



Proudly supporting your community

Hills of Gold Wind Farm Newsletter

AUTUMN 2022

We respect and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and future. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the lands on which our sites are located and commit to building a brighter future together.

Welcome to the autumn edition of the Hills of Gold Wind Farm newsletter.

Well, 2022 is certainly flying by and it's been fantastic for our development team to get out and about in the Nundle community in recent months to meet with residents and stakeholders. Thank you once again to all who came along to our social event at the Peel Inn in April, it was great to have an informal catch up with residents and locals.

At that event we also launched our 2022 Community Sponsorship Program. I really encourage any group or committee in the Nundle, Hanging Rock and Timor areas to get their applications in. We will be announcing successful applicants at the end of June.

With our Response to Submissions now lodged, the project is now under assessment by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE). We have been working closely with DPE to ensure any requests for additional information are fulfilled. We are expecting a recommendation from the DPE in the coming months. Once this is received the project will then be assessed by the Independent Planning Commission – an independent government organisation that will provide a determination on the project.

We'll also be holding a series of Information Sessions in June to update the community on the project. Join us in Nundle, Hanging Rock and Timor on June 7, 8 and 9. More information on these events can be found on page two and at www.hillsofgoldenergy.com/CommunityConsultation.

As we progress in 2022, we look forward to continuing our work with the Nundle, Hanging Rock and Timor communities, as well as key stakeholders in the wider region. If you have any questions in relation to the Hills of Gold Wind Farm development, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Regards,

Meredith Anderson
Development Manager, ENGIE





Proudly supporting your community

up to \$3000

Apply now for Community Sponsorship



Applications are now open for ENGIE's Community Sponsorship Program, offering up to \$3,000 to support projects that benefit the local community

This program will support locally run events or community initiatives. Funding will be awarded to projects or events that enhance or promote tourism, arts or culture, promote sustainability and enhance the environment, contribute to or improve education and training, or socio-economic conditions.

We encourage any community group or committees operating in the in the Nundle, Hanging Rock and Timor areas, to put their ideas forward and register their interest by May 31, 2022. Successful applicants will be notified by June 30, 2022.

To apply, or to find out more information, including the program guidelines and terms and conditions, please visit www.hillsofgoldenergy.com/benefitsandsponsorship.

Community Information Sessions

ENGIE will be hosting a series of Information Sessions in June to update the community on the project. If you are unable make it to any of the events below, or would prefer to meet separately while we're in the region, please get in touch with the team on **1800 845 067**.

Nundle:

Tuesday, June 7

7:30 - 10am, Machina Coffee & Donuts

Wednesday June, 8

7:30 - 10am, Nundle Fuel Café

Thursday, June 9

7:30 -10am, Machina Coffee & Donuts
5.30 - 7.30pm, Nundle Bowling Club

Hanging Rock:

Wednesday, June 8

5:30 - 7.30pm, Hanging Rock Hall

Timor:

Tuesday, June 7

5:30 - 7.30pm, Timor Community Hall



Contractor Site Visit

During May, ENGIE and Someva were pleased to host a number of site visits for potential Balance of Plant (BoP) contractors for the proposed Hills of Gold Wind Farm project.

Successful BoP contractors will be responsible for the civil and electrical construction of the wind farm to enable turbines to be delivered, installed, and commissioned.

The extensive tour provided visitors with a chance to familiarise themselves with the lay of the land and the unique challenges and considerations associated with the proposed wind farm design.

If you are interested in sub-contracting services to the selected BoP contractor, or providing any other support to the project, please submit your details at:

www.hillsofgoldenergy.com/workwithus



Timeline

- ✓ **October 15, 2018**
Lodge Preliminary Environmental Assessment
- ✓ **November 22, 2018**
SEARs issued
- ✓ **November 20, 2020**
Lodgement of DA and EIS
- ✓ **Dec 2020 – Jan 2021**
Public exhibition and collection of submissions
- ✓ **August 2021**
Update on Response to Submissions
- ✓ **January 10, 2022**
Response to Submissions lodged to DPIE
- **Q3 2022**
IPC Determination (anticipated)

Project Update

The Hills of Gold Wind Farm is currently under assessment by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE). There have been requests for additional information from DPE throughout its assessment, which is commonplace through this process.

Once the assessment is complete, the DPE will provide its recommendation to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC), along with an assessment report on the project. We are expecting the DPE's recommendation in the coming months.

ENGIE would like to thank supporters of the project and we wait eagerly for a DPE recommendation.

Independent Planning Commission Process

Due to the number of submissions received during the public exhibition period, this project's approval will be determined by the Independent Planning Commission (IPC). The IPC will be the consent authority, providing a determination on the project.

The IPC is an independent government organisation with a set process for assessing projects to reach a determination. The IPC will hold stakeholder meetings with community groups, government bodies and special interest groups, as well as conduct a site visit of the project area.

- Stage 1 ▶ Commencement** – A panel of commissioners to consider the project application and decide on an approval or refusal
- Stage 2 ▶ Public Submissions** – “Have your Say” is an online process for making community submissions. Submissions will also be accepted via post
- Stage 3 ▶ Stakeholder Consultation** – The IPC may meet with stakeholders such as local councils, community, and agencies
- Stage 4 ▶ Site Inspection** – Physical and/or virtual site inspection and/or locality tour
- Stage 5 ▶ Public Meeting** – An opportunity for community members and stakeholders to present to the IPC panel with their views on the project.
- Stage 6 ▶ Determination** – IPC determines the project application and will issue development consent or notice of refusal

Ongoing processes include a merit-based appeal, which is a court process and there is also the opportunity for judicial reviews.

There will be opportunities during the IPC process to make submissions expressing your view on the project and if a public meeting is held, there will be opportunities to nominate to speak at the meeting.

The IPC process can take anywhere between five to 12 weeks with a final decision expected at the end of the assessment.

Members of the community will be able to follow the process on the IPC website once the project has been uploaded through the 'notify me' section on each project page.

If the IPC is planning to hold a public meeting, they will notify the community of the intended time and location to ensure interested members of the community can come along.

Community Consultative Committee

The purpose of a Community Consultative Committee (CCC) is to provide a forum for discussion between a proponent and representatives of the community, stakeholder groups and local councils on issues directly relating to a specific State Significant Project.

A CCC is not a decision-making or regulatory body; it performs an advisory and consultative role. Government agencies will remain responsible for ensuring proponents comply with any statutory obligations. For the past three years, ENGIE and Someva representatives have met with the CCC on a regular basis to provide project updates and answer any questions put forward by the committee. Minutes from all meetings are placed on the project website at www.hillsofgoldenergy.com/ccc.

The current CCC has been notified by the Department of Planning and Environment that due to the Department currently assessing the project and a final decision to be made by the Independent Planning Commission (IPC), there is no need for additional CCC meetings while the project is being considered. The Department has also advised that if the project is approved, they would recommend reestablishment of a CCC as part of the conditions of consent.

Both ENGIE and Someva thank all members of the CCC who have contributed their time over the past three years, which has included 10 formal meetings, several other meetings, workshops and sites visits. This valuable input has helped shaped the project and improved outcomes for the community.



Become a Supplier

At ENGIE, we aim to leave a positive impact on our customers, our communities and the environment

Whether it's earthworks, infrastructure, building contractors, machinery operators and engineering, or accommodation, administration, catering, freight and cleaners – a number of skills and suppliers will be required by our main contractor during the construction phase of the project, including opportunities for local and Indigenous suppliers.

Register your interest

To find out more and register your interest scan the QR code or visit:



www.hillsofgoldenergy.com/workwithus

Biodiversity Protection



ENGIE shares the community's concerns about impacts to native vegetation and the habitats of native wildlife such as koalas and wombats. That's why we have undertaken thorough research and mitigation strategies to protect the biodiversity of the region.

Leading industry consultants ARUP and Biosis were engaged to conduct biodiversity studies over the course of two years. No serious or irreversible biodiversity impacts from the project were found.

Additionally, there are strict protocols to ensure mitigation measures are in place to protect biodiversity and native animals, governed by environmental management plans that must be prepared and implemented by specialists and approved by the Department of Planning and Environment for an Environmental Protection License prior to construction commencement.

ENGIE have also amended design elements of the project to help protect the local ecology, including:

- ▶ Removing three turbines that were considered high risk to threatened bat species
- ▶ Avoided 158ha of threatened species habitat – 100% reduction in all threatened bat species roosting habitat
- ▶ Removing turbines to reduce impact to other native species including the Greater Glider, Spotted Tail Quoll, Koala and Owls
- ▶ Avoiding 34ha of threatened Box Gum Woodland

ENGIE is committed to preserving the biodiversity of the Hills of Gold and is proud to be proactive in ensuring that the project is environmentally and ecologically sound.

Mythbusting

With the Hills of Gold Wind Farm becoming a popular topic in the New England region, ENGIE is helping to address some of the key concerns people have with regard to biodiversity, environmental and other impacts. To help you tell fact from fiction, we've put together a series of mythbusters.

Has the Hills of Gold Wind Farm been involved in any unauthorised cleared land?

Allegations of unauthorised land clearing have been investigated by the relevant authorities and as a result a Conservation Land Agreement has been established. Hills of Gold Wind Farm has not undertaken or authorised any land clearing over the project site.

Crown Land and Indigenous Land Claims

The project team has been in discussions with both the Gomeroi Native Title Applicant and the Nungaroo Land Council regarding the proposed bypass on Crown Land.

Are there impacts to quality and quantity of water into Chaffey Dam?

WaterNSW's submission on the project during public exhibition concluded that the proposal should not impact on Chaffey Dam or the quality of the water into Chaffey and Glenbawn catchments. It is considered that the mitigation measures outlined within the EIS will manage the project impacts adequately, including impacts to soil and water through the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan.

Is there an oversupply of projects in NSW?

The Hills of Gold Wind Farm is the most advanced wind farm project in NSW and ready for construction to commence in early 2023. This will alleviate energy cost and demand issues currently facing the market.

Will the project cause any delay in my day-to-day activities?

The project vehicle movements occur between a morning time of 7-8am, with most businesses in Nundle opening past 8:30am and the evening peak will be 4-5pm when majority of businesses have closed. The analysis completed on the main intersection in Nundle concluded existing vehicles would experience a one-second delay at this intersection during construction.

Is the Hills of Gold project having a worse biodiversity impact compared to other wind farms in NSW?

The Hills of Gold Wind Farm is ranked equal fourth out of 12 wind farms that have been approved in NSW on the native vegetation clearing per MW, which was consented to in the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) conditions.

There have been a range of assessments and workshops to reduce impact to biodiversity, which has involved removing and relocating turbines.

Need more information?

For more frequently asked questions and mythbusters, visit www.hillsofgoldenergy.com. Alternatively, you can email us at hillsofgold.au@engie.com or call **1800 845 067**.

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

**Community Sponsorship
Program applications close**
May 31, 2022

**Community Information
Sessions**
June 7, 8 and 9



L-R: **Jamie Chivers**, Managing Director, Someva, **Ricardo Alvarez**, Assistant Project Manager ENGIE, **Meredith Anderson**, Development Manager, ENGIE, **Thierry Kalfon**, Managing Director Renewables Australia and SE Asia, ENGIE, **Jacqui Niemand**, Stakeholder and Community Engagement Manager, ENGIE, **Dusan Hadzi-Nikolov**, Senior Project Delivery Manager, ENGIE, **Aref Taleb**, Development and Community Manager, Someva.

Get in Touch

Do you want to get in touch with the team?
ENGIE's Asset Development Team can be contacted on:

phone: **1800 845 067**

email hillofsgold.au@engie.com



www.hillofsgoldenergy.com



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