

Burrendong Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

TIME / DATE: 12:10- 13:30, Friday 8 December 2023

VENUE: Parklands Resort & Conference Centre, Ulan Rd, Mudgee NSW 2850

ATTENDEES:

Chairperson: Garry West (GW)

Community Members: James Mort (JM), Brad Bliss (BB), Chris Pilley (CP).

Council Representatives: NIL

Ark Energy Representatives: Andrew Wilson (AW), Melissa Pisani (MP), Daniel Jacobs (DJ) & Siobhan Threlfall.

Minute Taker: Garry West

1. Apologies: Justin Gard
2. Welcome
 - Chairperson opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed everyone to the meeting. No new declarations of Conflicts of Interest. Heather Gough-Fuller has resigned as she has sold her property.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and accepted and will be uploaded to the project website.

Business arising from the previous meeting:

GW advised he received a phone call from the General Manager of the MWRC raising a concern about a reference in the minutes about compulsory acquisitions being a matter for MWRC responsibility. The GM explained council has a policy of no compulsory acquisitions. The Chairperson advised he emailed the GM seeking a copy of the policy but received no response. The minutes as drafted will stand without amendment. All the actions have been completed.

4. Correspondence

Heather Gough-Fuller resignation.

5. Project overview

- AW introduced the project team present. A community briefing and information session is proposed during the afternoon.
- AW gave general update on the project being located east of lake Burrendong, in the Central West Orana renewable Energy Zone consisting of up to 70 wind turbines and a generation capacity of 400-500 MW connecting to the TransGrid network which is the existing Wellington to Mt Piper 330kV transmission line.
- The EIS is on public exhibition from 16 November to 13 December 2023 on the DPE Major Projects Portal.
- After the close of submissions DPE will collate all submissions including from the public, councils and government agencies and place them on the portal and request Ark Energy to provide a Response to Submissions (RTS).
- After submission of the RTS, DPE will complete their assessment and make a recommendation to the Minister's delegate along with proposed consent conditions if recommended for approval. The determination may be made by the Independent Planning Commission if the criteria is met.
- After approval Ark Energy will commence detailed design along with procurement & tendering before a final investment decision is made and construction commences.
- AW provided an overview of the key findings in the EIS:

- Landscape and Visual Impact

There are 4 non-associated dwellings within 3.35 km and 16 dwellings within 4.95 km. Two dwellings will have the potential for moderate visual impact and two will have the potential for high visual impact. Other dwellings and public viewpoints will have negligible, very low or low visual impact. Shadow flicker impacts are within acceptable levels; blade glint will have limited potential to impact stakeholders. The project is compliant with guideline performance objectives.

- Noise

Predicted operational noise levels are below the base criterion of 35 dB at all non-associated receivers, except for one.

- JM: How do you accommodate the impacted receiver?
- AW: Ark Energy will enter a commercial agreement with that property owner.

- Biodiversity

The project site includes areas of two Threatened Ecological Communities, namely Grey Box Grassy Woodland and Box Gum Woodland. Ark Energy proposes to manage the residual impacts via a biodiversity offset strategy and a bird & bat adaptive management plan. The offset strategy is not yet completed but hoped to be within the project site and managed by local landowners with strict reporting requirements.

- Traffic & Transport

The potential impacts were assessed for construction, operational and decommissioning. The preferred transport route from the Port of Newcastle to the site has been identified and consultation has been undertaken with TfNSW and councils as road authorities. Proposed mitigation measures have been identified to minimise impacts.

- CP: Locals would be potentially concerned with contractors using Yarrabin Road to access the site. BB: Yarrabin Road has not been assessed for archaeological artefacts.
- AW: Yarrabin Road is a public road and is open to use by the public. Ark Energy is in negotiations with the owners of the Reflections Holiday Parks Campground to potentially accommodate contractors in order to reduce construction traffic.

- Hazards & Risks

Wind Turbines (WTGs) do not penetrate any OLS surfaces and do not impact nearby designated air routes; however, a modification of PANS-OPS surfaces will be required for Mudgee aerodrome. There will be no adverse impacts on telecommunication surfaces and the electromagnetic fields do not pose a threat to public health. The risk of a major fire spreading from the site is very low and the risk of blade throw is unlikely.

- BB: Noted concerns raised following reports of abandoned wind turbine blades in Queensland.
- MP: This may refer to misleading media reports that blades from the Wind Hill Wind Farm had been dumped. The blades were in fact being stored in a local quarry to be used for research and recycling. ACTION: Media report and landowner statement to be circulated to the committee.

- Other Impact Assessments

There are 35 Aboriginal object sites potentially impacted however, there is no loss or partial loss of value from assessed impacts. No historic heritage listed items impacted. (5% of the project footprint is on land with low to very low agricultural capability and the WTGs are located on ridgelines away from watercourses and potential impact on threatened fish species is unlikely. There are no significant adverse impacts to resources and waste resulting from the project.

- General discussion regarding waste from the project near the end of life of WTGs and minimal impact on local waste facility.
- JM: What sort of artifacts were located? Will further studies be conducted?
- BB: Scar trees and stone sites, some more significant than others. Requirement for further studies is still being assessed, notably Yarrabin Road.

- Nest Steps

Anticipate RTS Q1 2024, approvals Q2/Q3 2024, Procurement & pre-construction Q3 2024 to Q2 2025 and construction commencement 2025.

6. General Business

- JM: Existing formation and alignment of local roads is causing uncertainty for some landowners.
- AW: Have met several local landowners recently to discuss concerns. Management Plans will be the next step to resolving those issues after approval.
- CP: Local accommodation strategy is not clear. Opportunity exists to provide amenities for lasting community benefits.
- JM: Community Benefit for the local community will be important and there is a question whether there will be a local shop front.
- AW: Those matters will be assessed post approval.
- CP: Believe there is an opportunity for sponsorship of the “Magnificent Mudgee Business Awards”.

7. Next Meeting – TBA Guideline requires a minimum of one CCC meeting per year until project commencement.

Actions

NO.	ACTIONS	ACTION BY
1	Details of Qld. Blade issue	MP

