



## URGENT CALL TO ACTION:

### PROTECT MAKHANDA'S SOUL AND THE EASTERN CAPE'S FUTURE!

Makhanda, a town rich in history and natural beauty, is on the brink of irreversible disastrous change. A silent threat looms, endangering the very essence of our town and the wider Eastern Cape.

Indalo is an Association of the most well-known game reserves in the Eastern Cape, including Kwandwe, Shamwari, Kariega, Lalibela, Pumba, Amakhala, Hopewell and Oceana, and is the government appointed Management Authority of the Indalo Protected Environment.

The Indalo Association, Kwandwe, Buffalo Kloof, Wilderness Foundation Africa and concerned citizens are calling on the people, communities and the relevant government authorities of Makhanda and the Eastern Cape, to urgently take a stand against the impending menace of misplaced wind farms, and specifically the proposed **Albany Wind Farm** to be located on Makhanda's doorstep.

This document is your rallying cry, your guide to safeguarding Makhanda's and the Eastern Cape's legacy, its biodiversity, economy, and future. The time to act is now; our region's unique heritage depends on your swift and resolute response.

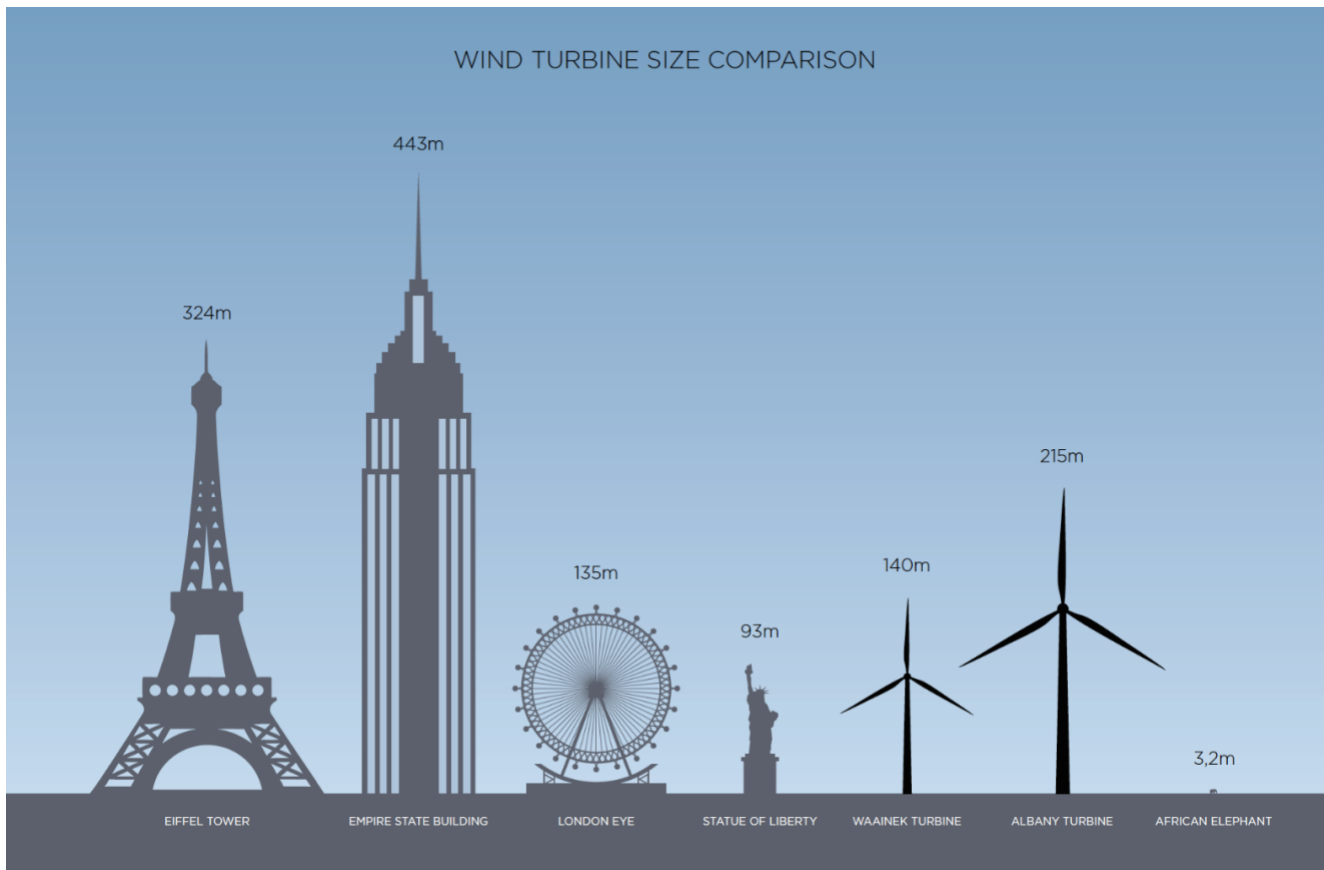
### As concerned citizens we ask that you please support us by urgently:

- **Objecting** to the **Albany Wind Farm** by emailing Caroline Evans at:
- [c.evans@cesnet.co.za](mailto:c.evans@cesnet.co.za) (detailed information below).
- Include your demand for a **full, adequate and fair Public Participation Process**, including a **public meeting** to be held by the Developer.
- **Spread the Word** as best you can - far and wide.
- **Sign our petition:** <https://dearsouthafrica.co.za/albany-wind-farm/>
- **Engage Your Public Representatives – by emailing:** [Appeals@dffe.gov.za](mailto:Appeals@dffe.gov.za) urging a reconsideration of wind turbines in ecologically sensitive areas and surrounding Makhanda.

## VISUAL IMPACTS

In the serene landscapes of Makhanda lies a hidden threat—ill-placed wind farms, including the disastrous proposed **Albany Wind Farm**. The colossal turbines, standing nearly 220 meters tall and 170 meters wide on the highest hills, threaten the scenic views and biodiversity of iconic locations, including Makhanda and the Albany landscape. The cumulative impact of these and other ill-placed wind farms, including many adjacent to Addo Elephant National Park, will destroy the character and the future of the Eastern Cape.

In comparison, the existing Waainek turbines are 140 meters tall.



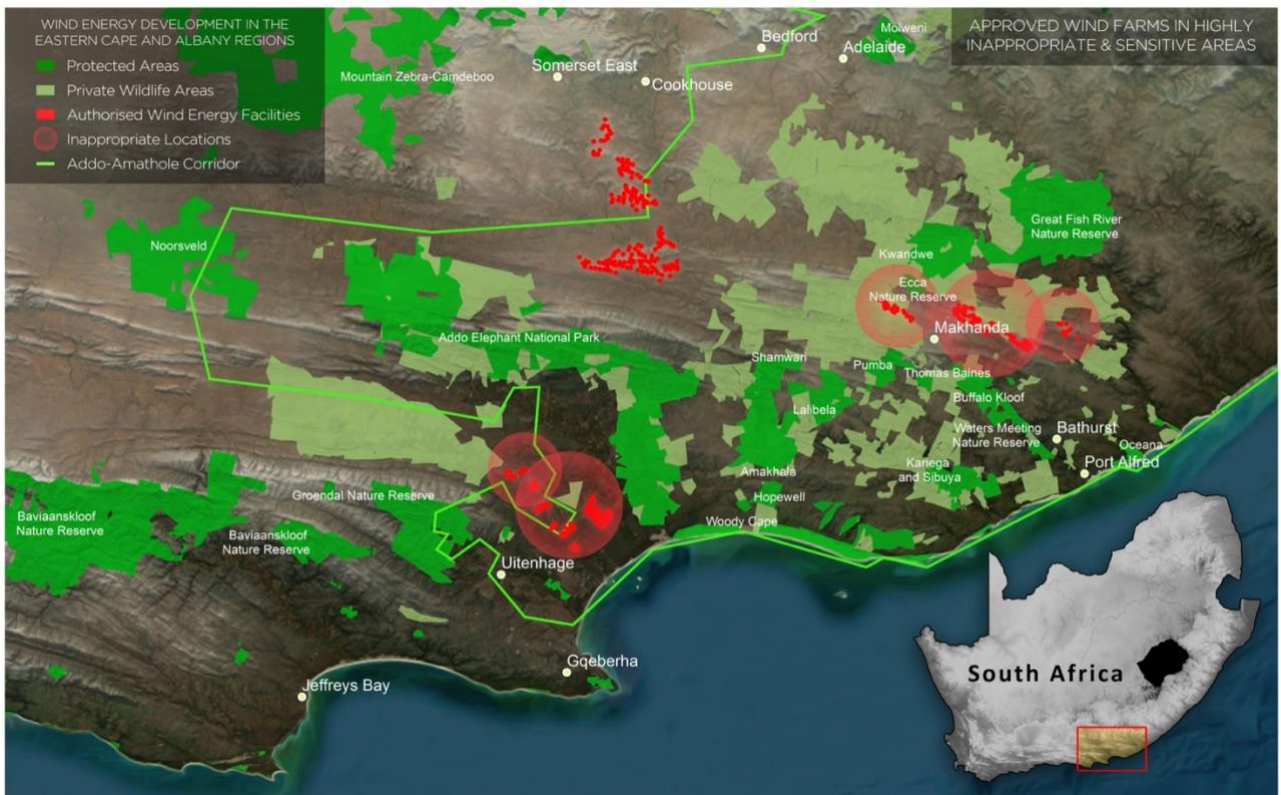
## BACKGROUND

### CURRENT WIND ENERGY LANDSCAPE IN THE EASTERN CAPE

- In the Eastern Cape, the landscape is already dotted with approximately 600 wind turbines constructed or under construction generating nearly 1500MW of wind energy.
- Initial wind farm developments were mostly located to avoid highly sensitive areas, minimising environmental impacts on the region as best as possible.



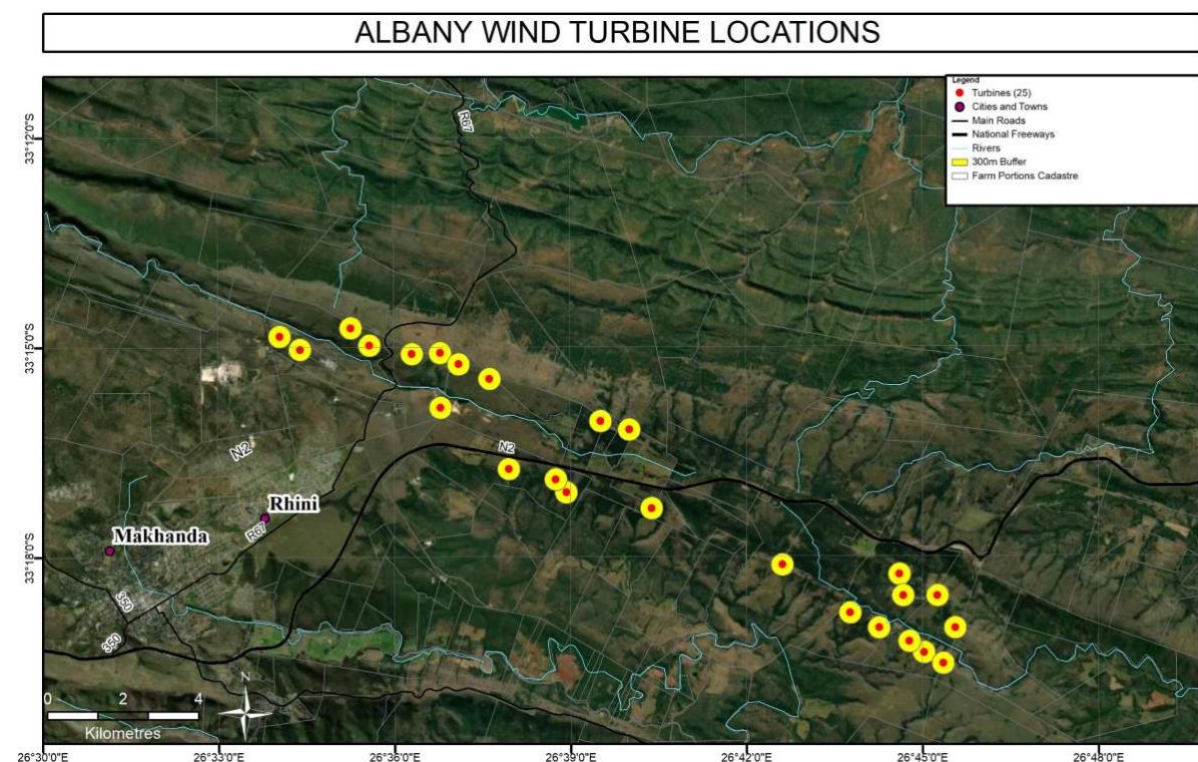
- However, recent approvals have increasingly greenlit wind farms in highly sensitive areas, posing threats to tourism, employment, and biodiversity.



- Large areas of the Eastern Cape have been converted to formal protected areas and game reserves which provide thousands of jobs through nature and wildlife tourism.

## SPECIFIC THREATS TO OUR HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

- Recently approved wind farms, including Dassiesridge and Bayview (all near Addo) and Windgarden, Fronteer, and the most contentious **Albany wind farm** (immediately adjacent to Makhanda), will stand as enormous unnatural structures immediately to the north and east of Makhanda (Albany wind farm) and along the western border of the Addo Elephant National Park (various other wind farms including Bayview and Dassiesridge), irreversibly changing the landscape and landscape experience forever.
- The Albany wind farm, currently under appeal to the Minister and featuring 25 colossal turbines nearly 220 meters in height, not only poses a direct threat to Makhanda's scenic beauty and sense of place, but the Albany wind farm will fall directly in the middle of some of the world's most important and scenic biodiversity areas and the most successful black rhino breeding and re-location programme in the world, all relying on tourism for their sustainability.



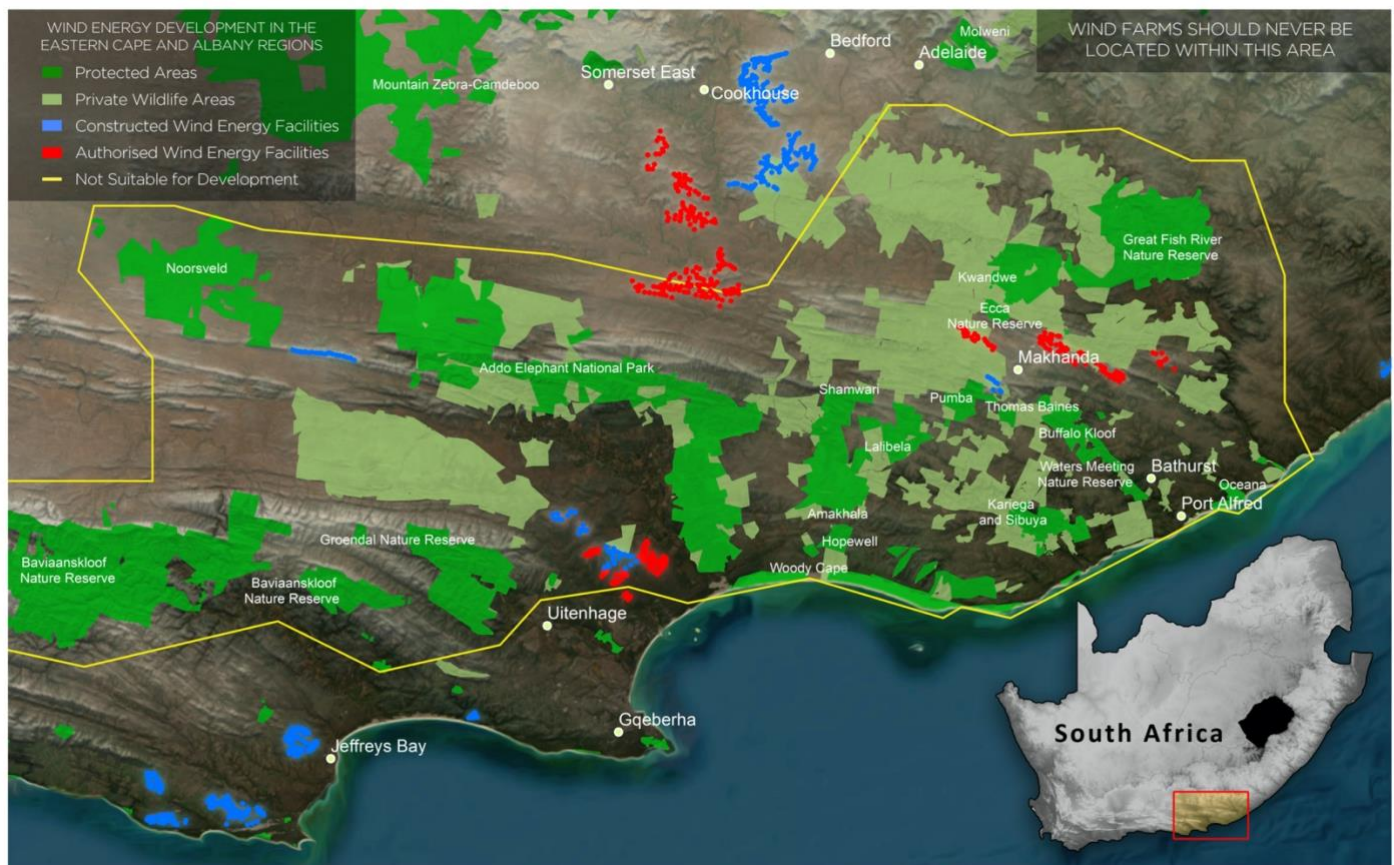
- The Developer published information that the Albany wind farm will be “*approximately seven kilometres (7 km) east of Makhanda/Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape Province*” could be construed as misleading in that some of the turbines will be located less than 3 kilometres (3 km) from the eastern edge of the town.
- The wind farms will also have a devastating impact on the efforts to secure the future of the wild Cape Vulture populations in the Eastern Cape, where 160 Cape and African White-backed breeding vultures have now been introduced at Shamwari to allow the regular release of bred Cape Vulture’s to be released.
- South Africa’s urgent need for new power generation is acknowledged and supported, but this reckless expansion of wind farms into inappropriate locations jeopardises the essence and future potential of the Eastern Cape, demanding urgent unity against this onslaught.

## IMPACT ON THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND TOURISM

- The proliferation of wind farms poses a dire threat to the Eastern Cape's biodiversity, natural landscape, wilderness areas and scenic resources, all vital for nature and wildlife tourism.
- While supportive of renewable energy, meticulous planning for the anticipated additional 4000MW wind energy development (comprising up to 1000 turbines) targeted to be developed in the region, and the potential for use of solar PV as an alternative with lower tourism and regional impact, is crucial to avoid irreversible detrimental impacts.

## CALL FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNMENT ACTION

- Government and developers must adopt a more thoughtful approach to wind farm locations to avoid destructive consequences.
- The stance is not against wind energy but advocates for their placement in areas ensuring long-term benefits for all South Africans, encompassing biodiversity, nature, wildlife, tourism, jobs, and further sustainable development of the Eastern Cape biodiversity economy.



- The recent government-approved wind farms, especially near Makhanda and Addo Elephant National Park and within the Addo to Amathole biodiversity corridor, amount to ecological destruction and ecocide.

## IMBALANCE AND CONFLICT WITH KEY PROGRAMS

- The cumulative impact of poorly located wind farms undermines the Eastern Cape's status as a tourism destination, emphasising the imbalance in sacrifices made.
- Poorly placed wind farms conflict with key government programs and objectives, including biodiversity and socio-economic priorities and international sustainable development goals.

## CONCERNS REGARDING DFFE'S STANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY

- The conflicting stance of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) and its Minister on tourism and environmental protection raises serious concerns.
- This conflict threatens the delicate balance between environmental conservation and wind farm development, demanding urgent attention and corrective action to safeguard the Eastern Cape's natural treasures and socio-economic well-being.
- The Minister has stated and emphasised the following in relation to biodiversity and tourism (including in her keynote address at a SANParks Tourism Investment Summit). The decisions being made to locate wind farms in critically sensitive environments and major tourism areas is irreconcilable with these statements and principles:

*“The contribution of tourism as a catalyst for the growth of the South African economy cannot be downplayed. The tourism industry is not only labour intensive and therefore a major job creator when it thrives, it is also an industry that has one of the highest multiplier effects, contributing both directly and indirectly to several other primary and secondary sectors in its value chain.*”

*Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are some of tourism’s greatest assets, its natural capital, and fundamental to its long-term growth; after all, leisure travel is primarily motivated by the opportunity to engage with nature and culture.*

*Conservation and tourism are therefore interdependent in many respects, when developed and managed in a sustainable and responsible way, tourism can be instrumental in safeguarding biodiversity and globally tourism revenue is indispensable to the funding of the protection of biodiversity.”*



## **CALLS TO ACTION: YOUR ROLE IN PROTECTING MAKHANDA & THE EASTERN CAPE**

### **1. OBJECT URGENTLY:**

- Object to the **Albany Wind Farm** by emailing Caroline Evans at [c.evans@cesnet.co.za](mailto:c.evans@cesnet.co.za)
- All information and details on the Albany Wind Farm can be found at: <https://www.cesnet.co.za/public-documents> with information on the current process underway at: <https://www.cesnet.co.za/albany-wind-energy-facility-empr>
- The current deadline is **February 29, 2024**.
- Use the subject title "Albany WEF Layout and EMPr".
- You can state your own reasons for objecting but we have included possible reasons herein.
- **NB:** Your objection should include a demand for a full, adequate and fair Public Participation Process, including a public meeting to be held by the Developer and full community and regional advertising of the process.

### **2. SPREAD THE WORD:**

- Share this document and information urgently with your network and voice your concerns on social media (urgently).
- Use our campaign hashtags to amplify the message and raise awareness: 🗣️  
#ProtectMakhanda #SaveEasternCape #ObjectNow

### **3. ENGAGE YOUR REPRESENTATIVES:**

- **Engage Your Public Representatives – by emailing:** [Appeals@dffe.gov.za](mailto:Appeals@dffe.gov.za) , urging a reconsideration of wind turbines in ecologically sensitive areas and surrounding Makhanda.
- Engage any local, provincial and national representatives you are able to contact.

- 4. **SIGN OUR PETITION:** <https://dearsouthafrica.co.za/albany-wind-farm/>

## TEMPLATE FOR CONCERNS AND GROUNDS OF OBJECTION:

Your objections should resonate with the threats posed and below is a template we have provided as a guide to your objection and possible objection grounds:

### HEADING: Objection to the Albany Wind Energy Facility (WEF)

I, [Your Full Name], residing at [Your Address], hereby express my strong objection to the proposed Albany Wind Energy Facility (WEF) based on the following grounds:

1. **Visual Impacts:** The visual impacts of the proposed Albany WEF (and the cumulative effects of wind farms in the region, including the proposed Albany WEF) have not been adequately considered, demonstrated, visualised and communicated by the developer(s) and have not been considered correctly or adequately by the approving authorities.

The reduction by the Developer of the number of turbines to 25 in no way reduces or changes the overall devastating visual impact of the proposed Albany WEF. In fact, it makes the visual impact significantly worse in that some turbines have now been re-located specifically on the very tops of hills and mountains, which are the highest points in the Makhanda and Albany areas.

2. **Social and Economic Impacts:** Failure to adequately consider the broader social and economic impacts of the project, raising concerns about potential adverse effects on the local community and the Eastern Cape region.
3. **Biodiversity and Noise-Related Impacts:** Concerns regarding the potential biodiversity and noise-related impacts of the proposed Albany WEF, which require comprehensive evaluation and proper consideration.

The proposed Albany WEF is situated in the middle of one of the world's most biodiverse regions and the most successful black rhino breeding programme in the world, operated and supported by National and Provincial Parks in the region, ECPTA, WWF, private land owners and many others. It is critical for the region and the planet that this biodiversity is protected at all costs.

**Animal and Bird Impacts:** Concerns regarding the impacts of the proposed Albany WEF on animals (specifically elephants) and birds generally, which require comprehensive and adequate evaluation and consideration, including noise impact to animals and animal communication. As examples:

The Developer and the Avifaunal specialist and Avifaunal Ground Truthing Reports make no mention of and include no consideration of the impact on highly endangered Vultures (including Cape Vultures), including the cumulative effect of wind farms in the region. These turbines will have a devastating collision impact and other impacts on vultures (and many other birds) and the very serious efforts to prevent their extinction in the Eastern Cape and Southern Africa.

Insufficient studies have been done on the effect and impact of wind turbines (both movement and noise) on various animal species, including elephants. We know that they impact these animals and until this is quantified and assessed with scientific certainty, the precautionary principle of not locating wind farms in these areas should be applied and followed.

4. **Heritage and Cultural Landscape:** Apprehensions about the project's impact on heritage and cultural landscapes, raising questions about preservation efforts and the region's future.



5. **Need Desirability:** Lack of need desirability, asserting that a wind farm is not needed in this area when more suitable locations are available.
- As an example, the very poorly located proposed Inyanda -Roodeplaas wind farm was rejected on appeal as it was found that there were numerous other proposed and approved wind energy projects with substantially less environmental impacts. This applies exactly also in the case of the Albany and Addo wind farms – there are numerous possible better locations to generate the power that will be generated by the proposed Albany WEF.

6. **Community Consultation:** Lack of adequate community consultation and inadequate public participation, including the absence of public meetings to sufficiently explain the wind farm and its potential impacts (and the impacts of cumulative wind farms).

Limiting the current public participation to existing registered I&AP's is inadequate and the full public should be included (with full public advertising, etc). Advertisements calling for the public to register as I&AP's were many years ago (one newspaper advert in the Grocott's Mail in 2018 and one advert in the Herald newspaper in July 2021).

There have been no further efforts of effective communication such as local newspaper and publication adverts, advising local and severely affected communities on the ground (as they will not see an obscure newspaper advert) and most importantly, there has never been a public meeting to properly explain the proposed Albany WEF and it's impacts to the public.

The process has been inadequate and unreasonable (especially that no public meeting has ever been held).

This application process has been ongoing for nearly 6 years now and there are many new people and changes in the area and the region since 2018. In addition, the developer has drastically changed the scope of the development between 2018 and now. The latest Final Environmental Management Programme and final turbine layout amount to major changes with significant new information and the general public and all possible I&AP's are entitled to be fully informed and given an opportunity to comment.

The final EMP and Specialist Reports now include the grid infrastructure for the first time? This was previously part of its own EIA process and is the subject of different appeals. The public and potential I&AP's has never been afforded the opportunity to consider this combined information.

The proposed Albany WEF (both itself and cumulatively with other proposed and approved wind farms) will have a devastating impact on Makhanda and the Eastern Cape and the public is entitled to know and be fully informed.

7. **Nature and Wildlife Tourism Impact:** Insufficient consideration of the nature and wildlife tourism impact of the Albany WEF (and the cumulative impact of wind farms in the region), a critical aspect for the region's ecological balance and tourism potential. This has not been adequately considered or addressed by the developer and the authorities.

The Minister has made the following statements and emphasised the following in relation to biodiversity and tourism (including in her keynote address at a SANParks Tourism Investment Summit). The decisions being made to locate wind farms in critically sensitive environments and major tourism areas, including the Albany wind farm, is irreconcilable with these statements and principles:

*“The contribution of tourism as a catalyst for the growth of the South African economy cannot be downplayed. The tourism industry is not only labour intensive and therefore a major job creator when it thrives, it is also an industry that has one of the highest multiplier effects, contributing both directly and indirectly to several other primary and secondary sectors in its value chain.*”

*Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are some of tourism's greatest assets, its natural capital, and fundamental to its long-term growth; after all, leisure travel is primarily motivated by the opportunity to engage with nature and culture.*

*Conservation and tourism are therefore interdependent in many respects, when developed and managed in a sustainable and responsible way, tourism can be instrumental in safeguarding biodiversity and globally tourism revenue is indispensable to the funding of the protection of biodiversity."*

The relevant biodiverse and sensitive wildlife areas in the Eastern Cape are largely difficult commercial farming areas which is why nature and wildlife tourism and other wildlife related commercial activities have been the largest growing economic activity in the Eastern Cape. Tourism and these related businesses create sustainable jobs and will create many more jobs in the future. They also directly and indirectly support many related businesses and it is not an exaggeration to state that tourism is saving this area of the Eastern Cape.

If wind farm developers and the government do not take a more discerning and informed approach to the positioning of wind farms in the Eastern Cape (including not allowing the Albany WEF in any form), the cumulative effect of indiscriminate carpet bombing of wind farms in the Eastern Cape and its sensitive and tourism and wildlife areas will destroy tourism and the potential of the province.

- 8. Protected Area Expansion Impact:** Apprehensions regarding the impact of the Albany WEF on the growth of Protected Areas and development of the of the Albany Biodiversity Corridor and the Addo-Amathole Biodiversity Economic Node, raising concerns about long-term environmental consequences. In essence, the construction of the proposed Albany wind farm (both itself and cumulatively with other proposed wind farms in sensitive areas), will prevent already planned and already being implemented protected area expansion in the region, in addition to destroying the sustainability of existing protected areas).

I kindly request that these concerns be thoroughly addressed in the ongoing Public Participation Process, and I anticipate that my objections will be duly considered in the decision-making process.

Sincerely,  
[Your Full Name]

[Your Signature]

[Date]

## FULL DETAILS OF CURRENT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

For detailed information and to submit objections, visit <https://www.cesnet.co.za/albany-wind-energy-facility-empr>.

### **CONCLUSION: UNITE FOR MAKHANDA & THE EASTERN CAPE**

As we stand at this crossroads, your voice matters. Join us in this urgent campaign to protect Makhanda's legacy and the Eastern Cape's future. The choice between badly planned progress and preservation is ours to make.

### **ACT NOW TO PROTECT MAKHANDA & THE EASTERN CAPES LEGACY!**

**PUBLISHED BY:** The Indalo Association, Kwandwe Private Game Reserve, Buffalo Kloof Conservancy and Wilderness Foundation Africa

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