

# Coppabella Wind Farm Community Consultation Committee

## Meeting No 19 – Café on Queen, Binalong

6pm Thursday 21 March 2024

### Present:

**CCC Members:** Nic Carmody (Independent Chair), John McGrath, Noeleen Hazell, Doug Painting, Paul Reagan, Cr Kim Turner

**Proponent:** Ben Carney, Allison Deale, Medard Boutry, Paul McMahon (Stakeholder Engagement Manager), Tania Gonzalez (Asset Manager - Goldwind)

**Observers:** Nil

**Invited Guests:** Nil

The Meeting opened at 6:06 pm

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

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Apologies were received from Brenden McKay. Ben Carney introduced team members: Paul McMahon (Stakeholder Engagement Manager - Goldwind) and Tania Gonzalez (Asset Manager - Goldwind)

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

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Nil.

### **3. Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting**

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The minutes of Meeting No 18 held on 7 December 2023 – two queries from John McGrath. All actions are embedded at end of the Presentation. Question 10A – question and answer transposed.

Amended minutes to be uploaded to website.

All outstanding items on action sheet have been completed.

### **4. Correspondence**

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Nil

### **5. Project Update – Ben Carney**

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Presentation – see attached.

- Outside hours for Information Centre by appointment with Alison.
- We are currently retendering electrical and civil works.
- Funding: continue to secure investment funding either as co funded (with Goldwind) or with investor(s).
- Program informed by re-tender process.

- EPL completed for submission pending firm NTP date.
- TransGrid has completed its Review of Environmental Factors exhibition process
- Grid connection agreement: connection application lodged Feb 2023. Project anticipating Offer To Connect, in second quarter 2024, likely April 24. Connection Application comments and FIA Report pending AEMO / TG issue.
- Meetings with Yass Valley Council (YVC) and Hilltops Councils held today. Development Consent approval for a total of 75 turbines obtained. Project currently progressing 59 WTGs in Hilltops LGA, 10 WTGs in YVC LGA together with options to progress a further 6 WTGs (as needed).
- Civil design (up to 30%) closing in next 2-3 weeks.
- Project timeline currently holding for 3q24.
- Construction works program envisaged to be nominally 3 years.

**Medard Boutry:**

- Activities discussed last meeting are ongoing.
- Remapping of vegetation has been completed. Regulator has requested further information – project is following up. Confirming biodiversity offset credits required.
- A smaller area of impacted EEC vegetation was originally accepted compared with that indicated by recent completed remapping. Variations to Condition of Approvals have been requested to adjust EEC limits accordingly. These are well progressed with Federal and State Governments.
- Project expects another round of comments (BMP lodged Dec 2023).
- Other management plans are being updated. GW Compliance and Planning team assisting. Bird and Bat Management Plan near completion in readiness to submit (note, not due until prior to operation. Project seeking a pre-Construction submission)
- EPL – application is drafted. Waiting on confirmation of proceed date to reduce costs.
- Council completed substantial maintenance works on Whitefields Road (1Q24). The works destroyed many seedlings and caused damage to the road corridor. GW has needed to advise State and Commonwealth regulators of this non-Project action whom are now aware of what has been observed
- Blackberries were also sprayed at the same time
- New applications for remaining 3 groundwater bores were submitted last week. Used for project construction water

**Tania Gonzalez:**

- Goldwind want to ensure noise compliance. We want people to be heard, complaints are recorded and responded to.
- Every wind farm is unique and has its own challenges. Having people locally on site is important to hear needs and concerns. Site Manager and administrative staff are likely to live locally.

**Questions on presentation:**

**Cr Kim Turner:** How certain are you that Yass Council were the ones doing the work on Whitefields Lane.

**Medard Boutry:** The works were done in part of the Yass Valley Council area.

**Cr Kim Turner:** Who have you been talking to at Yass Valley Council?

**Medard Boutry:** Chris (Berry) and Julie (Rogers)[who is now married with the last name Costa].

**John McGrath:** Medard – why are civil design works not finalised?

**Medard Boutry:** Typically, construction projects don't undertake any detailed design works during the development stage, these are contracted with the civil contractor.

Ben Carney: The Project has decided to undertake earlier design definition to assure a robust basis for pricing in what is a competitive marketplace and support subsequent contract management needs.

John McGrath: Will power out from each run alongside road?

Ben Carney: Correct

John McGrath: Bird and Bat – I thought that was done?

Medard Boutry: The Assessment was completed prior to the Mod 1. The Bird and Bat Management Plan is now ready to submit but the Department is overloaded, and we don't want to add to this workload.

John McGrath: Bores?

Medard Boutry: Approval lapsed – a resubmission. Same information same spot just redoing process.

John McGrath: Potable water for concrete batching.

Medard Boutry: Groundwater could potentially be unsuitable. Up to contractor to lock in their water supply (if this is the case).

John McGrath: Noise compliance question to Tania. The beepers set on the machines is generally outside the allowable decibel level. At Rye Park there have been complaints made about vehicles reversing and jack hammering at night.

Tania Gonzalez: I'm not aware of those complaints.

Medard Boutry: Two types of noise. Operational noise and construction noise. Construction can be an issue. Limits to it are documented within conditions of the consent – hours of work and certain activities are allowed outside those times. Anything else needs to be approved by the Secretary (- this usually requires modelling and evidence to support an alteration from the planning conditions).

Paul Regan: can you confirm Goldwind has no finance?

Ben Carney: No investment funding as yet.

Paul Regan: No contractors?

Ben Carney: No civil or electrical contractors have been contracted; Project is currently retendering. Commercially needed to go back out to market to refresh pricing.

Paul Regan: Grid connection?

Ben Carney: As explained an endorsed FIA report together with finalised comments on the Connection Application are still pending. We anticipate an Offer to Connect in April 2024 this year.

Paul Regan: Will this impact on investors.

Ben Carney: Offer to Connect is attractive for investment funding as it increases certainty.

Paul Regan: Mention of neighbour agreements. Is it in relation to Wind Farm? Can you expand on it?

Paul McMahon: Meeting with people who live within 5km of Wind Farm Turbines. Neighbour agreements are voluntary commercial arrangements and last for the life of the wind farm. Such arrangements do not restrict the neighbour's right to make a complaint Quite a few landholders have already signed up and have been receiving annual payments since they signed up.

Paul Regan: Upgrade 99m?

Ben Carney: Earliest transmission line works would likely start would be 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (currently Aug 2024). Also contingent on investment funding for the project. Project is paying for the rebuild of the 99M transmission line.

Paul Regan: Four test bores, are they within the footprint?

Medard Boutry: Yes. They are slow yield.

Paul Regan: Tania, you mentioned briefly about community funding - Community Enhancement Fund

Medard Boutry: Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPAs) with each council are within the projects consent and is managed by Council. On that Committee is a council rep, a project rep and two community reps and they administer the funds. There will be one committee with each council. VPA money goes into a Trust and there is reporting on expenditure. Any funds not spent rolls over to the following year/s. Targeted to be spent within 20km of project. Strategic projects can also be investigated.

On top of that, Goldwind has volunteered a supplementary Community Benefit Fund of \$100k per year for the life of operation. This will be potentially administered by local representatives and have tighter requirements. Intended to target the Yass Valley Council area, as most of the population close to the Coppabella Wind Farm resides in this council. Important to keep transparency.

Stakeholder Engagement staff will provide assistance and guidance with applications and funding. Wind Farm wants to show that it cares about the impacted local community.

John McGrath: Saying project pays for 99M. Why isn't Goldwind paying for it?

Ben Carney: Coppabella Wind Farm Pty Ltd (the project) as an entity will pay. Goldwind may not ultimately be the Owner / Principal of the entity.

## **General Business – without notice**

John McGrath

1. Given that several times Goldwind when asked about further vegetation removal from Whitefields Road, Goldwind have told the Coppabella CCC members that there will be no further vegetation removal from Whitefields Road. Would Goldwind sign a legal document that no further trees/vegetation will be removed from Whitefields Road to access the Coppabella Wind Farm site?

Medard Boutry: Did vegetation clearing initially in 2019. At the time we thought that was all that would be needed imminently. Surveying was completed and civil contractor wanted 3 additional trees removed, none of which were hollow bearing. Also there has been regrowth since then. Hindsight is a good thing. The vegetation removal remains compliant and was completed in a compliant manner and checked by Department of Planning Compliance Officer.

We do things in a manner that is compliant with conditions of consent. I will be going to Whitefields Lane to further investigate the recent council disturbance. There is no requirement to get a legal document signed off as we are fully complying with the legal requirements of the conditions of consent (which include the approved Roadside Vegetation Landscaping and Management Plan (RVMLP)). Appendices on design on Whitefield Lane upgrade and the Hume Highway intersection upgrade are included in the RVMLP which is available on the project website, under the Managing Impacts tab.

Other Questions: Nil

## **6. Next Meeting**

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Next meeting date Thursday 11 July 2024.

Meeting closed at 7:20 pm

**OUTSTANDING ACTIONS ITEMS**

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