

LETTER OF SUPPORT: WOOROORA STATION WIND FARM RAVENSHOE

Dear Hon Minister Plibersek,
Cc Federal Government Representatives, Queensland State Government and Tablelands Regional Council

“There has been a lot of misinformation being spread in the media ... but it is incorrect – the Jirrbal people strongly support the proposed development on our country.”

My name is Bradley Go-Sam I am a Jirrbal Elder and I represent the Jirrbal Peoples. We are the First Nations People for the country where the proposed Wooroora Station Wind Farm is located in Far North Queensland. We have a native title claim over part of this country and a native title determination for the nearby Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. We strongly support the proposed development on our country. It will bring opportunity for our Peoples and will help improve land that is now covered in weeds and pests.

There has been a lot of misinformation being spread in the media. I am writing so that the voice of the Jirrbal People I represent can be heard and to correct the misinformation being spread.

The Jirrbal People have authorised an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) for the Wooroora Station Wind Farm. This involved a lengthy consultation process facilitated by the North Queensland Land Council including three community meetings and an authorisation meeting on 8 May 2022. Before negotiations commenced I took this to the Jirrbal People for consent to commence discussions.

Like any represented group of people, there can be differing views amongst its constituents and we respect these views. However, the Jirrbal Peoples voted by majority to authorise the agreement. We Jirrbal People also have a cultural heritage management agreement, and Jirrbal People have the right to negotiate on how we protect our cultural heritage from any disturbance. The project took into account our views to make sure that the project protected Jirrbal Peoples' sites of significance. Ark Energy, the proponents of the project have consulted with us extensively since the very beginning and they ought to be commended for the work they have done in tis regard. They have been a great company to work with to date.

The Jirrbal People are excited about the employment opportunities and capacity building for our Peoples. The Wooroora Station Wind Farm project will make a real difference to Jirrbal Peoples standard of living. The employment and contracting opportunities will enable our young Jirrbal families to save for a deposit for a house rather than renting, a standard of living that is taken for granted by many. The Wooroora Station Wind Farm provides an opportunity for continued employment and living locally.

The Jirrbal Peoples will also have the opportunity to work on-country to deliver significant nature positive outcomes. The project site has large areas of weeds such as lantana, which stops Koalas from being able to move freely across the land – (which have not been found on the site to date with ecologists and TO surveys).

Pests such as wild pigs and cats roam across the properties in huge numbers. There is existing and extensive clearance and transmission line infrastructure. We can increase biodiversity by working closely with Indigenous and scientific communities on rehabilitation, weed and pest control, fire management, and Indigenous training and business development.

I agree clearing tropical rainforest and pristine protected species habitat would be unacceptable. If that were the case, I'd feel differently. But it's not true. That is simply not true. Why do people believe these claims being made by a noisy few, without question. They are misinformed false accusations.

The Wooroora Station Wind Farm project will enable the Jirrbal Peoples to access the Wooroora Station that is currently not available to our Peoples.

The former project name of Chalumbin created some confusion amongst our People, whether intentional manipulation by project opponents or otherwise. The project is not located on or near Chalumbin Hill. Chalumbin Hill is very sensitive to Jirrbal People and is outside the project boundary and will remain protected in the world heritage area.

The agreements we have with the project will continue to ensure that Jirrbal People are involved in and have a say in the design and delivery of the Wooroora Station Wind Farm. The company has been working with us since early 2019 to ensure that they are respectful of Jirrbal Peoples' connection to this area.

The project is a win-win as we get local jobs on country, and the environment gets a win too. If people want to oppose the wind farm for valid reasons, they should be honest about it. But don't misrepresent the truth and don't misrepresent the views of the majority of Jirrbal People.

Our voice is our own and we wholeheartedly support the Wooroora Station Wind Farm in the varied application you have before you for decision.

Yours sincerely
Bradley Go-Sam
Jirrbal Elder
Native Title Claimant