

Coppabella Wind Farm Community Consultation Committee
Meeting No 1 held at Cafe on Queen, 15 Queen Street, Binalong
Thursday 5 October 2017 – 5.00pm

Present

CCC Members: Nic Carmody (Chair), Cr Geoff Frost, Libby Elliott, Doug Painting, Paul Regan, John McGrath, Noeleen Hazell, Peter Holding, Brenden McKay.

Proponent: Sunny Rutherford, Tom Nielsen (Goldwind Australia)

Observers: Barbara Folkard (Alternate Committee Member), Bruce Hazell, David Hazell, Charlie Prell, Richard Hyles, Diana Mitchell (Department Planning & Environment), Anthony Ko (Department Planning & Environment) and Shirree Garland (Minutes)

The meeting opened at 5.07 pm

1. Welcome/Apologies

Nic Carmody, Chair, opened the meeting and thanked everyone for volunteering to be part of the Committee and supporting their local community.

Nic advised that Hilltops would elect a representative to the Committee at their November Council meeting.

Apologies were received from Mark Fleming (OEH)

2. Declaration of Pecuniary or other interests

The Chair provided an overview of declaration of pecuniary or other interests. The following declarations were made:

Chair: declared a pecuniary interest as he is paid Chair fees by the proponent, as per CCC Guidelines. Also, a non-pecuniary interest as his son was employed for a brief time by a contractor for the proponent.

Noeleen Hazell declared a significant pecuniary interest as being a current land owner and the potential de-valuing of land value.

John McGrath declared a significant pecuniary interest being a land owner, representing family, and the potential de-valuing of land value.

Peter Holding declared a non pecuniary interest as being a member of local Landcare Groups.

Brendan McKay declared a non pecuniary interest as he may be a potential supplier of equipment.

Doug Painting declared a pecuniary interest as he has a neighbour agreement and a non pecuniary interest as he is also President of the Bookham Hall Committee.

3. Introduction DP&E Staff / Application Amendment

Diana Mitchell introduced herself and Anthony Ko from the Department of Planning and Environment. Diana advised that a major modification application from Goldwind Australia had been received and was currently on public exhibition until 23 October 2017.

Diana advised that if anyone wanted to meet independently with the Department to contact her to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Concerns were raised in regards to native vegetation. Diana advised that the Conditions of Consent have a vegetation clearance limit.

4. Project Update – Tom Nielsen

Tom Nielsen, Goldwind Australia, provided a presentation to the Committee, providing an overview of the project since Goldwind's purchase in 2017. He advised that community engagement was well underway with construction due to commence in approximately mid 2018. A copy of the presentation will be provided to Committee members.

He advised that there was currently approval for 79 turbines within the envelope. The modification application is to increase the height of the current turbines to 171 metres high, and an increase in blade size. If the modification is approved it is likely that the number of turbines will be reduced (from 79 to 45), this is dependent on a number of variables including current discussions with Transgrid to increase the current connection agreement.

Tom confirmed that there was a current agreement with Transgrid is for 150 megawatts.

Only one neighbour agreement would require an additional clause added to account for the additional noise of the increased turbine height.

John McGrath asked Diana Mitchell (DP&E) why it had taken so long to establish the Community Consultation Committee. Diana advised that the time delay had been due to the creation of the new Community Consultation Committee Guidelines late last year, Goldwind's purchase of the project and the process of forming the Committee (receiving nominations and selecting members).

Paul Regan asked how many agreements there were for the current project. Tom advised that approximately 40 residents had received neighbour agreements with approximately 19 agreements signed. He stated that the agreements were primarily a community engagement tool, there was no time limit on signing, residents were being left to make up their own mind and that the company was being open and honest. The closer residents are to turbines the more they would be offered, the agreements with individual residents are confidential.

Sunny Rutherford, Community Engagement Manager advised that Goldwind were looking to be a long-term member and contributor to the local communities, and that they have a strong focus on community engagement. She advised that a Communications Centre will be opened in Binalong and that they were currently looking at recruiting appropriate staff. Sunny advised that the Goldwind Project had a strong focus on benefit sharing and providing sponsorships to local community groups.

The current Development Consent has approvals for 13 turbines in Yass Valley Local Government Area (LGA) with the remaining 66 turbines in Hilltops LGA.

Discussion was held in relation to the community enhancement fund, \$2,500 per turbine per LGA, noting that it was hoped that these monies could be spent in the areas that are affected most (within a 10-15km radius). Diana advised that as part of the conditions of consent the funding was left with the Councils, but they were

encouraged to use funds within a 20km radius of the community concerned. It was however left to the voluntary planning terms of each council. Councils are required to form a committee, which will include representatives from the community. This committee then decides where Community Enhancement funding should be provided.

Noeleen Hazell stated that money being provided to community organisations could provide a division within the community.

Charlie Prell advised that Yass Valley Council's Community Enhancement fund was based on per turbine.

Paul Regan asked that if there were less turbines installed would this then mean less money would be paid to the Community Enhancement Fund? This was confirmed.

Paul Regan asked whether the next brochure could be more specific to the community, specifically advising where funding would be provided etc. Sunny advised that this would be taken on board.

Peter Holding stated that he believed it was critical that it be reported who receives money and the amount received thus ensuring that everyone in the community was informed and division within the community was lessened.

Peter Holding asked whether it would be possible for the Committee to vary the amount of money awarded per turbine? Nic advised that the amounts had already been set through agreement with councils. Diana advised that there was currently a white paper in relation to the legislative framework on exhibition and encouraged submissions to be made during this period.

Sunny advised that Goldwind will make a \$250-\$300 million investment with an estimate of 10% going into the area. Ongoing maintenance work would involve a team of 10-15 members in operational crews.

Peter Holding asked about the servicing capability study and when it would be undertaken. Sunny advised that work opportunities would be listed through an industry capability network. Tenders for the main contractor would be awarded and then tenders for sub-contractors would be called for.

5. Community Feedback

Nil

6. General Business – Without Notice

Noeleen Hazell advised that she had volunteered to part of the Committee to represent her family and their properties and as the Vice Chair of Yass Landscape Guardians. Noeleen advised that most of her issues were with the Department – the lack of communication and consultation, dishonesty in relation to information provided, impact on the environment, devaluing of land. Diana advised that the Department had received correspondence from Noeleen and advised that they would arrange a time to meet with the Hazell's to discuss all the issues raised.

Diana also advised that individuals were encouraged to lodge a submission to the modification during the exhibition period. She confirmed that all submissions are taken seriously.

John McGrath asked the following:

- Whether the modification will be referred to Planning Approval Commission (PAC) due to the 14% increase in tower size, increase of 36% in blade size and an increase of 169% in the clearing area. Diana advised that the modification would be referred to the Planning Assessment Commission if more than 25 submissions

were received by way of objection, the local council objects to the project or the proponent has made political donations. If referred to PAC a public meeting will be arranged.

- Who is the proponent? Coppabella Windfarm Pty Ltd on behalf of Goldwind Australia.
- What measures would be taken to ensure minimal destruction to wildlife. Tom advised that there had been 2 years of surveys undertaken in relation to the Superb Parrot with a third round to be undertaken. There is an obligation to ensure areas are affected as minimally as possible.
- What distance are the towers going to stand back from hollow bearing trees? Tom took question on notice and will report back to the Committee.
- How is Goldwind going to negotiate Whitefields Lane from the Highway? Tom advised that this did not form part of the development footprint for the project, but that they have been working hard with RMS to get an approved design from the highway to the site. Ecologist construction and road designers have identified trees that may need to be removed, may be looking at 10-20 trees, along 1300 metres, these numbers are to be confirmed. Diana advised that the Consent does take into account the removal of vegetation.
- In relation to the proposed batching plant on site and the fact that it is very steep country, will safety rails be constructed on these trials? Tom advised that safety is a huge priority for the company and the design of roads is still to be discussed.
- Where will water for the batching plant be sourced from? Tom advised that this would be decided at the construction plan stage.
- How will fires be contained within the plant, and who will be responsible? Tom advised that the turbines to be used do not use gear box oil so the fire risk is considerably reduced. In relation to who would be liable if a fire started within the footprint of the windfarm, Tom advised that this would depend on the specific situation but he would look into and advise.
- What safety issues on access roads would be implemented to ensure safety? Tom advised that this would be addressed in the development of the Construction Management Plan.
- What will the Department do to specifically address micro-siting in the Consent? Diana advised that there was a 100 metre restriction for micro-siting.

Paul Regan asked the following:

- With the increase of turbine and blade size will the hard stand area of the turbines be increased from that currently approved? Tom advised that it would be increased and he will confirm the hard stand and depth sizes.
- How will the increase in turbine size affect buffer zones in relation to bushfires? Tom advised that there would be no exclusion zone for bushfires. An aircraft study has been undertaken, height level has to be approved by CASA, approximately 100 feet, to be confirmed. Use of fire fighting aircraft around wind turbines will need to be confirmed with the Rural Fire Service.
- Will there be a substation in the middle of the project? Tom advised that there would be 2 switch out options.

Doug Painting asked how quickly can the turbines be turned off in fire/emergency situations? Tom advised that they could be turned off immediately by an operator, either on-site or remotely.

Brenden McKay asked about the timeframes in relation to the review of the modification following the exhibition period. Diana advised that once the exhibition period closes it would take approximately a week to collate submissions, the proponent then prepares a response to submissions. Following receipt of response a detailed assessment of the modification will be undertaken, including consultation with local agencies – approximately a timeframe of 45 days. If the modification is referred to the PAC, it would probably take a

further 6 weeks for a recommendation to be made. Realistic timeframe for consideration and recommendation is early 2018.

Diana advised that there would be a number of post approval documents and management plans that would also require approval.

Doug Painting stated that it was a positive thing that Goldwind were talking to the community.

Cr Geoff Frost asked if the number of turbines was reduced to 45 turbines would the footprint be changed and would there be any capacity to move away from close neighbours? Tom advised that this would be taken into consideration. This would be delayed until the size of connection is finalised. Diana advised that the modification would be assessed with the 79 turbines.

Peter Holding asked if Goldwind go with the larger turbines and Transgrid increase their capacity can additional turbines be erected in the future? Diana advised that if the modification is approved, the consent would specify the maximum number of turbines that could be constructed. Tom advised that to erect further turbines in the future would be financially prohibitive to construct on a new line. An answer from Transgrid in relation to the possibility of construction of additional lines is expected by the end of the year.

Tom advised that in relation to the decommissioning of turbines that a clause had been put in the modification application to ensure that this would be the responsibility of Goldwind Australia. This clause will be updated every five years.

7. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held in December 2017, following receipt by the department of the responses to submissions, date and time to be confirmed.

Meeting closed at 7.45 pm

No	Action	Meeting	Owner	Deadline	Comment
1.	Provide a copy of overview presentation to committee members	5/10/2017	Goldwind Australia	30/10/2017	
2.	Include specific community sponsorships in next brochure	5/10/2017	Goldwind Australia	31/11/2017	
3.	Advise distance that towers will stand back from hollow bearing trees	5/10/2017	Goldwind Australia	Next meeting	

DRAFT

COMPLETED ACTION

DRAFT