

Hills of Gold Energy



November 2018

Wind Farm Newsletter

First Edition

This is the first in what will be regular updates for the community and all stakeholders. We are keen to share as much information with you as possible and listen to and address your concerns.

New South Wales has a robust and thorough planning assessment process that requires extensive environmental assessment, design and community consultation to finalise an application that takes into account the impacts and benefits for consideration for approval. This process has been designed for the protection of the local community and the environment.

Hills of Gold Energy will be a state significant development and will be assessed under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act of 1979 and most recent updates from 2017.

The process for this assessment will include ongoing community consultation as well as regular updates as further design and assessment of the project is completed. We will post all information regarding the project on the Hill of Gold Energy Website www.hillsofgoldenergy.com and it will also be available from the NSW Department of Planning and Major Projects website.



We've submitted our PEA!

On 17 October 2018, we issued our Preliminary Environmental Assessment ("PEA") to the NSW Department of Planning. This submission commences the assessment process for the Project. Shortly, we expect to receive the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements which details the areas required to be considered as part of our Environmental Impact Statement.

The PEA is available to the public on the Department of Planning's Major Projects website at: majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au under the Hills of Gold Wind Farm.

Wind Energy Partners are committed to continuing to progress detailed environmental and social studies for submission of a Environmental Impact Statement.

Contact Us

For any further information please contact John and Christine within the Nundle area on 0428 676 903 or email us on info@hillsofgoldenergy.com.



(Photo: Australian Wind Alliance)

The Clean Energy Council arranged a number of Wind Farms to be open to the Public on the weekend of 21st October. These included both White Rock and Sapphire in the New England area. The wind industry has contributed \$2 billion in investment into the Australian economy in 2018 with another 7.6 billion in future projects expected, including the Hills of Gold.

So what's been happening?

What is being proposed in the Hills of Gold

The Hills of Gold Wind Farm is a proposed 97 turbine State Significant Development. It is proposed to be located between Hanging Rock and Crawney, 9km south of Nundle.

Why a project in the Hills of Gold

The area identified for the proposed wind farm has proven strong wind resources and land suitable for the development of wind turbines and associated infrastructure. The proximity to the high voltage electricity "super highway" provides capacity to transmit power across the state. Tamworth as major regional hub has also been identified as a potential source of skilled people to support with the development, construction and operation of the project.

Benefits identified in the PEA

- The project once complete will provide clean and renewable electricity for up to 193,900 Australian homes
- Reduce CO2 emissions by 1.2million tonnes per annum
- Contribute up to 272 constructions jobs and 34 operational jobs over 35 years
- Contribute to the local economy through increased spending of construction and operational staff
- Diversify NSW reliance on coal fired power and provide replacement electricity capacity for ageing coal fired power plants
- A community enhancement fund has been announced with further details to be determined during 2019.

The plan from here

The project is in the early stages of planning following a long wind monitoring campaign conducted since 2011 proved a wind resource feasible to provide benefits to the Australian electricity market.

Wind Energy Partners will continue to engage specialist consultants to consult the community and undertake detailed environmental surveys and assessment. These will support design options intended to be presented along with associated impacts in an Environmental Impact Assessment. The submission is aiming to finalise this assessment in early 2020 for consideration by the Department of Planning in line with the State Significant Development planning pathway.

Key Results of the Preliminary Environmental Assessment

The preliminary environmental assessment provides the early concept and broad assessment and suitability of a wind farm against the NSW Wind Guidelines. This newsletter aims to provide a snapshot of the progress of the project thus far as there is a lot of information available from our initial independent studies including visual, noise, and biodiversity. Information can be found in our Preliminary Environmental Assessment on the Department of Planning's Major Projects website. A summary of this includes:

- The visual impact of the project has been identified by some in the community as an area of key concern.
- The preliminary visual studies present various vantage points and potential impact
- As further environmental studies confirm the turbine layout options, detailed visual assessment studies will be completed showing photomontages from various key vantage points
- NSW has some of the strictest noise criteria in the world for Wind Farms.
- Investigations for the Hills of Gold site have looked at a worst case scenario however a final design and assessment will utilise the latest wind turbine technology that meet all noise criteria and guidelines
- The protection of fauna and flora is a key focus area of our studies and is required in the Preliminary Environmental Assessment.
- Detailed field surveys will be carried out on species identified in the PEA and any further species identified while on site
- Bird song recording stations have been established on site for ongoing recording across various seasons
- Results of these studies will assist in turbine locations that have the lowest potential impact on native wildlife.
- The Department of Planning are consulting relevant agencies and are expected to provide the project State Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) which will inform of the detailed requirement to assess prior to lodging an Environmental Impact Statement.

Christmas and New Year are just around the corner and we understand it's been a hard year in the region. We wish everyone in the area a wet, wet Christmas and hope the tanks are full and the creeks running for the New Year.