

BENDENINE WIND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AT YOUR BACK DOOR

MAY 2025

Community Response to Wind Prospect's Bendenine Wind Turbine Proposal

The proposed Bendenine Wind Turbines, as outlined by Wind Prospect, raises serious concerns for the rural communities of Binalong, Bowning, and surrounding areas. While the company claims to bring “lasting benefits” and “meaningful engagement,” the reality for our community could be far more detrimental.

The Bendenine Wind Farm proposes up to 93 of **Australia's largest wind turbines**, some of which would be located just 3km from the villages of Bowning and Binalong including our Primary Schools.

Research indicates that exposure to wind turbine noise, including low-frequency sound and infrasound, can have adverse health effects on nearby residents, including sleep disturbances, headaches, and anxiety.

The Binalong – Bowning Community Action Group (BBCAG) will provide you with the information you need to have your say throughout every step of the development process. **Right now**, Wind Prospect has invited you to have your say by communicating with them directly. It is important they receive your views now so please give them your feedback - the contact details are at the end of this newsletter.* We have included our concerns in this newsletter and you may wish to include any of this information if relevant to you.

If you are approached or called by Wind Prospect with a request to meet or discuss the project, get any request they make to you in writing and advise them that you want someone independent to join the meeting to take minutes or that you will record the conversation to keep a record. Hold them to

account for what they say to you and follow any meeting with a letter back to them in writing.

Community Engagement or Tokenism?

Wind Prospect asserts a commitment to “open, transparent and best-practice community engagement”, yet the project is already progressing through feasibility stages before genuine consultation has occurred. Holding information sessions after early planning decisions have already been made does not constitute community-driven development—it’s a tick-box exercise. The power imbalance between corporate interests and rural communities undermines local voices and erodes trust. Best practices in community engagement emphasise early and continuous dialogue with affected communities (NSW Department of Planning, 2023). Wind Prospect has failed to meet that standard.

Property Value Depreciation

There is evidence suggesting that proximity to wind farms can negatively affect property values by up to 30%. A review by the NSW Valuer-General indicated that properties located near wind farms may experience value depreciation due to factors such as noise, visual impact, and perceived health risks.

Community Benefit Program: Insufficient Compensation

The proposed \$500,000 annual community fund and \$20,000 sponsorship pool are insufficient compensation for the lasting disruption caused to the rural community. These funds amount to around \$5,500 per turbine, per year—hardly equitable when local families may experience 30+ years of noise, stress, and declining property values. No amount of community funding offsets the industrialisation of a peaceful rural landscape. Other communities who host turbines have told us the offers of community money and investment have never been delivered.

Compare this with the possibility for the host landholders who may be paid as much as \$8,000MW per year. Should the 93 Turbines generate 7.5MW each - the host landholders could receive a total annual payment of almost \$6 million.

Rural Residents Bear the Burden, City Investors Reap the Rewards

This project exists not to serve local energy needs but to feed the urban grid. The benefits flow to city-based investors, developers, and energy retailers. Meanwhile, rural communities are asked to give up their views, quiet nights, and land use rights in the name of “net zero.” This is environmental gentrification—where rural land and livelihoods are sacrificed to meet metropolitan green quotas.

Fire, Infrastructure, and Grid Risk

The proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) introduces another layer of risk. Lithium-ion battery fires are extremely difficult to contain and present a real danger in high bushfire risk zones like Yass Valley, including toxic pollutants and poisonous gases for firefighters and our communities. This makes it prohibitive and unsafe for our volunteer firefighters. Additionally, the transmission infrastructure and access roads may fragment properties, block wildlife corridors, and place strain on local roads and emergency services during construction.

Potential Microplastics Contamination from Turbine Blade Erosion

Wind turbine blades, made from fiberglass and plastic resins, degrade over time, releasing microplastics into the environment. Studies estimate that each blade can shed between 30 and 540 grams of microplastics annually, which can contaminate soil, water, and potentially enter agricultural produce, such contamination poses risks to food and fibre production.

Agricultural Land at Risk

The project proposes to install up to 90 industrial-scale wind turbines across prime agricultural land, currently used for sheep, cattle, and cropping. While Wind Prospect claims “strong compatibility with existing land uses” (p.4), this ignores the disruption to livestock behaviour, land value depreciation, restricted aerial access (including for firefighting), and permanent loss of agricultural productivity on construction and access footprints. Once farming land is compromised by industrial development, it rarely returns to full agricultural viability. The installation of turbines, access roads, battery energy storage system (BESS), substation and transmission lines will fragment farmland, disrupt livestock behaviour, and reduce agricultural productivity.

Environmental and Aesthetic Impact on Rural Amenity

The visual and noise impacts of 260-metre-tall turbines are significant and irreversible. The proposed location between Binalong and Bowning, within sight of heritage townships and properties and the Yass town, would fundamentally alter the rural character of the Yass Valley. The current overview glosses over these impacts and downplays the psychological and lifestyle consequences for neighbouring residents. The introduction of shadow flicker, infrasound, vibration and 24/7 red lighting affects not just humans but also farm animals and native wildlife.

Short-Term Jobs, Long-Term Consequences

While Wind Prospect highlights “local employment opportunities” during construction (p.5), these are short-term, often filled by contractors who bring their own crews. Once operational, the project offers only a handful of maintenance roles. The broader community is left with ongoing noise, landscape degradation, and limited economic benefit. Compared to the enduring jobs and income generated by farming, the promised jobs are neither meaningful nor sustainable.

Destructive Blasting and Infrastructure Fragmentation

Construction will require **blasting of rocky outcrops** to install turbine foundations and cut new access roads. This will cause noise, vibration, and dust disruption to nearby homes and farms, disturb native ecosystems, and increase the risk of groundwater disturbance.

The associated **transmission lines and substations** will cut through previously undisturbed grazing land, valuable biodiversity introducing permanent barriers and potential fire risks in already fire-prone zones.

A Call for Transparency, Respect, and Balance

We support the transition to renewable energy—but not at the expense of rural communities, our agricultural heritage, and environmental integrity. The Bendenine Wind Farm proposal as it stands does not deliver a fair or equitable outcome for those who live and work in this region. We urge Wind Prospect and planning authorities to pause, listen, and redesign this process with true community-led values.

We demand:

- A comprehensive independent Social Impact Assessment including farming impact
- Transparent noise, shadow flicker, and land devaluation studies
- A binding community veto mechanism before final approval
- Recognition of the intrinsic value of rural landscapes and livelihoods
- Support for mental health services
- For Wind Prospect to **adhere to the Clean Energy Council's *Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Projects*** and cover the costs of independent legal and financial advice for our landholders and our community.

Conclusion: We Deserve Better

This community is not anti-renewables—we are pro-responsibility, pro-transparency, and pro-rural resilience. The Bendenine Wind Turbine Industrial Development threatens:

- Our **children's school** and learning environment
- The **clean, premium status** of our wool, beef and production industries
- The **safety and liveability** of rural households
- The **heritage and social cohesion** of our rural community

We call for:

- A **halt to project progression** due to the unsuitability of this area to host a development such as this
- A **full independent assessment of the environmental, social, and economic impacts**
- Transparent disclosure of **host landholder payments and contract terms**
- A **minimum exclusion buffer of 10 km from schools and residences**
- A **community veto mechanism** to ensure this project reflects public, not corporate, interest

Let us not be the collateral damage of a poorly planned energy transition.

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Wind Prospect Pty Ltd contact details

Phone: 1800 497 133

Email: info@bendeninewindfarm.com.au

Face-to-face meeting: Please contact them to arrange a time

Their online survey being conducted by Umwelt as part of the Project's Social Impact Assessment. The survey will inform the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) and guide the next phase of community engagement.

The survey is available here:

<https://www.research.net/r/SHFQXPN>