

### Why are wind energy projects important and how are they regulated?

The NSW Government supports the development of a sustainable wind energy industry in NSW. The State has valuable wind resources with many of the best areas located near existing electricity transmission infrastructure.

Wind energy projects not only generate clean energy, but also support jobs and investment, particularly in our regional areas. However, the potential impacts of wind energy projects need to be managed to ensure they are accurately identified, and any adverse outcomes are minimised.

As the approval authority for State Significant wind energy projects, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is also responsible for monitoring compliance with the conditions of approval. It is important that this developing industry constructs and operates their projects responsibly.

### When are wind energy projects classed as State Significant Development (SSD)?

Under the State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011, wind energy projects are classified as an SSD when the capital investment value of the project exceeds \$30 million (or \$10 million in a prescribed environmentally sensitive area).

### How many wind farms have SSD approvals and what is their status?

Status (as of 1 April 2020)	Total
Approved and operational	10
Approved and under construction	6
Approved and not lapsed	7
	23

### What was the focus of the inspections?

Since December 2018, the Department has undertaken 21 inspections of 10 wind farms across NSW (which included proactive, reactive and surveillance).

The Department liaised with relevant government agencies such as the Biodiversity Conservation Division (former NSW Office of Environment and Heritage), Environment Protection Authority, Roads and Maritime Service as well as local councils.

In addition to monitoring general compliance with conditions of approval, the Department focused on monitoring:

- Road upgrades and construction requirements;
- Construction transport routes and site access points;
- Traffic Management;
- Management of Aboriginal and European heritage;
- Vegetation clearing limits and areas of vegetation retention;
- Erosion, sediment controls and weed management; and
- To ensure that construction works had not commenced prior to meeting requirements.

# Wind Farm Energy Projects Inspection Program

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### What did we find?

The wind energy projects inspected were generally found to be constructing or operating in accordance with their conditions of consent that had been triggered at the time of inspections.

However, some formal enforcement actions were undertaken and the Department has identified and communicated opportunities for improvement.

#### *Formal Enforcement Actions*

##### **December 2018 – Crudine Wind Farm**

The Department issued a \$15,000 Penalty Notice to Crudine Ridge Wind Farm Pty Ltd, for failing to complete road upgrades prior to the commencement of construction at the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm site, located south of Mudgee.

Upgrades to Aarons Pass Road were required to have been completed prior to the commencement of construction to ensure the safety of other road users during the construction period.

Works along Aarons Pass Road have now been completed to the satisfaction of council and works on the site have recommenced.

##### **March 2020 – Collector Wind Farm**

The Department issued a \$6000 Penalty Notice to Collector Wind Farm (CWF), for failing to obtain Construction Certificates under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* for the construction of turbine foundations at the Collector Wind Farm.

CWF have now obtained the necessary approvals from the local Council.

Details on formal enforcement actions can be found in [our monthly compliance reports](#).

### What are the ongoing monitoring and future actions?

The Department will continue to monitor wind energy developments across NSW and investigate allegations of non-compliance to ensure projects comply with their conditions of consent.

### Where can I find more information?

Phone: 1300 73 44 66 | Email: [compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au)

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