

# Hills of Gold Wind Farm Newsletter

**Spring 2021**

## Message from the Project Manager



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

Over the last few months, ENGIE has continued to review the 660 submissions made during the Public Exhibition period earlier this year. We now have a better understanding of both the opportunities and concerns with the project. Subsequently, ENGIE has been conducting additional technical assessments and engaging with key stakeholders to assess how we can modify the project to reduce impacts in these areas.

While we understand members of the community are eager to see ENGIE's Response to Submissions (RTS), these additional assessments have caused a delay to the original schedule.

We announced in late October that we were likely to be submitting the RTS toward the end of 2021. Since that announcement however, we have received feedback from a number of residents raising concerns about the RTS being submitted right before the Christmas period. Given those concerns, we now expect to submit the RTS in the second week of January 2022.

To ensure the community understands what changes have been made to the proposed project, ENGIE and Someva are currently undertaking two weeks of community consultation in the Nundle region from November 8. We're encouraging all community members to come along and learn more about the project.

I'd like to thank everyone who took part in our Nundle business survey. More than 50 business owners from across the region responded and all provided valuable feedback on the project and our proposed traffic management strategies. The results of the survey are used to finalise our RTS.

It was also great to see a number of Nundle business owners in the local media in recent months, sharing their views on the project and highlighting the benefits it will bring. ENGIE is always willing and ready to talk directly with local business owners and the wider community, so if you have any questions about the project, please get in touch.

While we wait for the DPIE's assessment of the project, ENGIE will continue to engage with community members and key stakeholders of the project. Our discussions with Tamworth Regional Council have been ongoing throughout the development phase to ensure we make a positive impact in the local community.

As 2021 quickly comes to a close, I'd once again like to thank the local communities for their willingness and support, and from the wider ENGIE team wish you and your family a happy holiday season.

Regards,

**Meredith Anderson**  
Development Manager

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.

## Response to Submissions

### Why the delay?

During the Public Exhibition phase of the Hills of Gold Wind Farm project there were more than 660 submissions received, including 630 from individuals and members of the public, 11 from organisations and 22 from public authorities. The ENGIE team spent the last several months reviewing every single submission to ensure all of the community and stakeholder feedback was captured. The review process has highlighted a number of key impact areas that are a priority for the local community and other stakeholders. These include biodiversity, traffic, visual, social, heritage and economic impacts. As a result, ENGIE has undertaken several additional technical assessments to identify where these impacts could be further mitigated.

#### This has resulted in:

- Revising the number of wind turbines from 70 to 65
- Further soil and water studies
- Surveys and design of road upgrades along access routes

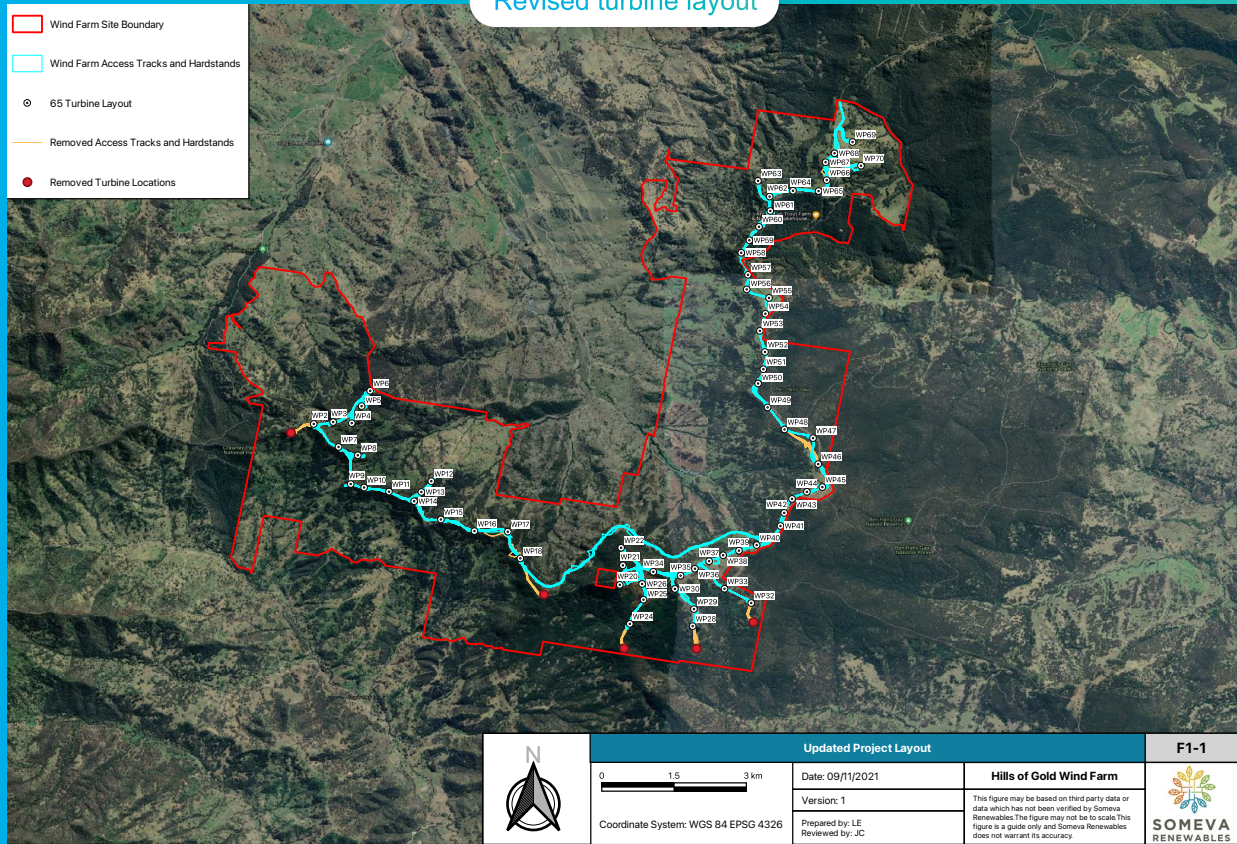
- The design of the Devil's Elbow Bypass
- Reduction of the development footprint and associated avoided biodiversity impacts
- Development of Traffic Management strategies
- Statement of Heritage Impact Study
- Reduced Aviation night lighting requirements
- Flora and Fauna surveys
- Turbine construction and design life suitability

These additional studies have resulted in a delay to lodging our Response to Submissions. We announced in late October that we were likely to be submitting the RTS toward the end of 2021. Since that announcement however, we have received feedback from a number of residents raising concerns about the RTS being submitted right before the Christmas period. Given those concerns, we now expect to submit the RTS in the second week of January 2022. Once lodged it will detail key project changes, which have significantly reduced traffic, visual, heritage and biodiversity impacts..

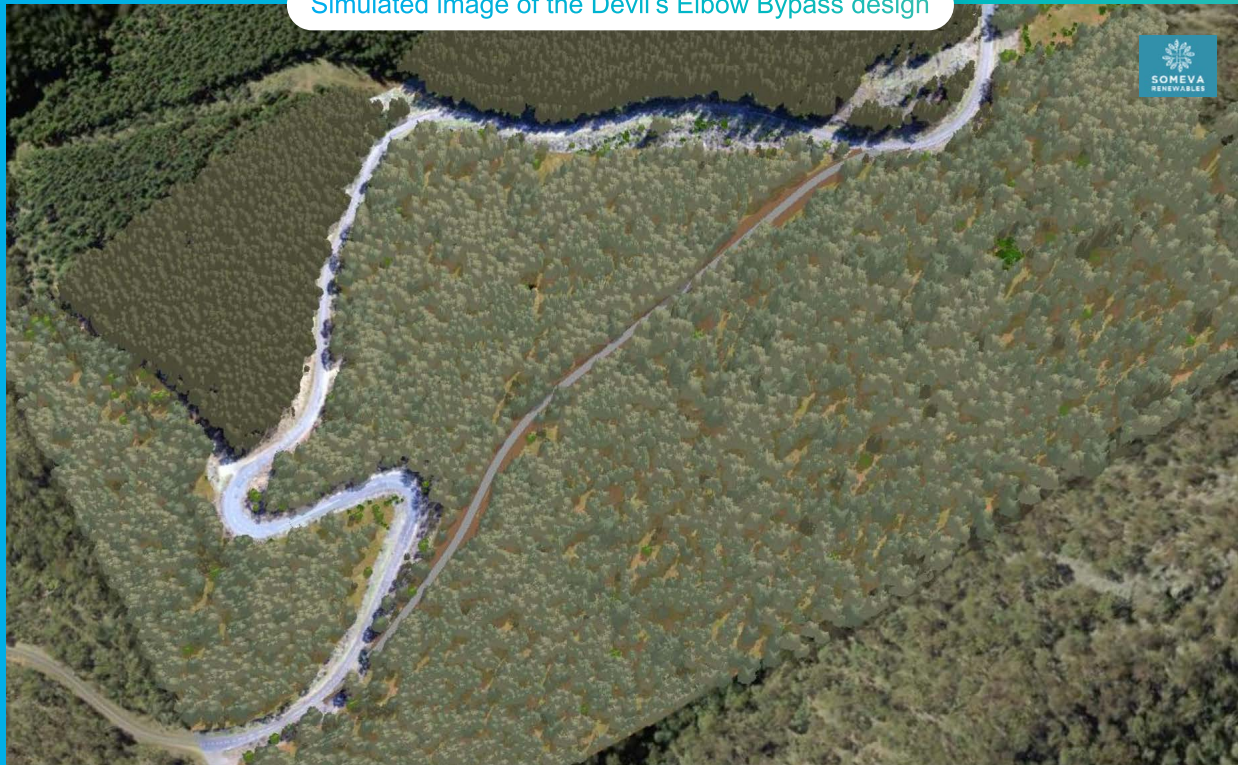




### Revised turbine layout



### Simulated image of the Devil's Elbow Bypass design





## Community Consultation

To provide more detail on some of the key changes made to the project as a result of public submissions, ENGIE and Someva will be hosting Community Information Hubs in Nundle, Timor and Hanging Rock in November.

### Nundle

November 8-10 & 15-17  
9am-12pm & 3pm-6pm each day  
Behind Machina Coffee & Donuts

### Timor

November 11  
10am-3pm  
Timor Community Hall

### Hanging Rock

November 15  
4:30pm-6pm  
Hanging Rock Hall



## Night Lighting Plan

In response to community and agency concerns regarding visual impacts from aviation night lighting, additional consultation with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has been undertaken and an Aviation Lighting Plan approved by CASA. The plan nominates the lighting of 28 out of the 65 turbines, installed at hub height.

CASA has also confirmed a reduction in the requirement for lighting intensity, from 2000 candela to 200 candela. A 2000 candela light is visible at 4.9km and a 200 candela light would be difficult to discern in excess of 3km.

In addition, ENGIE has committed to night light shielding which can reduce the impact on dwellings within up to 6 km of the project for higher intensity lights. The efficiency of shielding would be increased for the project due to the elevation difference between turbines and dwellings and lower intensity lights used.

It is anticipated that with fewer turbines lit, low intensity lighting and shielding, aviation lighting could be implemented with a low visual impact on the surrounding landscape.



## Business Survey Results

ENGIE's Community Engagement team undertook an online survey in August 2021, to gauge project sentiment among business owners who will have a direct impact from traffic movements associated with the project.

The survey was sent to known businesses with a shopfront or that are home-based in both Nundle and Hanging Rock.

There was a great uptake of the survey, with 55 responses received. While the majority of these were Nundle or Hanging Rock-based businesses, we also received responses from business owners in Timor and Crawney.

Some key results from the survey included:

- 67 per cent of local business owners with a shopfront in Nundle or Hanging Rock support the Hills of Gold Wind Farm project
- Of those that support the project, more than 90 per cent believe the project will bring economic benefits to their business, with majority citing increased revenue and increased customers as the biggest benefits
- 75 per cent of the supportive business owners believe ENGIE's project will strengthen the region's existing tourism market.

The survey was also used to gain feedback on a number of proposed traffic management strategies.

ENGIE's proposed traffic management strategies include:

- A dedicated transport route through Oakenville Street and onto Barry Road
- An additional pedestrian crossing in Nundle (subject to Council approval)
- Laybys for oversize and overmass vehicles on Morrisons Gap and Lindsays Gap Road
- Parking restrictions in Nundle for project vehicles
- A temporary car park in Nundle for project vehicles to access shops and services.
- 49 per cent of survey respondents said a dedicated transport route through Oakenville Street is the best proposed traffic management strategy.



*Nundle Business owners, Rob Schofield, Megan Carberry and Russell Sydenham, chatting with Prime7 News and the Northern Daily Leader about the project*

*IMAGE: Northern Daily Leader*



## Local Energy Offer

To help support the local community, ENGIE's energy retailer is developing an exclusive electricity offer for residents of Nundle, Hanging Rock and Crawney.

While it is still being developed, the offer will enable participating local residents to receive an additional discount off their electricity bill once the Hills of Gold Wind Farm is constructed.

We will continue to update the community as the offer is developed.



## Wind Farms & Land Values

ENGIE understands there are community members who feel that the project may have a negative impact on land and property values. A number of studies have been undertaken both within Australia and overseas, into the impact of wind farms on nearby property values.

In 2016, the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage commissioned a report into the impact of wind farms on property values. The report concluded that across the case studies reviewed in NSW and Victoria, there was no evidence of negative impacts on property values. Furthermore, the re-sale values of all the properties examined in the report experienced capital growth in line with the property market trends.

In another study completed in 2013, national property consultants Preston Rowe Paterson conducted an assessment of the impact of wind farms on surrounding land values in Australia, and similarly concluded that there was no 'quantifiable effect on land values.

Copies of these reports are available on our website at [www.hillsofgoldenergy.com](http://www.hillsofgoldenergy.com)

It is important to note many factors influence land and property prices. Supply and demand, proximity to amenities and infrastructure, housing affordability and the desirability of the location can all have an impact.



Get in touch with us or learn more about the Hills of Gold Wind Farm project by visiting our FAQs.



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