

Coppabella Wind Farm Community Consultation Committee

Meeting No 11 – Café on Queen, Binalong

6pm Thursday 29th April 2021

Present:

CCC Members: Nic Carmody (Independent Chair), John McGrath, Cr Geoff Frost (Yass Valley), Cr Rita O'Connor (Hilltops), Paul Regan, Noeleen Hazell.

Proponent: Tom Nielsen

Observers: Richard Hyles.

Invited Guests: nil

The Meeting opened at 6:10 pm

1. Welcome/Apologies

Apologies were received from Barbara Folkard, Doug Painting, Alison Deale, Medard Boutry.

2. Declaration of pecuniary or other interests

No changes to declarations made.

3. Confirmation of minutes or previous Minutes

The minutes of Meeting No 10 held on 19 November 2020 were confirmed. All outstanding items on action sheet have been completed.

4. Correspondence

Nil.

5. Project Update – Tom Nielsen

Presentation given – see attached.

Community Engagement – change of opening hours – switched to mornings.

Project is ready to go pending grid connection. Goldwind have been waiting on final feedback and approval from AEMO that was expected last month (March). AEMO have unfortunately come back and stated that a STATCOM (Static Synchronous Compensator) is required to be installed at the Yass Substation. This will mean an update to studies and further delays. It is however a resolution from AEMO, and thus a clear way forward.

The Connection Application was originally submitted to AEMO and TransGrid in June 2020. Since then, there has been significant delays to the connection negotiations as the project has been awaiting AEMO feedback and we will not be starting construction until we are sure that we comply with the rules. We have signed the connection agreements, resolving the legal and commercial arrangements. The technical arrangements on how we connect is the final item to be resolved.

Going through this technical negotiation process has resulted in AEMO advising that a STATCOM is required. This will result in an additional 5-6 months for updated connection models, and connection due diligence. The Statcom is required for dynamic contingency network faults. Once the connection application is updated and submitted; we will get a resolution. Goldwind were formally advised of the resolution regarding a STATCOM on the 14th of April (2 weeks ago). TransGrid where aligned with Goldwind that there was no need for a STATCOM in that part of the network, but AEMO has taken a harder stance. It was not in our contingency plan, so it will impact the financing of the project.

The STATCOM to be installed at the substation will be utilised for improved voltage regulation and to increase reactive power capabilities - reducing the impact of network faults.

Cr Rita O'Connor: Why don't you have your own substation?

Tom Nielsen: We will.

John McGrath: You still have the issue from the substation to Yass.

Tom Nielsen: We could move the connection point back to the Coppabella substation, but the MLF losses are more expensive than a STATCOM.

Expectation is that we have a few months of studies to complete, resulting in an Offer to Connect around October. Then hopefully by November/December the commencement of site works.

In addition to the grid connection workstream, for the planning approvals we have been seeking biodiversity offset sites – secure land similar to that being impacted (like for like). Managing it to return to its natural state. It should be close by but does not have to be. For example, Superb Parrot credits will have to be within their Government recognised habitats.

We are working with the Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD) to finalise biodiversity management plan and we are currently waiting for feedback on that.

Due to the delays on the project starting we are continually refreshing out contractors' rates.

Project Update Questions:

Paul Regan: Will Goldwind start construction before Transgrid commence construction of 99M?

Tom Nielsen: We will kick off around the same time.

Cr Rita O'Connor: Where will the parts for the STATCOM come from?

Tom Nielsen: Likely overseas; depending on the contractor.

Cr Geoff Frost: On the project finance. Do you have that finalised?

Tom Nielsen: We are pretty well sorted with that but until we get the connection issues completed, they will not be signed off or funds committed.

Paul Regan: So, who is funding it up to date?

Tom Nielsen: Goldwind has funded the project to this point. We estimate \$600M for total project construction costs.

Cr Rita O'Connor: If you are spending \$600M how long does it take to recoup?

Tom Nielsen: Typically talking around 10 years to recover equity for a project like this. The NSW infrastructure Roadmap was released late last year. This Roadmap estimates that over the next 15 years, the majority of NSW Coal generators will be retired and will need to be replaced predominantly by solar and wind, with the help of dispatchable technologies. Forecasting a massive amount of wind and solar power which will drive down the price of power. These forecasts have caused the Merchant market to react and have accordingly dropped power prices, which is a clear indicator that increased renewables in the network reduces wholesale electricity prices.

Paul Regan: Wind and solar are intermittent power so there must be a way of storing it.

Cr Geoff Frost: Water for the project, how is that going?

Tom Nielsen: we have one bore functional and installed. The flow rate is 4 times what we expected. It is slightly salty, so we have passed the test results to the civil contractors to see if it is suitable for concreting. We have investigation licences for 3 other bores on site.

Cr Rita O'Connor: Is that enough for your needs?

Tom Nielsen: That is our expectation.

Cr Rita O'Connor: Do those bores impact on others around them?

Tom Nielsen: We have had the specialists look at that and they have advised that there are not any bores near enough to be impacted.

John McGrath: How far removed is the aquifer from the one RTA used at Bookham?

Tom Nielsen: I believe it is a few km from that bore.

Paul Regan: Location of concrete batch plant.

Tom Nielsen: If you look at the DA Site Map there are two sites marked.

Paul Regan: Are you planning on using any surface water?

Tom Nielsen: We are securing a certain amount of water and then it is up to the contractors to find any further required. Dependant on climatic conditions.

Paul Regan: Obviously, you need a different licence to a Stock and Domestic licence.

Tom Nielsen: Yes, that is correct, but you can potentially convert it at a later date.

6. General Business – without notice

Noeleen Hazell: The question was asked at the last meeting about access to landholders for TransGrid. They said they have signed agreements. But that is a lie.

Tom Nielsen: I understand there would be signed easement agreements with TransGrid from a long time ago.

Chair: We will get this confirmed from TransGrid – I will forward the question on.

Questions John McGrath:

1. Whilst I agreed with the postponement of the 18th March 2021 Coppabella CCC driven by Goldwind, why is a Community Consultation Committee Meeting driven by the Windfarm's Proponent? Remembering Goldwind postponed the March 2020 meeting also.

Tom Nielsen: I did not have anything to report as I was waiting on the response from AEMO. I was prepared to attend if required.

Chair: 30 days before each scheduled meeting I firstly contact the proponent and ask if there is anything to add the Agenda. In this instance I was informed the project had not progressed and there was nothing new to report to the CCC. I am conscious that committee members are volunteers and do not want to waste people's time. I gave all committee representatives an opportunity to comment on the delaying the meeting. In this instance everyone agreed.

2. Goldwind. Given the last month or so has been relatively still with nil to no breeze not an uncommon scenario here, why besides proximity to the grid is this region ideal for siting wind driven turbines?

Tom Nielsen: The key is the average wind speed over a year is high, coupled with the benefit of a strong network connection. Even on a relatively still day there is often a breeze on the top of those hills.

3. Goldwind. Page 2 of November 2020 Coppabella minutes Tom Nielsen states a 275MW delivery at point of connection. How can Goldwind guarantee Transgrid this, when from what you have already agreed is an intermittent generation source?

Tom Nielsen: No, we do not. What that is, is an upper limit. We cannot generate more than is specified in the Connection Application.

4. Construction preparation is progressing. Two preferred contractors – expecting to go to one contractor next month. Construction Manager has been hired. That did not get far in the last 2 years. We have been hearing this far too long and they cannot yet divulge contractors' names?

That was the February 2019 Coppabella CCC. Now April 2021 – top of page 3 19th November 2020 Coppabella CCC minutes Goldwind are still looking for suppliers? Have or have not Goldwind got contractors locked in? If so, who?

Tom Nielsen: We have been negotiating with contractors and asking them to re-price as timeframes have been delayed. Regarding the comment around suppliers, I believe this is referring to local sub-contractors, who the main contractors will contact once the project is about to kick off. No, we do not have signed contracts at the moment.

John McGrath: Surely over the years the pricing has gone up, so your estimate cannot be right?

Tom Nielsen: We have been periodically refreshing the price validity with our contractors as required. Obviously, if there is a massive spike in contractor costs then it may impact the viability of the project.

Paul Regan: Has there been a Principal Contractor appointed?

Tom Nielsen: We have a preferred tenderer. We have negotiated contracts, but they have not been executed, and will not be until we have finalised the grid connection process.

Chair: How much lead time do they require to begin work.

Tom Nielsen: 9-12 weeks is a standard mobilisation period for contractors.

Paul Regan: Did the companies go out and inspect the site?

Tom Nielsen: Yes

5. Has the AEMO realised as they across the South East of Australia that the South East Electricity Grid cannot accept any more generation? That is it futile constructing Coppabella?

Tom Nielsen: AEMO are not advising that we will be constrained due to the capacity of the grid. We will get assessments of grid capacity and assess any possible curtailment or congestion issues, then it is an economic assessment. AEMO is making sure you are connecting and not jeopardising system strength.

Cr Geoff Frost: Does the solar farm in Sutton change things?

Tom Nielsen: I'm unaware of the specific project you are referring to, but it is first-in best-dressed for network connections. For example, I did not have to consider Bango in my original studies as they weren't committed, but now have to as they have an agreement to connect. Once we have committed our project to the network, future projects will need to consider the impact of our project in their connection studies.

Cr Rita O'Connor: So, you have approval for a number of turbines but if it is first in best dressed if someone else gets then your capacity is decreased which will impact on turbines.

Tom Nielsen: We can elect not to install some of the approved turbines if required. We would consider it in our economic business case. The longer it takes to get an Offer to Connect the more opportunity there is for others to get in first.

6. This is a question that in my opinion was never satisfactorily resolved at the 19th November 2020 Coppabella CCC. Goldwind purchased from Epuron 2017 a combined total of 380MW output development? Marilba and Coppabella. Then given Marilba was rejected it left Goldwind with half that project simply 190MW?

Tom's information page 3 Coppabella CCC Minutes 19th November 2020 that the known generation for Coppabella is 135MW from 45 turbines?

Yet announcement of a likely duplication of the 99M 132KV transmission line Yass Murrumbah was only announced November 2018 Coppabella CCC.

Following year 22nd August, the announcement that the 132KV busbar at Yass 132KV substation did not have the capacity to accept any further generation?

I ask again considering it was known that the most generation that the existing 99M 132KV transmission line could accept was approximately 24MW on a cold winter's night. Why the delay in announcements of the need to construct a second 132KV transmission line parallel to the existing 99M from Coppabella 132KV substation back to Yass 132KV substation, then the belated announcement that the 132KV busbar at Yass did not have the capacity for further generation?

Tom Nielsen: Regarding the project in 2017 – the planning approvals do not put a limit on Mega Watts. They concentrate on turbine numbers. The planning process does not reflect the capacity. The total installed capacity of a project is an outcome of the number of approved wind turbines, the type of wind turbines, and the local grid capacity.

When we first started it was at 150MW – we were only going to install 45 wind turbines. Since then, other projects became committed, and they impacted on the power flows on the line. We were told our project would be curtailed. As a solution to this, TransGrid looked to upgrading the power lines to connect directly onto the 132kV busbar at Yass. Then, as a result of potential contingency ratings

on the 132kV network, a direct connection to the 330kV network was the preferred solution. Now AEMO wants us to build a STATCOM.

I do not agree that there was never going to be capacity in the network.

John McGrath: You have said Bowman Solar Farm is going to stop you. But you still have the two lines back to Yass. You have three parallel routes to Wagga.

Tom Nielsen: Transgrid advised that we would likely be curtailed due to other committed projects in the network, but they did not give us specifics. I have simply outlined the process we followed.

John McGrath: This project was never going to be able to work.

Tom Nielsen: If the original planning approval was performed with enough vegetation clearance allowance to build it we would have proceeded immediately. Then other projects became committed and impacted on our ability to connect.

John McGrath: The 99M has never had the capacity to take power from the Windfarm and take it back to Yass.

Noeleen Hazell: We would like to have a representative from the Government Dept of Energy and TransGrid and have a discussion.

Chair: I can invite anyone the committee requests, but there is no guarantee of attendance. If you can let me know whom the committee would like to invite, I will do so.

Cr Geoff Frost: The Marilba situation. What link does Goldwind have to the Marilba proposal? The landholders out there are still under some shadow.

Tom Nielsen: Goldwind purchased the entire project from Epuron, but we no longer have land agreements with the Marilba properties. The Marilba section was not approved.

John McGrath: Conroy's Gap is approved.

Tom Nielsen: We have no relationship to Conroy's Gap. But I believe Conroy's Gap Wind Farm had their approvals extended at some point.

Cr Geoff Frost: I believe they have ordered a turbine that constituted substantial commencement, so the DA is still alive.

John McGrath: On behalf of the Yass Landscape Guardians, we have submitted a letter to the Chair to inform him that Alan Cole has moved from the Community as an alternative Richard Hyles is proposed to take over his position as the alternate member.

Chair: The process is from now is that I will advise the Department and that will decide on the appointment.

7. Next Meeting

Next meeting date Thursday 29th July 2021, venue to be advised.

Meeting closed at 7:40 pm

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS ITEMS

No	Action	Meeting	Owner	Deadline	Comment
1.	Bore test results	29/04/2021	Tom Nielsen	Next meeting	

Questions for TransGrid Coppabella CCC 29th April 2021

Q1. At the November 19th, 2020 Coppabella CCC minutes Kath Elliot Page 2 minutes stated, “Each property holder has signed an agreement with us to provide access.” In reference to the rebuild of the 99M 132KV transmission line.

I have recently spoken to 4 property owners with the 99M easement traversing their property by phone and none have signed such a document with TransGrid. I also spoke with a 5th property owner with the easement of the 99M across their property and once again no recollection of signing such a document?

On the night of the Coppabella CCC 29th April 2021 at least 2 more disgruntled 99M affected property owners near Binalong made the meeting aware, that they have never received a written request from TransGrid to access their property’s for construction of the new 132KV transmission line within the existing easement of the 99M. This line is “mooted” or connecting the “mooted” Coppabella 132KV Substation to Yass 132KV side of the new “mooted” step up transformer to be constructed at the Yass 330/132KV Substation.

All the above suggesting such a document does not exist.

Can this then be explained by TransGrid if they claim that there is a signed document from property owners guaranteeing access to the 2nd 99M rebuild/AKA duplication in less than 4 years?

Q2. Why is dangerous legacy work still outstanding almost 4 years after the completion of the 2017 99M rebuild?