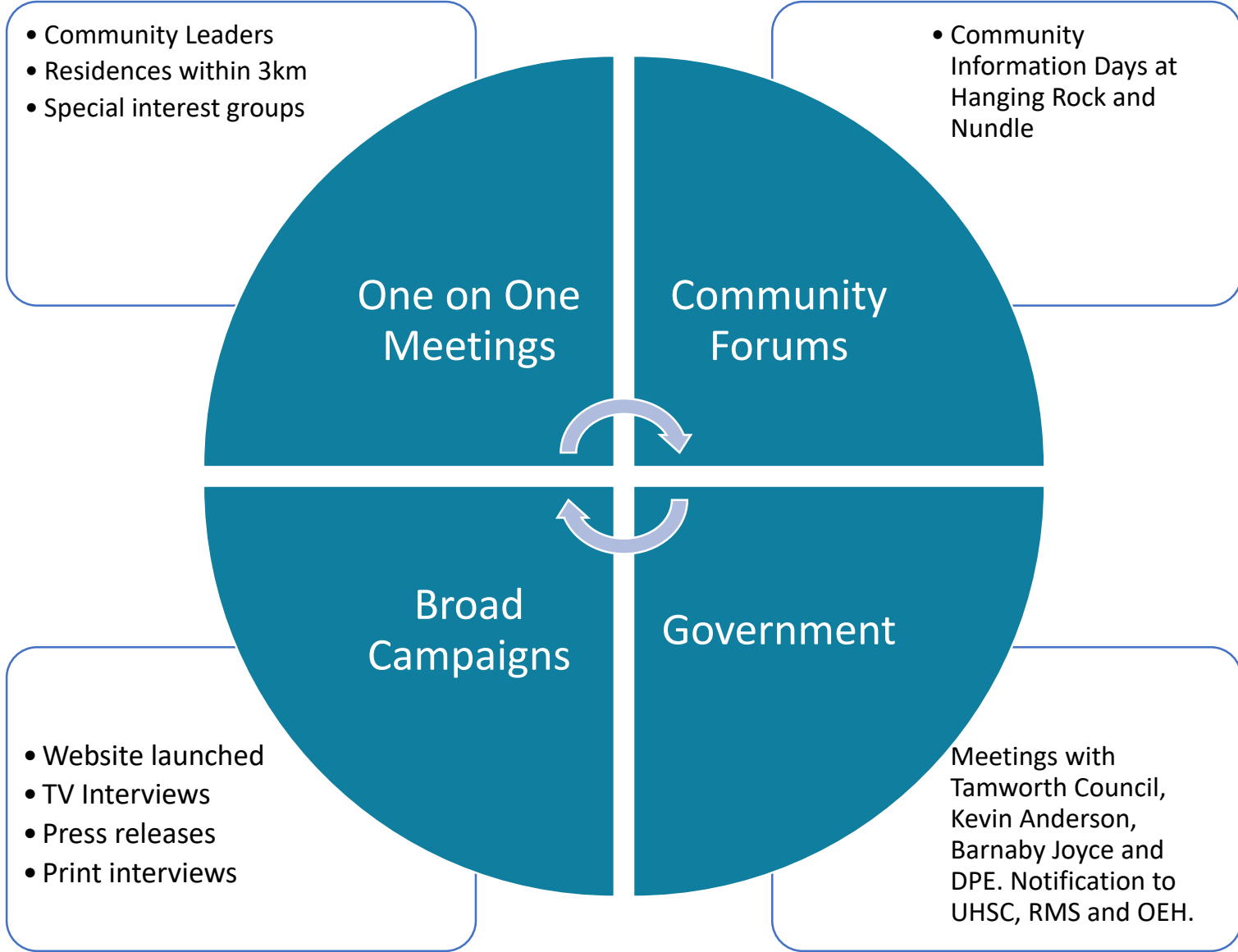
Tamworth has been identified as a potential source of skills for construction and operation due to the existence of a variety of sectors and industries as well as strong population of 200,000.





## NSW Wind Resource Map and Hills Of Gold Energy Project Location







- Issued November 2018 following PEA acceptance
- SEARs require a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment supported by:
  - Detailed technical assessment of 14 speciality areas against 38 technical guidelines
  - Establish CCC
  - Consultation with 16 local, state and commonwealth authorities
  - Consult community groups and affected landowners



# State Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs)

Specialty Discipline	Overview
Landscape and Visual	Detailed assessment of visual impacts of all components in accordance with Wind Energy; Visual Assessment Bulletin (DPE 2016).
Noise	Detailed assessment of turbine, ancillary equipment, construction, traffic and vibration noise impacts in accordance with relevant NSW codes and guidelines.
Biodiversity	Assess biodiversity values and the likely biodiversity impacts of the development and the projects impact on birds and bats
Traffic and Transport	Assess the construction and operational traffic impacts of the development
Hazards and Risks	Aviation safety, telecommunications, electro-magnetic frequency and other potential health impacts, bushfire risk management, blade throw,
Heritage	Aboriginal heritage and other non-aboriginal heritage assessment
Water and Soils	Quantify water required and sources available and any impacts on these sources.  Assess measures to minimise erosion on steep gradient land
Waste	Identify waste types and how these will be reduced, reused or disposed of
Social and Economic	Social and economic impacts and benefits to the community and state including assessment of impact to community infrastructure and tourism

**Detailed SEARs are available on the DPE's Major Projects Website**

Thank you for your time...questions?



**SOMEVA**  
RENEWABLES





# Crookwell 3 wind farm referred to IPC

Date: 02.05.2019 Type: Departmental Media Release

Author: NSW Department of Planning and Environment

The Department of Planning and Environment has 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.

“There’s strong support for renewable energy in NSW and the Government is backing the industry’s development including with guidance on assessment of impacts, community engagement and more,” he said.

“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.

“The proposal is right next door to the Crookwell 2 Wind Farm, built by the same proponent. Some people would be able to see five wind farms from their front door.

“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. Read the Department’s assessment report and reasons for refusal of the proposed Wind Farm at the Department’s [Major Projects website](#).

## Note to editors

### As at 9 April 2019:

- There were thirteen major operating wind farms in NSW, with a total capacity of about 1400 MW.
- Four new wind farms were commissioned in 2018-19:
  - The 270 MW Sapphire wind farm is the largest in NSW and can provide enough electricity to power over 131,000 NSW homes.
  - The 199 MW Silverton 1 wind farm can provide enough electricity to power over 96,000 NSW homes.
  - The 172 MW White Rock 1 wind farm is the second largest in NSW and can provide enough electricity to power over 80,000 NSW homes.
  - The 92 MW Crookwell 2 wind farm was also commissioned, which can generate enough energy to power almost 45,000 homes.
- Two wind farms were under construction, amounting to about 250 MW and worth \$500m in investment.
- 11 wind farms had planning approval, almost 2,600 MW and worth about \$4bn and 6 wind farms were seeking planning approval, over 1,350 MW and worth around \$1.5bn in investment.

**Tagged:** Wind Farm | Crookwell | Southern | Highlands

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The Department acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to all Elders past, present and future.



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