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A message from the Development Manager

There has been a lot happening with the project as we work through the Development Application (DA) process. We would like to thank the many business owners and community members who have taken the time and effort to provide a submission, during the public exhibition period of the Hills of Gold Wind Farm (HOGWF) Project.

We have been engaging with local councils, as well as the community to ensure we understand and address all issues surrounding the project. ENGIE is committed to working with residents and business operators long-term to ensure we make a positive impact in the region.

We recognise that the local community has not been consulted as well as it should, that's why we will be actively engaging with residents and businesses as much as possible in the coming months to ensure everyone has had their say.

While discussions with Tamworth Regional Council are ongoing, the councillors in the Upper Hunter Shire recently voted to support the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm Community Enhancement Fund. It is great to have the Upper Hunter Shire Council on board, as we work to ensure the communities benefit from the development.

Thank you for your feedback so far, and we look forward to continuing our work with the communities of the HOGWF.

Regards,

Meredith Anderson

Increase in Contribution to Community Enhancement Fund

\$3,000

INCREASED COMMITMENT ANNUALLY PER TURBINE

\$210,000

CONTRIBUTED ANNUALLY FOR AT LEAST 25 YEARS

\$5 million

CONTRIBUTED OVER THE LIFE OF THE WIND FARM

\$42,000

ALLOCATED TO THE UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COMMUNITIES

We have increased our commitment to \$3,000 per turbine per year, which will see up to \$210,000 contributed annually (CPI indexed per annum) to the fund for at least 25 years. This will see an estimated \$5m contributed to the fund over the operational life of the wind farm.

ENGIE General Manager, Asset Development, Andrew Kerley says the Community Enhancement Fund (CEF) will be used to support community projects and events in the local government areas hosting wind turbines.

If the project is approved, funds from the CEF will be split between the regional communities, depending on how many wind turbines are placed in their local government area.

Based on the wind turbine layout lodged as part of ENGIE's Environmental Impact Statement in December 2020, up to \$42,000 will be allocated to the Upper Hunter Shire communities annually, while the Tamworth local government area will see up to \$168,000 annually.

Following feedback from council submissions, ENGIE has increased its per turbine commitment to the fund to \$3,000 annually, up from its 2020 commitment of \$2,500.

While discussions with Tamworth Regional Council are ongoing, the Upper Hunter Shire Council recently voted to support the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm CEF.

We are very happy to have the Upper Hunter Shire Council on board. If the project is approved, the CEF will be administered by each council, but managed by a community committee.

A dedicated Community Committee, made up of residents, council members and an independent chair, will be created in each local government area to determine how the money is spent.

To find out more about the Community Enhancement Fund, please email info@hillsofgoldenergy.com

Turbine Lighting Requirements for Hills of Gold Wind Farm

Through our consultation with the community, we understand that many residents are concerned about the red aviation lighting likely to be required on some of the wind turbines. Under guidelines imposed by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), objects that exceed 150m in height require aviation lighting.

In July, CASA confirmed that it would accept low intensity steady red lighting of no lower than 200 candela, which is the equivalent of a 24W LED light bulb or 150W incandescent bulb.

This is a 90% reduction on CASA's previous statement that the HOGWF would require 2000 candela medium lighting.

This is a significant improvement and when combined with the use of shielding is expected to significantly reduce impact to residents located at elevations below the turbines by focusing the lower intensity light at the elevation of aircraft.

It is expected that not every turbine will be lit and we are using aviation and visual experts to develop a lighting plan for the project that lessens impact, while meeting aviation safety requirements.

Thank You to Dungowan Public School



We had the pleasure of meeting the students and teachers of Dungowan Public School in April for a special renewable energy education workshop.

We demonstrated how a wind farm operates with a special lego wind turbine and YouTube information video. The students made their own pin wheels in a craft workshop, which they really enjoyed. Unfortunately, some community members did not agree that ENGIE should be providing these educational sessions. As such, further school programs have been postponed.

If the project is approved, we will be undertaking further engagement with the community to find out if school and tertiary educational engagement programs are supported or not. If you would like to express interest in ENGIE hosting educational sessions relating to Renewable Energy, Wind Energy or Engineering, please email us at info@hillsofgoldenergy.com

Community catch-ups

It was great to catch up with members of the community in Nundle in May. Representatives from ENGIE and Someva met with the Friends of the Wind Farm, Nundle Business Tourism and Marketing Association and the Hills of Gold Preservation Inc to discuss the project.

These meetings were held to engage with the community and to ensure our Response to Submissions addresses all the views of the local community and provides workable solutions to all key issues.

We will be organising more community meetings soon. Residents will be notified as soon as dates are secured.

We'd like to thank the community for your patience as we try to remain COVID safe and minimise travel where possible.

We encourage and welcome the community to contact us at any stage to discuss any questions about the project.

Businesses Have Your Say

To ensure we fully understand the views of the business community, we have developed a survey for business owners in Nundle and Hanging Rock.

We want to know how business owners feel about the project, what the potential impacts may be to your business and how any negative impacts can be mitigated.

We also want to know how we might be able to support the business community by utilising local services and purchasing local products and goods during the construction and operational phases of the project.

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR YOUR FEEDBACK.

This feedback will help us to further refine our project plans and reduce any negative impacts to businesses, particularly during the construction of the project.

If you're a small business owner in the Nundle and Hanging Rock area and want to ensure you get the opportunity to complete the survey please provide your business email address to info@hillsofgoldenergy.com

Proposed Traffic Management Strategies

We have received a range of submissions, during the public exhibition period of the Hills of Gold Wind Farm Project. Some stakeholders have expressed their concerns about increased traffic and transport in Nundle, particularly during the construction phase.

We understand these are important issues for residents and we have developed a number of proposed strategies to minimise these concerns. Through a number of proposed changes we are aiming to reduce daily traffic movements through Nundle by 38%.

Our proposed management strategies during construction of the project include:

1

A dedicated transport route through Oakenville Street and onto Barry Road, avoiding residential areas in Nundle and impacts to private property.

2

Updates to the Traffic Management Plan, including:

A new pedestrian crossing in Nundle, at the intersection of Oakenville and Jenkins Streets.

Laybys for oversize and over mass vehicles on Morrisons Gap Road and Lindsays Gap Road.

Nundle parking restrictions for project vehicles based on opening times for businesses, to reduce congestion for existing residents and tourists.

A temporary car park in Nundle for project vehicles to access shops and services.

If you have other suggestions on ways to mitigate traffic, please email info@hillsofgoldenergy.com

Getting to know ENGIE

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

At ENGIE, we have more than halved our CO₂ footprint in six years. In that time, we have also grown our renewable energy portfolio to 27GW globally, including 1.2GW in Australia.

To learn more about ENGIE, visit engie.com.au

Update on Response to Submissions

Submissions to the project have been received from across Australia. The project team is in the process of responding to all aspects of the project raised through these submissions, irrespective of where they come from. In total 593 unique public submissions were received as well as those from government agencies and organisations. Of the public submissions 56% were from council areas hosting the wind farm. It was positive to see that there were similar levels of support to concerns from those writing submissions from within these communities, with many objections coming from out of area. Those supporting cited opportunities the project will bring to the region, upgrades to local infrastructure, alignment with environmental views and future energy visions of many residents. Concerns raised focused on visual impact, concerns with wind energy as an alternate source, traffic during construction, biodiversity impacts and site suitability justification.

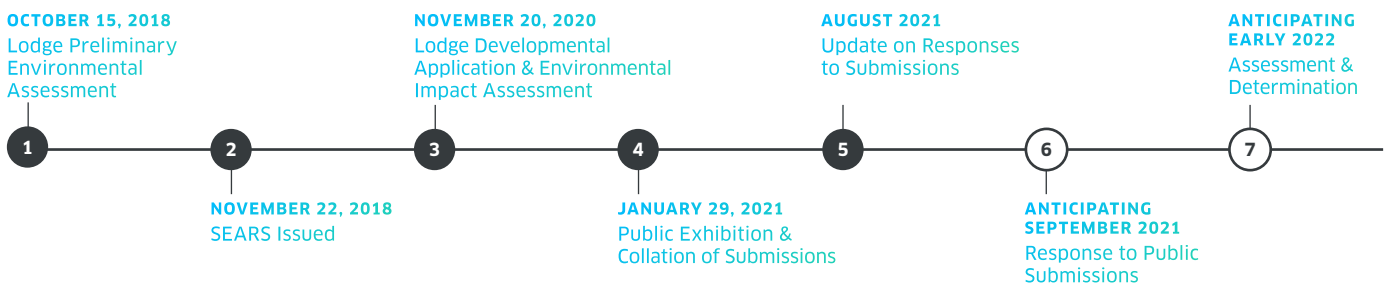
The project team has prioritised further studies to address local resident concerns such as traffic generation (and is described in this newsletter), further site suitability studies including soil and water assessment and construction company site visits to ground truth feasible designs and confirm constructibility. ENGIE has developed more information to construct the project while maintaining compliance with expected strict environmental compliance, such as through best practise soil erosion and sediment control protocols.

In addition to local consultation, the project team has been consulting with agencies (such as the Department of Planning Biodiversity Conservation Division and the Civil Aviation Authority amongst others) and has resulted in additional survey work and technical assessment required to demonstrate the project can meet acceptable environmental and safety requirements. This has led to further definition of bat caves, karsts and foraging habitat and positive outcomes in project design, construction and operation to avoid impact to identified species, and agreement to use lower intensity aviation lighting (see update below) to reduce visual impact at night.

NSW has a robust planning process which requires specialists to assess how better planning outcomes can be achieved for local communities hosting projects such as the Hills of Gold Wind Farm. ENGIE is committed to developing the highest quality renewable energy projects, that deliver lower cost, cleaner and diversified electricity across Australia while working with local communities. This has led the project team to ensure all concerns are technically addressed, communicated to stakeholders and can be assessed to confirm the broader benefits of the project are acceptable with the strategies committed to minimise local environmental impact and result in no net loss of biodiversity from the project. ENGIE intend to submit the Response to Submissions in September 2021.

Update on the Project Timeline

With the end of public exhibition, the Hills of Gold Wind Farm is now responding to submissions. Following this, we will be submitting a report to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) for assessment.



Get in touch with us or learn more about the project by visiting our FAQs.

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