

Coppabella Wind Farm Community Consultation Committee
Meeting No 9 – Mechanics Institute, 15 Wellington Street, Binalong
6pm Thursday 6th August 2020

Present:

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

Proponent: Tom Nielsen, Medard Boutry & Alison Deale

Observers: Carlene Carmody (minutes)

Invited Guests: Kath Elliot – TransGrid (apology)

The Meeting opened at 6:00 pm

1. Welcome/Apologies

Apologies were received from Cr Rita O'Connor (Hilltops),

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 8 held on 28th November 2019 were confirmed. All outstanding items on action sheet have been completed.

4. Correspondence

Department Planning have circulated information & advice on Covid-19 protocols for meetings.

5. Project Update – Tom Nielsen

Presentation given – see attached.

Alison Deale: Community Engagement Update.

Information Centre has been closed since March. Working from home. Still updates going out. Hope to open Info Centre dependent on Covid-19. Locally at sponsorship related to Covid-19.

Tom Nielsen: We have multiple Information Centres across Australia; all are currently closed.

Tom Nielsen: Status of key project elements.

Energy yield and layout – unchanged. Same turbine.

Planning approvals – main are complete. Main State Government approvals are in place. Federal Government approval in place since 2018.

Construction Contractors ready to go.

Pending grid connection – cause of delays

Expecting to connect towards end of year

Finance – Equity partners will not sign on until grid connection has been finalised.

Medard Boutry: Secondary Management plans

Traffic Management Plan – approved. Available on project website

Superb Parrot Plan – submitted to Commonwealth earlier this month for approval.

Disturbance footprint – initial contractor’s design received so can now develop Biodiversity Plan

Vegetation clearing looks to be considerably less than what was originally planned.

Revegetation occurred along Whitefield’s Road replacing plants lost over summer – approx. 30% of the original plants survived

Groundwater investigations – one of 4 test bores completed earlier this year. That bore was quite productive. Aquifer test completed. That bore has the capacity to supply the water needs for entire project. Test bore currently in process of being convert to a production licence.

John McGrath: What was that Superb Parrot Plan?

Medard Boutry: Superb Parrot Conservation Research Plan. Undertaken by independent third parties including ANU

Tom Nielsen: Grid models independently checked and benchmarked. Two models completed to comply with new connection rules

Took a long time to understand new rules and get the models to a satisfactory point where we could submit the connection application.

Due Diligence first round completed yesterday. We do not have any feedback yet.

Expectation that based on feedback from the first round of TransGrid and AEMO due diligence we update the models further. Then go through another round of due diligence.

TransGrid have been working online upgrade approvals. Approved on 31st March, then submitted an addendum. That is now on Public Exhibition which is available on TransGrid’s web page.

TransGrid have also gone through an updated Tender process for that upgrade.

Project Update Questions:

Cr Geoff Frost: Is your linkage into the Grid reliant on Hume Link?

Tom Nielsen: No. The project is planned without any influence from HumeLink

Paul Regan: Can you confirm the Construction Company?

Tom Nielsen: We have finalised on our preferred two main civil and electrical contractors. We have progressed to the point where we are ready to go but contracts cannot be executed until we have finance for the project in place.

Paul Regan: How much is that reliant on grid connection?

Tom Nielsen: Most project workstreams now awaiting grid connection confirmation

Paul Regan: Have TransGrid given you a timeframe for Grid Connection?

Tom Nielsen: No. There is no set time frame for the due diligence works and final connection agreement.

Paul Regan: On the groundwater - did it pass for concreting or just construction.

Medard Boutry: We have not seen the results yet. The volume is sufficient to supply whole project. The question is it suitable for concrete batching - which is a small component of the overall project. If need be we will import water for the concrete batching plant.

6. General Business – without notice

Questions John McGrath:

1. Why doesn't Goldwind wish to comment of Star Casino on Barrangaroo being rejected by DPIE on VI in an already visually polluted skyline as opposed to the community surrounding the Coppabella Industrial Estate using VI as only 1 of the objections to Coppabella?

Tom Nielsen: Goldwind Australia does not have a role in this development, nor wish to comment publicly regarding its merits or rejection.

2. On 22nd August 2019 Coppabella CCC under Construction Preparation you state that main contractor finalised. Thus, can you tell us who the contractor for the Coppabella project is?

Tom Nielsen: Contract is not executed. As per previous response to Paul Regan.

3. What has been the outcome of the test bores?

Medard Boutry already answered.

4. Bat and Bird surveys 19-26th March 2020. Why?

Medard Boutry: It is part of building the base line information for the project. Seasonal surveys are required as part of building the picture of the Bird and Bat Management Plan. Bat eco-locators were out for 2-3 months. Birds are visually observed and done in accordance with guidelines. That is the accepted process. It is also seasonal – occurs 4 times a year for a week.

5. Is Goldwind involved with the St Patricks project in Tasmania?

Tom Nielsen: No

6. I spoke to an ecologist about the removal of vegetation along Whitefields Road in August 2019 when at that time Goldwind and Transgrid had no connection agreement. He said emphatically "That it is illegal?" What is Goldwind's response to that please?

Medard Boutry: There is an approval in place, there is a preconstruction requirement. On the basis of information at the time. It was done in accordance with DPIE approval.

John McGrath: I am not happy with the Department over that.

7. How is a solar farm at Wagga going to increase marginal loss factors and congestion on the 99M when there are multiple other options regarding transmission lines to deliver power generated inland back to the East coast population centres?

Tom Nielsen: Power flow studies of the 99M show that if the project were to connect to this line, 80% of the project's power flow would go to Yass and 20% to Wagga. At the time we were told that there were multiple new committed projects near Wagga that would increase power flows on the 99M and increase congestion on the line. Specifically of concern was the 100MW Bomen Solar Farm that connects to Wagga North Substation.

8. Why does Goldwind use an image of a particularly eroded section of the Coppabella Range on the front page of its documentation and continuing to indicate that there will be little further erosion of the Coppabella Range by their imminent construction process?

Tom Nielsen: We were just trying to show it is a hilly site and represent that in the photos.

Medard Boutry: If there is any erosion it will be rectified. The contractor will be required to meet requirements in Blue Book and it will be monitored and ensure that the meet the requirements. DPIE will also be across it.

John McGrath: Isn't pre-empting erosion better than fixing it up after it occurs?

Medard Boutry: The contractors are required to follow Blue Book. I agree we want to prevent it. We will have controls and practices in place. They will be implemented as per plans.

9. What is the present estimate of construction costs of the Coppabella Project including duplication of the 99M and the installation of the new 132KV step up to 330KV transformer and associated switch bays at Yass 330/132KV substation?

Tom Nielsen: Total project cost is approximately \$600m. Does not include powerline upgrade. Power lines updrage and grid connection costs are funding through an annual service fee. TransGrid are finishing off a Tender Process to finalise these costs.

is the annual fee is similar to a rent payment – it will be paid off over the life of the project by revenues from the power generation. TransGrid pay for the connection works upfront.

10. Last winter is was too wet to get onto Coppabellas. How do you think you will get on it?

Tom Nielsen: I was not impeded on my site access last year.

Medard Boutry: The contractors will progressively be establishing trafficable wet weather roads despite surrounding natural grounds being too wet to access.

11. Micro sighting of towers - how far can they be seen?

Tom Nielsen – the contractor has proposed a large number of microsited locations to reduce the civil works on the site. At this point approximately 70% of locations have been proposed to be micro sighted at an overall average of 20 metres per wind turbine. This is within the 100m micrositing allowance from the planning approvals.

12. Working Hours: would the contractor need to work outside hours?

Medard Boutry: Ultimately up to the contractor to seek a request to work outside standard hours. There are certain exceptions. It would need to be inaudible. Emergency works.

Deliveries. Typically, it would come into play during the turbine installation when wind issues can affect installation of the blades.

John McGrath: So, neighbours would be advised?

Medard Boutry: Yes

Cr Geoff Frost: Who enforces that?

Medard Boutry: The EPA is responsible for noise compliance.

Cr Geoff Frost: So, there is nobody on site?

Medard Boutry: Dept of Planning will send people outside hours. They can also require an acoustic monitor.

Doug Painting: What are the operating hours:

7am to 6pm Monday to Friday 8am to 1pm Saturday, no work Sunday. Noise audible.

Paul Regan: Are we getting the TransGrid questions.

Nic Carmody: Any questions that are related to TransGrid can be sent to me. I will email them to Kath Elliot from TransGrid who has agreed to respond to the Committee. I will endeavour to have the responses go out with the minutes.

Paul Regan: The Transport Management Plan, does that specify the use of other access roads.

Medard Boutry: Yes, feel free to have a look at the Plan online. The contractor has opted not to use the section of Coppabella Road that connects the two internal wind farm roads. If they change their mind during construction phase, they would need to upgrade that section of the road. It would need to be agreed with Council.

Paul Regan: Where the windfarm connects into the 99M has there been a location specified.

Tom Nielsen: The new line will connect with the upgraded 99M without a switchyard. The 99M connection point is a pole on project land – Pole 143.

7. Next Meeting

Next meeting date 19th November 2020, venue to be advised.

Meeting closed at 7:10 pm

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS ITEMS

No	Action	Meeting	Owner	Deadline	Comment
1.	nil	06/08/2020			