



Submission - Crudine Ridge Wind Farm Mod 1

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The Australian Wind Alliance supports the Section 4.55 modification to the Development Consent for Crudine Ridge Wind Farm.

About AWA

The Australian Wind Alliance (AWA) is a community based organisation that has over 700 financial members and more than 11,000 Facebook followers. Our members include landholders, farmers, small businesses, and members of the community, including many neighbours to existing wind farms. The Wind Alliance encourages best practice community engagement and supports wind farms for the contribution they make to reducing Australia's carbon emissions and the benefits they bring to regional Australia.

Comments

We note that this application is for the modification of an existing permit and therefore the assessment is not of the project itself but rather of the impact of the proposed modifications on that permit. We further note that the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm has been financed and construction activity has commenced. This modification application is particularly important to give certainty to local residents as to the extent of the project, which is already under way.

The central modification requested is a reduction in the number of turbines in the project, from 77 down to 37, with no change to the tip height envelope. A smaller number of larger capacity turbines is a trend we are seeing across the industry, as larger, higher efficiency machines drive down the cost of wind power for consumers. The lower number of turbines represents an improvement in the visual and noise amenity of the project made possible through technical advances and should be supported. At the same time, an increase in rotor swept area from the machines envisaged in the original permit increases the amount of clean energy generated and reduces the cost of that energy and this should also be supported.

The main change in terms of amenity is the updated upgrade plan for Aarons Pass Road. This upgrade will be fully funded by the proponent and improves road condition, visibility, drainage and passing opportunities. The upgrade will leave a much-improved road for the local community and meets council's standards. While the road upgrade itself is planned to slightly increase vegetation clearance in the vicinity of the Aarons Pass Road, this is far outweighed by the reduction in clearance from the reduction in turbine numbers. The result is a lighter environmental footprint for the project overall.

We are satisfied that the proponent has consulted well, that there is broad support for the project and that the project will benefit the local community. Some of these benefits include local jobs, with up to 240 people engaged during the construction period. This has certainly been the experience at other wind farms across the state, such as Crookwell Wind Farm, where the civil contracting alone saw \$12 million of contracts awarded to local firms. An annual contribution of \$168,000 will be made to a community fund for local projects and initiatives across the life of the project, an amount that compares favourably to other NSW projects on a per megawatt basis. The dependable income for local farmers hosting wind turbines will be a buffer against weather and unpredictable commodity prices and bring added resilience to the local farming economy.