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Independent decision for Crookwell wind farm proposal

The Department of Planning and Environment has referred an application to build a new wind farm at Crookwell to the Planning Assessment Commission for an independent decision.

“The Department has assessed the proposal, including community feedback and has recommended the PAC approve the development, with strict conditions,” a Department spokesperson said.

“The ‘Crookwell 3 Wind Farm’ proposal involves building and operating 28 wind turbines on two sites totalling around 1500 hectares, around 17 kilometres south east of Crookwell.

“The proposed wind farm would see between $90 and $110 million invested, creating 40 full-time construction jobs and six full-time ongoing positions.”

The proposal was put on public exhibition in late 2012 and early 2013 and received 206 submissions, including 188 from community members objecting to the proposal and seven from community members who supported developing the wind farm.

Community concerns about the project included noise and visual impacts, ecological issues, impacts on bushfires and firefighting, effect on property values, local traffic disruptions and impacts to a range of aviation activities, including agricultural and firefighting flights. Many of these concerns were around cumulative impacts from other existing and approved wind farms in the region.

“The applicant made a number of changes in response to the community feedback, including removing one turbine and relocating another, as well as realigning roads and vehicle access points,” the spokesperson said.

“The footprint of the proposed wind farm has also been reduced to minimise impacts on native vegetation.

“The Department’s assessment has found that visual, noise, ecological and fire protection impacts could be reduced by some of the strict conditions recommended to the PAC, including removing an extra turbine in addition to the one already removed by the applicant.

“The recommended conditions include giving certain affected landowners the right to have their properties bought out by the project, if impacts cannot be reduced to levels in line with the approval.

“The Department fully considered that the wind farm will contribute to offsetting carbon dioxide, particulate and other emissions that would otherwise be produced if the power was being generated by fossil fuel combustion.”

The final decision about Crookwell 3 Wind Farm will now be made by the independent PAC. To read the Department’s assessment visit www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au.

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