

## Coppabella Wind Farm Community Consultation Committee

### Meeting No 2 – Café on Queen, 15 Queen Street, Binalong

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – 5.00pm-7.00pm

#### Present:

**CCC Members:** Nic Carmody (Independent Chair), Cr Geoff Frost (YVC), Cr Rita O'Connor (Hilltops), Libby Elliot, Doug Painting, Paul Regan, John McGrath, Noeleen Hazell, Brenden McKay

**Proponent:** Sunny Rutherford, Tom Nielsen, John Campbell and Alison Deale

**Observers:** Bruce Hazell, David Hazell, Annie Jacobs, David Winterflood and Shirree Garland (minutes)

The Meeting opened at 5.11 pm

#### **1. Welcome/Apologies**

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Apologies were received from Peter Holding, Alan Cole and Barbara Folkard.

#### **2. Declaration of pecuniary or other interests**

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Nil

#### **3. Confirmation of minutes or previous Minutes**

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The minutes of Meeting No 1 held on 5 October 2017 were confirmed, with the following amendment:

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

#### **4. Project Update – Tom Nielsen**

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Tom Nielsen, Development Manager for Goldwind Australia, provided a project update briefing to the Committee, which will be made available on the website.

It was noted that the Information Centre would be open next week.

Tom acknowledged that there had recently been a flyer distributed throughout the community. He advised the Committee that the flyer contained some mis-information. The correct information was provided in the presentation.

In response to submissions received there has been an additional amount of \$100,000 per year (CPI adjusted) committed to be donated to the local area. The funding will be separate and additional to the Community Enhancement Fund and will become operational when the project is operational. The framework for this fund is currently in the preliminary planning stages.

Project construction is due to commence in late 2018 with a 22-month construction phase planned.

Road widths will be 5 ½ metres, wider in some places (around corners). Roads will be fully surveyed from one point to the other, drainage will be included to ensure the flow of water is not changed.

Air Services Australia have advised that they are happy with the project.

Councillor Frost asked what the total number of trees to be removed on Whitefields Road. Tom advised that there would be around 20-30, with only 4 hollow bearing trees removed.

#### Modification Application

Goldwind has provided an initial response to submissions. Additional information has been requested from the Department. Following receipt of this information the Department will continue assessment and then refer the application to the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC).

104 submissions were received.

The response to submissions is available through the Department of Planning, Major Projects Register. Printed copies will be available in the Information Centre.

Will Goldwind be considering solar? Tom advised that Goldwind is focusing on pre-construction planning for the wind farm. Councillor O'Connor asked whether it was mandatory to have on site storage. Tom advised currently there is no legislative requirement for storage. Tom noted that requirements may change in accordance with the National Electricity Guarantee – draft design currently on exhibition.

**Action: Provide information to Committee on the National Electricity Guarantee.**

Paul Regan asked what the specifications were for the new turbines? Web link to be provided. Essentially the turbines are the same but with a smaller blade, the footprint will be slightly reduced.

**Action: Provide web link to information on specifications for new turbines.**

#### **Questions to update**

In relation to the additional \$100,000 being offered Councillor Frost thought that it seemed odd to have 3 sets of money being administered in 3 different ways. Sunny advised that additional money would allow some flexibility as to where it is distributed, but they were still in the very preliminary stages as to how the funding will work.

Councillor O'Connor asked whether the access roads would need to be asphalt? John Campbell advised that they would be gravel roads, which will be built for a 25-year lifespan.

#### Access Roads/Hollow Bearing Trees

John Campbell advised that an Ecologist and himself had walked the entire length of proposed access roads a number of times. John advised in relation to the hollow bearing trees and parrots, that the girth of every tree along the road has been measured to ensure/confirm whether root systems may be impacted by the road works.

The maximum gradient of access roads would be up to 20 degrees. Tom to review what the original gradient was and provide details to members. Paul Regan stated that there would be more likelihood of run-off erosion with a higher gradient of roads. John advised that full sediment and drainage plans would be developed and that they will try to take the most direct route that the gradient will allow.

**Action: Tom to provide original gradient of road to Committee members.**

Hardstand options are still being optimised but may be up to 35 metres across and 65 long with a 20-metre diameter foundation, total flat area of up to 85 x 55 metres (but will be refined down during detailed design to ensure as small an impact as possible).

Paul Regan asked whether any blasting would need to be undertaken? John advised that at this stage the road will be ripped with no blasting expected to be required.

Councillor Frost asked whether the water pipeline from Yass to Binalong would be used to supply water? Tom advised that there will not be a great deal of treated water used, with the untreated water being mainly used for dust suppression and road building. All concrete will use treated water. Where the potable water is sourced from will be the decision of the concrete supplier engaged. Concrete will need to be done in a continuous pour, with concrete on site and also a backup. Treated water can be used as long as it meets specifications for the concrete. Yass Valley and Hilltops Councils have both confirmed that they have water available, there are also some dams on site. Goldwind are currently applying for a Water Access Licence for the area and also investigating bores. It has been noted that there were concerns about using Jugiong creek, these concerns have been noted and the use of Jugiong Creek will be avoiding as much as possible.

Peter Regan advised that he had not been able to identify the location of the batch plant. Location was identified on the map, Sunny to also arrange for a copy of the map to be sent to Committee members.

**Action: Sunny to provide a copy of map to Committee members.**

Councillor O'Connor asked whether there would be any interference to mobile network services by the wind turbines? Tom advised that there would not be any interference, if however, there is then the developer will be liable. Goldwind is currently engaging with Telstra regarding potential opportunities to improve the Telstra Network coverage in the area.

Councillor O'Connor left the meeting at 6.38pm to attend another meeting, Chair Nic Carmody thanked her for attending and representing Hilltops Council.

John McGrath asked whether potable water was to be used for concrete? John advised that 'potable' was just a terminology used and was suitable for use but has to be chemically treated to comply with the concrete.

Paul Regan asked whether Telstra would be using infrastructure on the hill? John Campbell advised that this has occurred in the past at other Goldwind Australia project sites.

Paul asked whether the generator would stay on site? John advised that it would be removed once power was connected to the grid.

Tom advised that one or two permanent meteorological masts will be located on-site to monitor the wind resource. These will be installed during the construction period.

John McGrath asked what type of generator would be used and what would happen when there was a total fire ban? John Campbell advised that it would be a diesel generator and would be set up in such a way that it would be safe.

John McGrath asked now that Goldwind have gone from a 3.4 turbine to a 4.2 turbine, do these turbines have a gearbox? Tom advised that there was no gearbox and talked through the diagram

Paul Regan asked in high wind speeds what stops the blade speed from increasing? Tom advised that control comes from the blade pitching in and out "feathering", when on down days they may pinwheel around.

## **5. Community Feedback**

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Alison Deale, Community Relations Officer to provide update at future meetings.

Councillor Frost asked whether they had any idea of when the approval would come through the PAC. Advised that a response was expected from the Department hopefully by the end of April. Application will then be forwarded to the PAC who will make a recommendation. Sunny to send link to Members to the PAC website. The PAC normally provide 2 weeks' notice prior to the meetings, normally held within the region. Paul Regan advised that it was now a requirement to record PAC meetings. Nic suggested that members keep an eye on the media for the scheduled meeting.

**Action: Sunny to provide Committee members with a link to the PAC website.**

Noeleen Hazell asked whether there would be an opportunity to meet with the Planning Department staff at the PAC meeting. Nic advised that a staff member may be appointed to the Panel, they may attend but are not required to. Nic advised that it is inappropriate for the Department to attend a CCC meeting during the assessment period. If you've made a submission you are able to register to speak and address the Panel.

John McGrath noted that he was pleased that both the Department of Planning and Goldwind actually now know what the Transgrid line is now called.

## **6. General Business – without notice**

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John McGrath's asked the following questions:

- 1. Page 9 2.2 Coppabella Wind Farm Paragraph 2 Contractor will build the substation. Who is that contractor?**

Covered in Goldwind presentation.

- 2. Page 11 2.6.1 Project indicative layout-substation layout indicating that Transgrid does not have an indication of how to build a 33KV to 132KV substation, with inclusion of all components including control room and safety clearance.**

Substation is in approved area. Looking at using the same model as White Rock Wind Farm. Transgrid will build the substation and switch yard. In response to submissions Transgrid have advised the design at this early stage, will indicatively be 72 m x 115 m. Transgrid have advised this may however change.

- 3. Page 9, Paragraph 7 Community Engagement?**

**Page 40 – "To have a culture of openness, inclusiveness, responsiveness and accountability"**

**At what stage were Goldwind going to inform the public/neighbours about the widths of the proposed access tracks.**

Community Consultation Committee is a forum for the public, members can bring and take issues back to the community. Regular face to face meetings are held with host families and neighbours within 5 kms. There are no requirements from the Department as to communicating with neighbours. The key communication in 2018 will be the Information Centre, due to open next week. The Centre will be located in Binalong providing information and also providing the opportunity to discuss issues in person. Maps will also be available for viewing. Sunny invited members to provide advice on how Goldwind could continue to improve on their efforts in community engagement for the project.

**Action: Committee Members to advise Sunny of any suggestions to improve engagement with the community.**

**4. Page 9, Paragraph 5**

**Several submissions raised concerns about Goldwind's involvement and perception as a large foreign cooperation unconcerned with the interests of the local community. Goldwind (Australia) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Xinjiang Goldwind Science and Technology etc**

**Who owns Goldwind Australia?**

Company headquarters is in Beijing, with an arm of the company in Australia (Goldwind Australia) with approximately 150 employees.

**5. Page 10, 2.5 Background to CWF Modification Application process (second dot point)**

**Meetings between DPE and CWF on 3 occasions,**

Tom noted two of the early meetings were held prior to the project being renamed Coppabella Wind Farm. Therefore, this should be referred to as meetings between DPE and Goldwind Australia.

**6. Questions on extra height applied for blade tip.**

**Page 26. Table 5.3.1 Proponent claims that the proposed adding of 21 meters to each towers' blades will as claimed by the proponent viz "the proposed Coppabella wind farm modification would result in an overall low-level change in visibility and largely unchanged visual impact rating in accordance with the approved Coppabella Wind Farm project".**

**Thus, a calculated increase in RSA of more than 100% is not significant in the opinion of the proponent?**

Blade sizes have been changed.

**7. Page 44, Visual Impact**

**Once again, I cite an increase in RSA of more than 100%.**

**What maybe visually offensive to someone living as Goldwind state 10 kilometres away should not be decided by either a person writing or signing off on a document such as this?**

**"The slower rotating speed is typically considered as a lesser visual impact or more aesthetically acceptable in relative terms"**

**In whose view is a slower rotating blade more aesthetically acceptable?**

**In whose view is it that the further away the turbines then they become less offensive? "less visual influence on the landscape"**

Tom advised that this was a subjective personal response, not objectively saying that is the outcome of studies. Slower rotating turbines can be more aesthetically pleasing. Goldwind has endeavoured to respond as objectively as possible, using external consultant's findings. The Visual Impact Assessment undertaken by the expert consultant reported that the impact of the modification becomes less significant at greater distances.

Noeleen Hazell advised that the turbines would be within the 3.4km threshold from their residence but still in their line of vision. She also believed that non-residential 'absentee' landowners are not as impacted as those who reside on their properties. Tom advised that submissions received had been split into various groupings (near neighbour, broader community and distant respondent). Submissions were available for viewing on the Department's website.

**8. Page 46. Planning and Environment's Visual Assessment Bulletin.**

**Last box last paragraph shows Goldwind's total contempt for public opinion and "childish" response to the views of the wider community to VI as obviously submitters from wider areas are as concerned**

about the rising VI caused by the proliferation of wind farms across South East Australia, as are the directly affected community.

Vix. Addresses shown in these submitters identify that they are located in the Braidwood and Boro areas. Coppabella wind farm should not be visible from their residences.

- Screening from residences? Why is it that Goldwind supposes that VI is only offensive to people from their residence?
- In Goldwind's opinion how does a row of trees reduce the VI?
- In whose view is a slower rotating blade more aesthetically acceptable?
- In whose view is it that the further away the turbines then they become less offensive?
- Page 44 Last box of Table 7.3 "While multiple windfarms in Australia have gained approval for up to 200 metre tip heights etc"
- Please name these multiple wind farms in Australia?

Tom advised that in response to submissions from those not in the direct local area, Goldwind had intended to highlight there will be no effect on the submitters' residence.

There is a regulatory requirement to offer all residents within 5km visual impact mitigation measures. A landscape architect will be engaged to work with the relevant landowners to develop an appropriate landscape plan.

Noeleen Hazell stated that mitigation was not acceptable and that their property had been bought for the view and this will now be heavily impacted on.

#### **9. Page 41. Increase in Wind Turbine dimensions.**

**Last paragraph;**

**Using the 171-metre tip height enables use of the optimum modern turbine yet unchosen, on page 12**

**Page 77 Wind Farm layout and Grid capacity. Box 1 "Words to the effect of" Transgrid has advised that a connection of up to 280MW to the 99M 132KV transmission line will allow the use of 6 turbines.**

**Why is Goldwind still undecided on what size turbine to use?**

**Increasing blade length and hub height adjustment.**

**How does that still ensure sufficient ground and tree clearance?**

**Page 96**

**2. Allow for improvements in technology-larger (taller and larger rotors);**

**I question how improvements to turbine technology need larger taller turbines?**

Covered in Goldwind presentation.

Paul Regan reiterated the visual impact and that the majority of neighbouring residents would be outdoors working within 3km of turbines.

#### **10. Fires**

**Pages 62 Mitigating the Risk of Fire**

**Page 89. Access roads for bush/grass firefighting.**

**Please explain how these access roads will assist grass firefighting?**

**How do the wind farm access tracks improve fire suppression for NSW RFS, Goldwind please explain?**

Tom responded that there will now be access for vehicles to go up the hill to assist in firefighting. John McGrath advised that it would not be normal practice to go up a hill to fight fire – therefore no benefit in access roads during bushfires. Tom noted the response.

#### **11. Page 52. The clearing of the hills on the Coppabella Range.**

**Second box. Ecologists qualifications?**

**Concerns that native animals may be driven onto neighbouring lands by construction activity.**

**What is Goldwind's vision of the flow on effect of Eastern Grey Kangaroo disturbance?**

**12. Page 68. Construction of wind farms on hills. “It is the nature of wind farms that they are often sited on top of hills or ridges to access the stronger and more consistent winds”  
Why is it essential for windfarms to be always constructed on hills?**

Turbines are predominantly located on top of hills. Wind Farms are generally located in areas that have been identified as high wind resource.

**13. Australian Wind Alliance, can you please explain your statement Page 79 Last box Overview and Key Extracts please?**

Covered in Goldwind presentation.

Noeleen Hazell asked whether following Office of Environment & Heritage assessment whether the turbines would need to be re-sited, they are restricted to 100m which will give the developer options. Tom advised that the development consent includes a 100m micro siting allowance. Micro-siting may occur during the detailed design phase to increase constructability. One turbine has been removed from the layout to reduce the impact on 58 identified hollow bearing trees.

Councillor Frost asked whether there were any turbines of comparable size in the area that the CCC would be able to visit? Nic Carmody advised that he had spoken to the developers at Biala who were hoping to commence construction in June/July, and they had agreed to visit by this CCC. Sunny advised that the Gullen Range Wind Farm (located close to Goulburn) host regular public tours.

Councillor Frost asked whether it was possible to provide exact details of where turbines would be located and their tip height? Tom advised that the Information Centre would have maps and information. The contractors will however still need to refine the design.

Paul Regan asked if the modification is rejected will the project still go ahead with the original approval? Tom responded that it would be difficult.

**7. Next Meeting**

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Date of next meeting to be advised.

Meeting closed 7.41 pm.

**ACTIONS**

No	Action	Meeting	Owner	Deadline	Comment
4.	Provide information to the Committee regarding the National Electricity Guarantee.	6/3/2018	Goldwind	30/3/18	
5.	Provide link to information on specifications on new turbines.	6/3/2018	Goldwind	30/3/18	
6.	Provide original gradient of road to Committee members.	6/3/2018	Goldwind	30/3/18	
7.	Provide a copy of site map to Committee members.	6/3/2018	Goldwind	30/3/18	
8.	Provide Committee Members with a link to the PAC website.	6/3/2018	Goldwind	30/3/18	
9.	Advise of any suggestions to improve community engagement	6/3/2018	CCC Members	Ongoing	

**COMPLETED ACTIONS**

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