

VOL 1 - SEPTEMBER 2019

# HILLS OF GOLD

PRESERVATION INC.

## Newsletter

THE CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE  
OUR BEAUTIFUL

*Hills of Gold*

NATIONAL WIND FARM COMMISSIONER  
VISITS NUNDLE & HANGING ROCK

*"Crawney Road"*

A SONG INSPIRED BY THE HILLS OF GOLD

HOGPI 2018/19 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

NUNDLE · HANGING ROCK · CRAWNEY · BOWLING ALLEY · TIMOR





## PRESIDENTS REPORT

Thank you to our members and supporters who have contributed to research, public and ordinary meetings, and fundraising since Hills of Gold Preservation Inc was formed in April 2018.

The executive of resident and landholder group Hills of Gold Preservation Inc was returned at its Annual General Meeting held last month [August 8].

The returning executive is president John Krsulja, deputy president Brian Tomalin, secretary Sharon Csanki, treasurer Teresa Eather and community members Ian Worley Snr, Megan Trousdale, and Natasha Soonchild.

It was a significant shock for many people in our community to learn early last year that a developer, Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd, proposed up to 97 wind turbines on the mountain between Hanging Rock and Crawney.

It has taken a lot of reading, networking, meeting, and writing to understand the potential impacts of the proposed wind turbines and to share our concerns with the developer, State Government, and local community.

The support of Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members has been reassuring and consolidated our resolve to find out as much as possible about how wind turbines have impacted other communities.

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members held a public meeting at Nundle Memorial Hall in September, and lobbied to attract Department of Planning, Industry and Environment representatives to host a public meeting in October.

On the same day the Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd Preliminary Environmental Assessment (Scoping Report) was released on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Major Projects website: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/9701> <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/9701>

The first Hills of Gold Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee was held on June 12. The committee is made up of three representatives of Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd, three representatives of Tamworth Regional Council, Upper Hunter Council and Liverpool Plains Council, representatives of Hills of Gold Preservation Inc John Krsulja, and Nundle Business Tourism and Marketing Group Inc Megan Trousdale, and community representatives Ian Worley, Margaret Schofield, Peter Schofield and Marcia Ajani. Alternative members are Bruce Moore, Ed Hughes, Nick Bradford, Selena Sylvester, Teresa Eather, and Megan Carberry.

Minutes are published online [https://docs.wixstat-ic.com/ud/ddde62\\_063049d530f247e6b11f1b98e43ea054.pdf](https://docs.wixstat-ic.com/ud/ddde62_063049d530f247e6b11f1b98e43ea054.pdf)

The next CCC meeting will be held on Wednesday September 18 and community members are encouraged to contact CCC members with any points they would like discussed.







*Pic: Part of Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd's proposed project area visible from Nundle Rd.*

Discussion at the meeting revealed:

- the overall lack of progress over the last 15 months and the consequent lack of detail on issues such as the proposed turbine layout, transmission line route/grid connection, and DA/EIS progress

- Preliminary Environmental Assessment identifies 42 residences/DAs within 3km of the proposed project area (Page 45, Figure 6-2, many within Hanging Rock village, and on Morrison's Gap Rd, and Barry Rd, Hanging Rock);

- request for confirmation on whether administration of the Community Enhancement Fund would be a Section 355 committee of council;

- request for details on modelling for proposed construction and ongoing jobs.

- Jamie Chivers confirmed that he is a director of Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd and he is one of its shareholders.

- details on most common concrete slab foundation construction, sizes generally between 17 to 20m diameter and 2-3 metres depth, with 15-20m underground pylons and underground cabling;

The meeting raised the potential visual impact of the proposal. The Preliminary Environmental Assessment goes into detail about where turbines would potentially be visible from including Hanging Rock Lookout, Barry Rd, Morrisons Gap Rd, Shearers Rd, Nundle Creek Rd, Mountain View Rd, Timor Crawney Rd, and Crawney Rd.

It states that, "Turbines located within this [Rolling foothills] Landscape Character Area have the potential to become the **dominant visual feature** in the landscape..." and that from the Southern Edge of Nundle and Nundle Town, "It is anticipated that wind turbines would potentially be visible along the ridgeline in the distance."

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc has had feedback from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment that the Wind Energy Guidelines recognise that there are circumstances where dwellings or key public viewpoints located above the 'Preliminary Assessment Tool line' (being 3 km for a turbine height of 220m) may require further consideration due to topography or other landscape features.

"It is expected that the EIS will assess the visual impacts to dwellings and other sensitive receivers located beyond 3 km from the nearest proposed turbine," a department representative outlined.

"In preparing the environmental impact statement, the Applicant should consider the elements of the landscape important to the community, including public and private viewpoints. These areas of importance should be shared with the Applicant for inclusion in the Visual Baseline Study."

## JOHN KRSULJA

Facebook Hills of Gold Preservation - Nundle, Hanging Rock and Crawney

<https://hillsofgoldpreservation.net.au/>



# NATIONAL WIND FARM COMMISSIONER VISITS NUNDLE & HANGING ROCK

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc invited National Wind Farm Commissioner Andrew Dyer to Nundle and Hanging Rock late last year and he visited in March. Mr Dyer visited the proposed project area and met with 10 Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members.

The National Wind Farm Commissioner's 2017 Annual Report (8. Site Selection, 8.1 Observations, pg 44) states:



“...WE HAVE FOUND THAT LOCATING TURBINES ON TOP OF HILLS OR RIDGES, WHILE OPTIMUM FOR CAPTURING THE WIND RESOURCE, CAN HAVE GREATER IMPACTS ON VISUAL AMENITY, MAY LEAD TO SPECIFIC NOISE AND SHADOW FLICKER SCENARIOS FOR RESIDENTS IN THE VALLEY BENEATH, AND MAY HAVE OTHER IMPACTS ON THE COMMUNITY. ACCESS ROADS FOR HILL RIDGE WIND FARMS CAN ALSO BE INTRUSIVE AND SIGNIFICANTLY CONSTRAIN THE AVAILABLE FARMING LAND IN THE AREA...

THERE MAY BE OPPORTUNITIES TO SELECT AND PRIORITISE WIND PROJECTS, FROM THE CURRENT PIPELINE OF WIND ENERGY PROJECTS, WHICH BETTER BALANCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROJECT BY THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY...”



Pic: DPIE Public Meeting, October 2018

Mr Dyer shared his extensive knowledge about wind farms throughout Australia and some of the experiences of communities that have been through the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment State Significant Project assessment process.

He listened to Hills of Gold Preservation Inc members' concerns and provided references for future research.

Listen to National Wind Farm Commissioner Andrew Dyer's interview on ABC New England North West: <http://nundle.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/190311-Wind-Farm-Commissioner-123ABC-64kBit.mp3>

and read his Annual Report: <https://www.nwfc.gov.au/publications/2017-annual-report>  
<https://www.nwfc.gov.au/publications/2018-annual-report>



## AUSTRALIAN WIND ALLIANCE BEHAVIOUR DISAPPOINTING

The Hills of Gold Preservation Inc was disappointed with the behaviour of Australian Wind Alliance representatives Andrew Bray and Charlie Prell in our community in March.

Andrew Bray and Charlie Prell requested a meeting with the Hills of Gold Preservation Inc executive at short notice. They asked us to share our concerns and then broke the trust we showed in giving them the courtesy of a meeting by using our concerns against us in media.

We do not want an ongoing debate with AWA, however we note its obvious bias and dripping condescension towards anyone who does not share its agenda.

This makes it clear AWA is unable to be an impartial assessor of local attitudes, which its representatives pretend to be, and its inability to provide impartial advice to the community.

A positive that came out of Hills of Gold Preservation Inc raising members' and supporters' concerns with the AWA was removal of the toxic Facebook page Nundle Renewable Energy Park Discussion Forum.



Australian Wind Alliance's Charlie Prell and Andrew Bray during their Nundle/Hanging Rock visit.



Department of Planning and Environment, executive director, Resource Assessments David Kitto and NSW Farmers Association president James Jackson.  
Source: The Armidale Express.

## NSW FARMERS' FORUM HEARS RENEWABLES CONCERNS

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and NSW Farmers' Association representatives hosted a forum at Armidale exploring landholders' concerns about large scale solar and wind energy developments in the New England region.

A major theme was the need for developers to have greater transparency when entering communities and negotiating with potential renewables and transmission line hosts, and the wider community. Other issues raised were concerns about impacts on land values, insurance risk, and future development opportunities.

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc called for a Best Practice model to be developed to encourage better and meaningful community consultation.

A report will be written following forums at Armidale, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga.



# CROOKWELL 3 WIND FARM REFERRED TO IPC

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 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.

"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," he said.

"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.

## SHOOTIN' SADIE FUNDRAISER

Thank you to more than 100 guests who attended the inaugural Nundle production of one woman show, Shootin' Sadie, written and performed by Natasha Soonchild.

The fundraising event was exceptionally well supported raising more than \$4000, with event profits complemented by community members donating plants, artworks, jewellery, and garden tools for a secret auction.

Guests were effusive in their praise of the whole night, but particularly Natasha Soonchild's and John Krsulja's performances.

Last performed at the Sydney Fringe Festival in 2013, Natasha revived Shootin' Sadie to raise funds for Hills of Gold





established to research, assess, and inform good decision making regarding a wind farm proposal from Hanging Rock to Crawney.

A Charles Sturt University Communications graduate, Natasha wrote Shootin' Sadie conjuring the Western genre she always wanted to perform. She was joined by director Gwenda Hague, who is also her mum.

Playing an incredible 12 characters, the 45-minute rollicking tale, is an epic Wild West adventure drawing on the aural tradition of story telling.



## INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING NEAR MUDGEE

Hills of Gold Preservation Inc attended the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) Hearing for the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm Modification in June.

Crudine Ridge is an interesting case because it raises the issue of vegetation/habitat clearing required for transporting wind turbine components. This will need to be assessed from the New England Highway to Wind Energy Partners Pty Ltd's proposed project area.

The Preliminary Environmental Assessment proposes accessing the project area via Hanging Rock/Morrison's Gap Rd, or Head of Peel.

Work on the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm was stopped late last year after residents raised the alarm that while permission was given for the developer to clear 50 trees in 20km along Aaron's Pass Road, hundreds of trees were cleared in just 3km. The developer applied for a Modification enabling additional clearing and it was approved by the IPC.



Picture: Crudine Ridge, Aarons Pass Road (Uncleared)



Picture: Crudine Ridge, Aarons Pass Road (Cleared)





## *"Crawney Road"*

It's more than just a sunrise  
over Crawney Road  
The morning light beckons a new day  
Through the rolling hills of gold like  
a passage back in time  
Blows a wind no man can contain

There's a rustic old farm house  
just below the pass  
Tired and old but it's loved just the same  
I can't help but wonder as  
the seasons change  
Will it always remain

Crawney Road the valley of ideas  
Escape the ordinary inhibitions disappear  
It's everything and all I know  
It comes together in a beautiful way  
Crawney Road

You can listen to the magpie on the wire  
Gravel under footsteps  
if you care to walk a mile  
From patchwork to the old exchange  
Nundle and the great dividing range  
Crawney Road

You can paint it if you want to  
You can sing under its sky  
Why would you want to change it  
We are just a stitch in time

Crawney Road the valley of ideas  
Escape the ordinary inhibitions disappear  
It's everything and all I know

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