

Coppabella Wind Farm Community Consultation Committee

Meeting No 3 – Café on Queen, 15 Queen Street, Binalong

Tuesday 19 June 2018 – 5.00pm-7.00pm

Present:

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

Proponent: Sunny Rutherford, Tom Nielsen, Alison Deale (Community Relations Officer) – Goldwind Australia

Observers: Bruce Hazell, Barbara Folkard, Charlie Prell and Shirree Garland (minutes)

The Meeting opened at 5.11 pm

1. Welcome/Apologies

Apologies were received from Libby Elliott.

2. Declaration of pecuniary or other interests

No changes to any Committee member's declarations.

3. Confirmation of minutes or previous Minutes

The minutes of Meeting No 2 held on 6 March 2018 were confirmed.

4. Project Update – Tom Nielsen

Tom advised that there was not much to update since the previous meeting. He provided a brief overview of the project.

He advised that Goldwind would be monitoring Yass Valley Council's recent motion.

Goldwind are currently consulting with both Yass Valley and Hilltops Councils on the Whitefields Road Upgrade Plan. The Councils will also be consulted on the Community Enhancement Fund and the Traffic Management Plan. Key stakeholders will be kept informed of progress.

Four major companies (joint ventures civil & electrical companies) have tendered for the construction of the project. These companies are currently looking at how the site can be optimised to lower the construction footprint. As tendering is a private competitive process no further information can be supplied at this time.

Tom clarified that Whitefields Road was the proposed (and now approved) access route through the planning process – including the Environmental Impact Statement and discussions with key stakeholders (RMS and Council's). He advised a Whitefields Road Upgrade Plan is currently being prepared internally. The plan is being prepared in consultation with both Councils and is required to be approved by the Department of Planning & Environment. He acknowledged significant ecological values in the area and also noted the concerns over the hollow bearing trees. Paving, draining and landscaping plans would be required to go to Council for approval. Tom advised that alternative access roads were considered but not proposed during the Modification Application process due to the alternative roads being more trafficked, having more impact on neighbouring residents, as well as requirements for substantial upgrades to creek crossings, when compared to the existing approved route.

Nic advised that often the wind farm companies are only talking with Council Engineering or Planning staff and that Councillors are not often aware of where the project is at. He suggested that Councillors should ask Council staff to provide information to Councillors so that they are able to consult with the community.

Sunny advised that briefings had been provided to staff at both Councils.

John McGrath stated that many people in the community are not aware of the changes that are occurring all the time and that the project that previously went to Council is not what is currently being dealt with.

Tom advised that Goldwind had recently met with the RMS about the intersection into Whitefields Road and that design work is currently underway.

The Department of Planning & Environment assessment process for the project modification is currently being undertaken, additional information was requested from OEH and the Department of Planning & Environment following receipt of submissions. All additional information has been provided with no outstanding questions. Awaiting advice from the Department of Planning & Environment.

There has been no advice as to when the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) meeting will be held.

Sunny advised that the Information Centre in Binalong was open two mornings and two afternoons a week. A successful opening event was held early May. Sponsorships had been provided to a number of organisations with a number in the pipeline for Harden, Yass and Jugiong events. Sunny reiterated that any ideas on improving community engagement were welcome.

Paul Regan asked where the upgrading of the electricity connection for the 99 line was at? Tom advised that the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) process was still progressing. Restructuring work and a larger conductor would be part of the work. Paul asked whether Goldwind would be financing the work? Tom advised that Goldwind were financing the REF process and that an annuity charge would be paid for the life of the project.

Tom advised that options for sourcing water on site were still being looking into and that water access licences would need to be applied for. People within the area who have water allocations would need to be identified. 10-15% of water usage would typically be treated water for the turbine foundations. Water has to be of a certain standard to use with the concrete. There are currently no agreements in place. Water usage will peak throughout the project with approximately 100 megalitres per year over the construction period.

Paul Regan asked whether the site map had been provided to members following the last meeting? Nic advised that the map had been emailed to all CCC members. Tom advised that there were two updated maps available which he will provide for distribution to members. Cr Geoff Frost asked whether these maps showed the precise location of the boundaries of both LGAs? Tom advised that they did.

5. General Business – without notice

John McGrath asked whether there were any plans to oversee biosecurity (keeping track of people coming and going from each property and ensuring vehicles are clean)? Will the absentee owners be held accountable to being bio specific? Tom advised that this would be looked into when more detailed plans are developed.

John McGrath asked how deep the cable trenches would be and what is the length of the blades? John advised that the proponents at Crookwell were able to answer these questions. Tom advised that Crookwell is at a stage where construction plans are now actually agreed on. Sunny to take questions on notice with technical staff and provide a response.

John McGrath stated that the Coppabella Wind farm gradient was very steep, much steeper than White Rock Wind Farm.

John McGrath asked how the fibreglass blades would be stopped from fragmenting? Would there be any plans in place if fibres get into woolclip? Tom advised that the blades were designed for all types of atmospheric conditions and it would take something very extraordinary to fragment the blades. The blades are designed to last for a minimum 25 years, they are coated with a poly resin finish, designed to be robust. If something breaks on the blades the wind turbines will be turned off and the blades will be fixed as soon as possible. He advised that he hadn't come across any concerns about fibres getting into wool clips.

Noeleen Hazell stated that there are so many variances to the development and that it was unthinkable that it could be approved. More definitive plans, micro siting, routes should be required prior to any approval. Noeleen stated concerns over Whitefields Road being the most ecological area. Tom advised that Whitefields Road is the approved access route and the Whitefields Road Upgrade Plan is currently being developed. Creation of a route through private property from the Hume Highway had been investigated but it was not a way forward.

Peter Holding asked whether the towers would have lights on them? Tom advised that CASA's recommendation was to have lights. However, Goldwind has undertaken a risk assessment and believes lighting will not be required. Determination would be made by the Department of Planning & Environment. If lighting is required, the project will be seeking to use radar activated aviation lighting to avoid unnecessary continuous lighting.

Peter Holding asked whether there would be some sort of fund set up for the redundancy of the turbines in 25 years. Tom advised that there was a Decommissioning Fund which was a regulatory commitment through the modification application that within 5 years of operation a Decommissioning Fund is to be set up and reassessed every 5 years. The Fund then grows with the project. Peter asked who is responsible for the Fund? Tom advised that he was unclear on the mechanism at this stage. Sunny to take question on notice and report back.

Cr Rita O'Connor asked whether discussions could be held with Councils in relation to the Community Enhancement Fund being on an output basis? It was stated that both Councils had made submissions during the project modification process that the Community Enhancement Fund be based on output (a per megawatt basis). Goldwind committed to an additional annual \$100,000 per year fund based on Councils submissions and community feedback.

Cr Geoff Frost asked how the additional annual \$100,000 fund would be administered? Sunny advised that the additional fund will become operational when the project becomes operational. Processes will be developed through investigations of other funds being used by other windfarms. There will be up to 12 months to put a process in place, consultants may be engaged to assist.

Paul Regan asked whether \$2,500 would be allocated per turbine? Tom confirmed that it would be \$2,500 per installed turbine, allocated to the respective LGA. The additional annual \$100,000 allocation is still to be worked out, it hasn't been tied to the Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA).

Cr Geoff Frost stated that as the 'key' distance from turbines is 20km under the standard agreement for funding allocation Council would have to identify possible priority projects. Sunny noted this distance and advised that at another Goldwind project, a distance weighting up to 50km was included alongside other selection criteria within funding applications.

Doug Painting asked whether there was any chance of the Community Enhancement Fund, in the Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA), being administered by one body/Council? Cr Frost advised that Bango and Rye Park Wind Farms VPAs are separate. Cr O'Connor advised that Hilltops have approved a 355 Committee, but members were yet to be appointed.

John McGrath asked Charlie Prell to respond to his submission (page 79) to the Coppabella Wind Farm in relation to the 'welcome boost to the economic base of a rural area'. Charlie advised that it had been challenging times for rural people for a number of years and that the passive income stream received from turbines had assisted, meaning that they were not being dependent on the weather. His objective is to get as much money from windfarm companies to assist people on the ground to become more resilient. The impact of completed windfarm towers is minimal to agricultural farms, improved roads are beneficial to firefighting, there are a massive number of advantages. Charlie advised that he was happy to extend an invitation to members of the Committee to visit his property.

Charlie Prell advised that Yass Valley Council's Community Enhancement Funding Policy precludes money being spent on roads. He totally agreed with the suggestion to move to per mega watt basis.

Barbara Folkard asked how much extra power would be going through to Yass? She stated that there was a push by the ACT to become totally renewable energy reliant. Tom advised that he will contact Transgrid for clarification, including the safest distance from the nearest house.

Barbara Folkard advised that at the October meeting last year, it was advised that if approval for increased heights and widths was granted that Goldwind would be cutting the number of turbines back to 45. Tom advised that that was on the basis that the line would be basically as it stands. Transgrid have now advised, with an upgrade, the line will have an increased capacity.

Barbara Folkard asked why the survey with 92 objections had been ignored? Tom advised that the Department was still assessing the project modification. Response to submissions report is available for viewing on the Department's Major Development Register. Copy of report to be provided to members.

Cr Geoff Frost asked whether minutes have been sent to Councils? Nic advised that the minutes are sent to the Council representative who should then forward to Council staff to prepare appropriate report to Council.

6. Next Meeting

Next meeting date to be advised, possibly September/October dependent on the outcome from Department of Planning and the Independent Planning Commissions assessment of the modification application.

Meeting closed at 6.48 pm.

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No	Action	Meeting	Owner	Deadline	Comment
9.	Advise of any suggestions to improve community engagement	6/3/2018	CC Members	Ongoing	No approaches provided, happy to receive at any time.
10.	Advise of depth of cable trenches and length of blades	19/6/2018	Goldwind	31/07/2018	
11.	Advise who would be responsible for the administration of the Community Enhancement Fund?	19/6/2018	Goldwind	31/07/2018	
12.	Provide copy of Responses to Submissions to Report to members	19/6/2018	Goldwind	31/07/2018	

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
4.	Provide information to the Committee regarding the National Electricity Guarantee	6/3/2018	Goldwind	30/3/18	Information provided
5.	Provide link to information on specifications on new turbines	6/3/2018	Goldwind	30/3/18	Link provided
6.	Provide original gradient of road to Committee members	6/3/2018	Goldwind	30/3/18	Information provided
7.	Provide a copy of site map to Committee members	6/3/2018	Goldwind	30/3/18	Information provided
8.	Provide Committee Members with a link to the PAC website	6/3/2018	Goldwind	30/3/18	Link provided