

Liverpool Range Wind Farm  
Community Consultation Committee  
Survey

15 respondents from 6 operating wind farms in NSW

**Re: Community Enhancement Fund Structure**

# Summing-up

- Limitations of a section 355 Local Government Act committee can be overcome if a council develops a strong policy and charter demonstrating transparency and equity
- Effective community consultation and reporting back to the community is vital
- Membership of the section 355 committee should reflect the diversity of the community
- Committee can serve as a community feedback antenna for the wind farm company

## **DISCLAIMER**

This survey report was prepared by the Liverpool Range Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee. The views expressed in the survey report are not necessarily the views of the NSW Government or the Office of the Environment and Heritage.

# Community enhancement funds from operating NSW Wind Farms: survey of experiences

Report of survey conducted by Eleanor Cook, Linda Gant, Gordon Fraser (Office of Environment and Heritage) and David Robinson (Epuron) for the Community Consultation Committee of Liverpool Range Wind Farm, 26 August 2016

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## Abstract

Fifteen stakeholders in the six operating wind farms in NSW that finance community enhancement funds responded to an invitation to participate in a survey conducted by the community consultation committee of the proposed Liverpool Range Wind Farm over the period October 2015-April 2016. Support was expressed for both wind farm company administered community funds, and for local council managed community funds (utilising 'section 355 committees' to make recommendations as to grant allocations). In the absence of explicit policy on community enhancement funds at the NSW Government level, Upper Lachlan Shire Council has developed detailed community enhancement program policies, and successfully administers community funds for two wind farms in its area. Yass Valley Council and Cooma Monaro Shire Council have also developed such policies in relation to proposed or operating wind farms. The survey findings are relevant to the design and management of community enhancement funds for future wind farms.

## Introduction

Australians have a generally favourable attitude to wind farms. However, as for various large scale infrastructure projects, some wind farms have had a divisive effect on local communities. This concern has focussed attention on how wind farm companies can best engage with local communities and on mechanisms for sharing the financial benefits from wind farms more widely within the nearby community.<sup>1</sup> One such mechanism is the establishment of a community enhancement fund, in which the wind farm company makes annual grants for the benefit of the local community. Local communities are interested in such funds, asking how much money will be available, who decides where the money will go, and what the grant criteria will be.

This report was instigated by a subcommittee of the community consultation committee for the proposed Liverpool Range Wind Farm. The report explores the functioning and acceptance of community enhancement funds of operating wind farms in New South Wales through a survey of the experiences of stakeholders. The purpose of the report is to provide information, based on experience to date, on how community enhancement funds can best be structured to maximise benefit to local communities.

## Operating wind farms in NSW with community enhancement funds

There are nine operating wind farms in NSW (counting the adjacent Woodlawn and Capital wind farms, both operated by Infigen, as one). Of these, the six largest and most recently constructed have community fund, community benefit, community enhancement or grant programs. In this report such fund or grant programs are referred to as 'community enhancement funds'. Some provide more funding than others. Some are completely discretionary, while others are legally

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Environment & Heritage NSW, *Community Attitudes to Renewable Energy in NSW*, 2015 (<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/actionmatters/community-attitudes-renewable-energy-150419.pdf>); Hall N et al, *Exploring community acceptance of rural wind farms in Australia: a snapshot*, CSIRO, 2012 (<https://publications.csiro.au/rpr/download?pid=csiro:EP117743&dsid=DS3>); Ipsos, *Establishing the social licence to operate large scale solar facilities in Australia: insights from social research for industry*, Australian Renewable Energy Authority, ([http://www.ipsos.com.au/ipsos\\_docs/Solar-Report\\_2015/Ipsos-ARENA\\_SolarReport.pdf](http://www.ipsos.com.au/ipsos_docs/Solar-Report_2015/Ipsos-ARENA_SolarReport.pdf)). This study, which included a survey of a representative sample of 1,197 Australians, found that 72% were strongly or somewhat in favour of wind farms, and that 10% oppose them (at page 9); Ernst and Young, *Benefit sharing models for NSW*, Office of Environment and Heritage NSW, update version 2015, (<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/communities/EY-wind-farm-shared-benefits.pdf>). In June 2016 the industry peak body, the Clean Energy Council, announced a 'new project to maximise benefits for communities near wind farms'. The collaboration with NGOs 'Embark' and 'Community Power Agency' proposes research on innovative ways to share the benefits of wind farms, and is expected to report in the first half of 2017 (<http://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/news/2016/June/wind-farm-community-benefits.html>).

required though development consent conditions and/or planning agreements which stipulate annual per turbine or per megawatt contributions. Some are administered by the wind farm company directly, while local councils administer others, upon receipt of annual contributions from the wind farm company. Grants are typically made on the recommendation of a community committee, after applications are publicly invited through websites and local newspapers. The resulting grants support local community groups, facilities and events. More details of the six, operating community enhancement fund programs are contained in Schedule 1.

### Section 355 committee operations

Where a fund is administered by a local council, the council establishes a committee to make recommendations regarding annual grants. Section 355 of the Local Government Act 1993 enables a council to carry out its functions ‘...partly or jointly by the council and another person or persons...’

Advice from the Office of Local Government on the nature of section 355 committees is reproduced in Schedule 4.

Councils invite applications from the community to sit on a committee that makes grant recommendations to the council each year or half-year.

Perhaps the most evolved arrangements are in Upper Lachlan Shire Council area, which hosts a number of wind farms. The Taralga Wind Farm Community Enhancement Program,<sup>2</sup> for example, was voluntarily established in 2014, and is administered by the Council, upon recommendations from a section 355 committee comprising two community representatives, a councillor, a Council officer, and a wind farm company representative. The target community for grants is within 20km of the 51-turbine wind farm. The funding commitment is \$2,500 per year per installed wind turbine. The guidelines published on the Council’s website describe the criteria used to evaluate grant applications, procedure for grants and reporting back, annual auditing requirements, and reimbursement from the fund of Council’s administration costs of up to \$5,000 per year.

### Proposed Liverpool Range Wind Farm

The proposed Liverpool Range Wind Farm, for up to 288 wind turbines, near the town of Coolah and the village of Cassilis, has a community consultation committee interested in how a community enhancement fund would operate, should the wind farm be approved and built.

The 10th meeting of the committee, held in Cassilis on 15 September 2015, was dedicated to a community benefit fund workshop. Seventeen people attended all or part of the meeting, comprising an independent chairperson, three uninvolved landowners, five involved or potentially involved landowners, a council officer from each of the two local councils in whose area the wind farm is proposed, a councillor, two observers from the Office of Environment and Heritage, two representatives from the proponent wind farm company Epuron, and one observer from the Department of Industry, Resources and Energy.

Attendees discussed what community funds existed for wind farms in NSW, particularly with regard to fund amounts, fund administration method, fund or benefit area definition and types of projects that have been funded. Regarding fund administration, there was some support for local council administration based on funding recommendations from a committee that represented the local community, particularly

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<sup>2</sup> For the Taralga Wind Farm Community Enhancement Program:  
<http://www.upperlachlan.nsw.gov.au/sites/upperlachlan/files/public/images/documents/upperlachlan/Council/Policies/Community/r%20Lachlan%20Shire%20Council%20and%20Taralga%20Wind%20Farm%20Nominees%20%28No%20%29%20Pty%20Ltd%20-%20signed%20copy%20with%20date%20amendments%20incorporated.pdf> (accessed 30 May 2016)

the community closest to (and therefore most impacted by) the wind farm. Regarding benefit area definition, the group considered 10km radius, 20km radius, and nominated eligible towns, villages or local government area possibilities, as well as whether communities near new powerlines (not just wind turbines) should be eligible to apply for funds.

At the end of the meeting two landowner attendees (one not involved, and the other potentially so) expressed an interest in conducting a survey of experience with existing wind farm community funds. The Office of Environment and Heritage and Epuron offered to help with the survey. The survey would seek to identify concepts that have been successfully implemented and those that can potentially be built upon, particularly with regard to eligibility for grant criteria, and fund administration. The result of the survey would be presented at the next community consultation committee meeting, and made publicly available.

### The trend from voluntary towards legally required funds

As indicated in Schedule 1, the oldest operating wind farms in NSW have no community enhancement funds. Subsequently, some large wind farms were established with voluntary community enhancement funds, managed in-house by the wind farm companies.

In recent years, however, practices and expectations appear to have changed to the extent that community enhancement funds have become, in reality, an indirect, legal requirement. While the Department of Planning's *Draft NSW Planning Guidelines: Wind Farms* (December 2011) and the *Wind Energy: Assessment Policy, Draft for Consultation (August 2016)* stop short of recommending that a proponent offers community enhancement funds, and there is no direct legal obligation for a proponent to enter into a 'voluntary planning agreement' (VPA) with the local council(s) in whose area a proposed wind farm lies, in practice it appears that proponents will not obtain planning approval without such a fund. The existence of a VPA with the local council appears to reassure the consent authority<sup>3</sup> that the proponent has adequately addressed local concerns, being an important matter in the planning determination for the proposed wind farm.

The two most recently approved wind farms (Yass, approved 30 March 2016, and Crudine Ridge, approved 10 May 2016) illustrate the trend. Both contain consent conditions that

'Prior to the commencement of construction, unless the Secretary agrees otherwise, the Applicant shall enter into VPAs with the Councils in accordance with: (a) Division 6 of Part 4 of the EP&A Act; and (b) the terms of the applicable offer in [an appendix].'

The appendices, for both wind farms contains the general terms of the wind farm company's VPA offer to the relevant local councils, namely:

'The VPAs shall include provisions for the payment, collection, management and distribution of the contributions under the agreement, with a focus on funding community projects in the area surrounding the project site.'

The appendices stipulate payment of \$1,250 per megawatt as installed per year (Crudine Ridge) or \$2,500 per wind turbine per year (Yass)<sup>4</sup>, payable from the date of commencement of commercial operation until the wind farm is decommissioned, and adjusted by the Consumer Price Index annually.

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<sup>3</sup> The consent authority is the Planning Assessment Commission, under delegated authority from the Minister for Planning.

<sup>4</sup> The same \$2,500 per constructed turbine, indexed to CPI is proposed for Rye Park Wind Farm: <http://www.yassvalley.nsw.gov.au/draft-voluntary-planning-agreement-between-yass-valley-council-and-trustpower-australia-0> (accessed 22 August 2016)

In summary, some older wind farms support 'voluntary' community enhancement funds. These are run by wind farm companies as a discretionary, community-building exercise. The companies are not legally obliged to operate them. However the trend in more recent wind farm planning applications is that the wind farm company and the local council(s) agree in advance as to the size and nature of a community enhancement fund to be set up, and implementation of that 'voluntary planning agreement' agreement becomes a condition of the eventual planning approval. These community funds are thus 'mandatory', being required as a condition of development consent, and typically councils use section 355 committees in order to distribute the funds fairly and transparently.

### Local community versus local council?

Given the trend towards mandatory community enhancement funds, and local council management of the funds, a key issue becomes the level of trust between residents near the wind farm and the local council.

Local residents tend to favour funds being spent in the immediate locality of the wind farm (for example, within a stated, small number of kilometres), whereas local councils tend to seek the discretion to allocate funds to projects anywhere within their area. This tendency is particularly evident where the wind farm is located at the edge of the local government area, far from the local council offices. This is frequently the case, as many local council areas follow the water catchment line, with the result that hilltop wind farms often are found at the outer edges. Recent council amalgamations have the potential to further exacerbate tension between 'local locals' and the local council, situated tens of kilometres away.

Interest in investigating the possibilities of fund management by the local community, not by the local council, was a motivating factor for some of the community members of Liverpool Range Wind Farm Community Consultation Committee in proposing and volunteering to undertake this survey. However due to the small number of wind farms with operating community enhancement funds within NSW, it became evident that building on their experiences would provide limited information. Even at the end of the survey and report-writing process, some members of the survey committee remained sceptical about local council involvement in fund management, and remained unconvinced that, even with policies and procedures in place, section 355 committees would serve the local community effectively.

While this report argues that, in practice, community funds are becoming a mandatory aspect of obtaining planning approval for wind farms, 'mandatory' need not mean 'council-administered' community funds. However, local councils are long-term institutions, they operate under legislation, they are democratically elected, they have transparent and audited systems in place for financial management, they are experienced in assessing, dealing with and reporting publicly on development impacts, including regarding roads and public amenities affected by major developments, and with the local communities particularly impacted, and the NSW Government can intervene if they are mismanaged. While outside the scope of this report on experiences with existing community funds, there is no legal obstacle to developing a community-initiated model for managing community funds, for example through an existing, or new, incorporated association. Such a model could arguably obtain community support beyond the effective reach of local councils, for example using social media for communication, promoting creative or innovative events in local areas, and through local presence (rather than being considered an emanation from the distant office of the local council). Most importantly, more people could be motivated to take an interest in the fund, because it was the 'community fund', not the 'council fund'. For such a model to gain the support of the local and State government, the wind farm company and the local community, it would need to

possess the characteristics relating to accountability as listed above which explain why, at present, *local councils*, not community associations, manage mandatory community enhancement funds.

### Payments to local councils based on electricity generated, as in Victoria?

In order to help local councils, and to reduce the perception of them being in competition with the local community regarding community fund allocations, the survey included a question relating to payments to local councils by wind farm operators (and other electricity generators) in lieu of local council rates. Survey question 7 was as follows:<sup>5</sup>

In Victoria, local councils receive payments from electricity generators (such as wind farms) based on the amount of electricity produced, instead of rates (based on land value). This gives the councils where wind farms are located a certain income stream independent of community enhancement funds. Do you think that this could be a good idea for NSW, and should be further researched?

### Survey method

The survey committee developed a survey form, explanatory document and accompanying letter (Schedule 2). These were mailed to eleven individuals from wind farm companies, local councils and chairpersons of wind farm community consultation committees (Schedule 3). Subsequently, the survey committee invited others who had experience with wind farm community funds, such as funding committee members, and applicants for grants, to participate.

Response rate statistics (the number of actual respondents expressed as a percentage of the number of issued invitations to respond) were not gathered, however overall, the survey committee felt that if people who had interacted with a community enhancement fund in some way could be reached, particularly by telephone, they were generally willing to express their views.

Schedule 5 contains a summary of responses from the fifteen respondents.

The level of experience and involvement with community funds varies significantly within the respondent group, with some respondents having been closely involved with the administration of an operating wind farm community fund, and others only peripherally involved, for example as a member of a community group that has applied for a grant.

David Robinson, of Epuron, made the initial draft of this survey report, on behalf of the survey committee. Drafts of the survey report were circulated to the 11 respondents whose email addresses had been collected in conducting the survey, for comment, on 12 August 2016.

### Survey limitations

The survey committee believes that it was able to elicit only a relatively small number of responses for the following reasons:

- *Small target group.* As indicated above, there are only six operating wind farms in NSW that have community funding programmes.
- *Little experience to date.* Of the operating wind farm community enhancement funds, most have only been operating for a small number of years. Accordingly, there were few potential

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<sup>5</sup> For further information on the council payment system in Victoria, see Electricity Industry Act 2000 (Vic), section 94, the order under section 94 issued 24 August 2005, and the Electricity Industry Act Rating Arrangements Review Panel report to the Minister for Local Government, December 2004 ([http://www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/225062/DVC\\_Electric\\_Rating\\_no\\_3.pdf](http://www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/225062/DVC_Electric_Rating_no_3.pdf) accessed 1 June 2016).

individuals or community groups who had applied for funds, and who had experiences and perceptions to relate.

- *Low priority.* Some local councils and wind farm companies declined to participate due to pressure of other work, including (in the case of local councils) the distraction, at the time during which the survey was conducted, fulfilling 'Fit for the Future' obligations.
- *Survey format.* The survey format may have been more suited to quantitative assessment, assuming a much larger number of responses than the committee, through mail, telephone and email attempts, was able to obtain. The survey format was not easy to use. An easier format may have been 'Survey Monkey' or equivalent online software. A degree of ambiguity existed as to whether the survey was to be conducted by telephone by the survey committee members, or completed by stakeholders directly.
- *Limited resources.* The community members of the committee primarily prepared the survey, conducted the interviews, acting as volunteers, in their spare time, with the officers from OEH and Epuron who supported them acting in an informal basis, without formal funding allocation. The limitations of resources impacted the relevance of the questions and desired outcome; the timeline; and scope of the survey and report. A broader investigation would have been preferred, conducted by recruited professionals, but funding had not been sought for this.
- *Perception of bias.* One respondent declined to participate on the basis that the survey was not at arm's length from vested interests. Internally, the survey committee discussed the possibility that the focus, method and reporting about community funds could be (or is inevitably) influenced by private interests, including the support given by Epuron, as a wind farm developer.

## Survey findings

### 1. Some local councils have developed strong policies and practices for community enhancement fund management

Upper Lachlan Shire Council has developed detailed community enhancement fund policies,<sup>6</sup> and successfully administers community funds for two wind farms in its area. Yass Valley Council and Cooma Monaro Shire Council have also developed policies in relation to proposed or operating wind farms.

The scale, layout and geography of each particular wind farm, and the number and distance of nearby homes and towns, should inform any decision as to within what radius (if any) community funds should be spent.

Community representatives on community enhancement fund committees should be as diverse as the local community, and should be active participants in community activities.

### 2. The draft NSW planning guidelines for wind farms are causing confusion regarding community enhancement fund management

The good community enhancement fund policies developed by local councils, referred to above, are not consistent with the Department of Planning's outdated *Draft NSW Planning Guidelines: Wind Farms* (December 2011). The *Draft NSW Planning Guidelines: Wind Farms* (at page 38) envisage that

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<sup>6</sup> See footnote 2, above.



the community consultation committees established at planning stage would also advise on the allocation of community enhancement funds once the wind farm is built. However the *Draft Guidelines* provide committee membership details that are inconsistent with community enhancement fund committees established under section 355 of the Local Government Act 1993. For example, in the former, the Department of Planning Director General (now called the Secretary) appoints the chairperson and community members on the committee, whereas the local council does so under the latter. The former is stated to have a broad role to act as a forum for open discussion for issues regarding the assessment and, if approved, the performance of the wind farm and community relations. The latter has the narrow role of recommending how community enhancement funds should be spent. The motivation for members of the community to be appointed to the former (for example, to oppose a particular wind farm at the planning stage), is not necessarily consistent with the harmonious functioning of the latter (to fairly distribute community funds from an operating wind farm).

The process of finalising the *Wind Energy: Assessment Policy (draft for consultation August 2016)* (Department of Planning and Environment) presents an opportunity to clarify the respective roles of community consultation committees and community enhancement fund section 355 committees. The draft supports community enhancement funds administered under a voluntary planning agreement with the relevant local councils, but also endorses the *Draft Community Consultative Committee Guidelines: State Significant Projects* (Department of Planning and Environment, February 2016). The latter includes 'identifying community initiatives to which the Company could contribute' as one of the roles of the Community Consultative Committee (CCC), creating the potential for bureaucratic overlap, inefficiency and time-wasting, in which the local councils, the local community and the wind farm company have two community committees for the wind farm, once operating: the CCC, and the section 355 committee. The potential exists to avoid confusion by giving CCCs for wind farms with community enhancement funds administered by a local council under a section 355 committee a defined life (for example, to be dissolved after the section 355 committee is successfully operating, in the view of the CCC), as noted in the *Draft Community Consultative Committee Guidelines: State Significant Projects* (at page 3). The Secretary would retain the discretion to reconstitute the CCC if operational or decommissioning issues arose.

3. Wind farm companies can successfully manage community enhancement funds directly, however management through local council section 355 committees is currently the preferred mechanism for legally required community enhancement funds.

Infigen successfully manages a community grants program funded by Capital Wind Farm. However more recently, for other wind farms, it has entered into voluntary planning agreements with local councils, in which the local council manages the community fund.<sup>7</sup> A representative of another wind farm operator surveyed expressed a preference for a third party, preferably the local council, to manage the community enhancement fund. In establishing section 355 committee policies, and in constituting committees, councils should consider how best to utilise the potential interest and

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<sup>7</sup> In November 2014 Infigen entered into a VPA with Palerang Council in relation to Capital Wind Farm 2. The VPA provided for a one-off payment to Palerang Council to purchase a build new playing fields. Also in 2014 Infigen and Blayney Shire Council entered into a VPA in relation to the proposed Flyers Creek Wind Farm. In 2013 Infigen entered into a VPA with Wellington Shire Council in relation to the proposed Bodangera Wind Farm. Both the Flyers Creek and the Bodangera VPAs provide for annual payments to the local council. The payments are for a community benefit fund, road maintenance and project-related council administration. It is not clear if, when constructed, councils will establish section 355 committees to recommend how grants from the community benefit fund should be made.

creative initiative of locals. While accountability needs to be preserved, a community fund led by active locals in a section 355 committee, backed up by the council, will have more pizzazz, greater reach, and be more effective than one driven from the town hall.

4. The criteria for grants from community enhancement funds should clearly state the degree to which payments can be made to local councils.

Currently, planning approval conditions make provision for wind farm companies to:

- upgrade roads for construction access as required and make good project-related damage caused to roads, and
- require a VPA be entered into for a specified amount with a focus on funding community projects in the area surrounding the project site.

A question in the survey comparing wind farms, local council rates or payments from electricity generation, and community funds in Victoria and NSW proved to be too broad for any conclusion to be drawn. However, discussion of the question served to highlight impacts on the community to benefit from the community fund, and the desirability of setting clear grant eligibility criteria for community funds. As a general principle, planning approvals (including endorsement of voluntary planning agreements) should clearly state conditions for funds and /or not mix up road and other direct council costs (such as regulatory costs in responding to wind farm construction or operation issues) with community funds. The maximum dollar amount, indexed if appropriate, that a council can pay itself for administering a community enhancement fund could be stated in the planning approval. A council itself may seek a discretionary grant from a community enhancement fund, to be assessed by a section 355 committee, but not in relation to road or project and other direct council costs incurred because of the wind farm. Thus a road impacted by wind farm construction should be repaired at the expense of the wind farm company as an issue separate from the operation of the community enhancement fund, while a road near, but not used by the wind farm, could be improved with a grant from the community enhancement fund if the section 355 committee so recommends.

### Survey conclusion

Fifteen stakeholders in community enhancement funds supported by operating wind farms in NSW were generally positive as to the performance of the funds.

In establishing community enhancement funds, attention needs to be paid to local circumstances so that the local council administering the fund does so in a way that is, and is perceived to be fair by the local community, particularly the local community surrounding the location of the wind farm.

The 'Survey Findings' section of this report provides further information relevant to those interested in maximising the potential of community enhancement funds.

Schedule 1: Details of Operating Wind Farm Community Enhancement Fund Programs (NSW)  
(April 2016)

Wind farm (present operator) MW capacity	Year completed	Local Council	Governance	Radius Rule
Blayney (Trustpower) 10MW	2000		Not applicable – no community enhancement fund	
Crookwell (Trustpower) 5MW	1998		Not applicable – no community enhancement fund	
Hampton Wind Farm 1MW	2000		Not applicable – no community enhancement fund	
Cullerin (Origin) 30 MW	2009	Upper Lachlan Shire	The 2007 development consent required an annual \$25K indexed community enhancement program to be prepared prior to construction, in consultation with ULSC 'and community representatives'.	No specific distance-from-wind turbine criterion
Gullen (Goldwind) 166MW	2014	Upper Lachlan Shire	Proponent 50% (clean energy program grants (CEP))	CEP component: <5km
			Council through section 355 committee 50% (community enhancement fund)(CEF)	CEF component: <10km
Gunning (Acciona) 47MW - 2011	2011	Upper Lachlan Shire	Discretionary grants directly by company, taking into account a community committee informally constituted by the company.	No specific distance-from-wind turbine criterion
Capital/Woodlawn (Infigen) 189 MW	2011	Palerang	Direct proponent management, as advised by a community advisory committee	No specific distance-from-wind turbine criterion
Taralga (CWP Renewables) 107MW	2014	Upper Lachlan Shire	Council through section 355 committee.	<20km
Boco Rock (CWP Renewables) 113MW	2015	Cooma Monaro Shire Bombala Shire	Council, through section 355 committee with single community rep on committee. Small grants and large grants components.	Nil ('community-wide benefits' loose criterion)

## Schedule 2: Survey form and accompanying explanation



Office of  
Environment  
& Heritage

Your reference:  
Our reference: DOC15/411437-1  
Contact: Gordon Fraser, 4927 3145

Mr Miles George  
Managing Director  
Infigen Energy  
Level 22, 56 Pitt Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000  
Attention: Mr Ketan Joshi, Research & Communications Officer,  
[ketan.joshi@infigenenergy.com](mailto:ketan.joshi@infigenenergy.com)

Dear Mr George

**RE: Survey of Wind Farm Community Enhancement Fund experience**

I write to invite your participation and the participation of other representatives of your community and district in survey research with regard to community enhancement funds for operational wind farms in NSW.

This survey is being conducted jointly by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, Regional Clean Energy Program (OEH) and the Liverpool Range Wind Farm (LRWF) Community Consultative Committee (CCC).

Community enhancement funds have been established for a number of wind farms in NSW. As part of its Regional Clean Energy Program, the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) wishes facilitate information-sharing between those involved with existing community enhancement funds related to constructed wind farms and those considering establishing community enhancement funds associated wind farms that are yet to be constructed.

The Liverpool Range Wind Farm Community Consultation Committee (LRWF CCC) has also asked for research to be carried out as to the experience of existing committees established to help administer community enhancement funds from other wind farms in NSW.

As a result of the above, a sub-committee of the LRWF CCC and OEH is conducting survey research through short, telephone interviews and/or emailed questionnaires over the coming days and weeks. Further details of the research method and the questions being explored are enclosed.

I would appreciate your participation in the survey, and would be happy to answer any questions you may have about it Mob 0455 093 631 or [Gordon.Fraser@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Gordon.Fraser@environment.nsw.gov.au).

I also hope you may assist this research by forwarding this letter and the accompanying Survey to the following people

- all members of any wind farm voluntary community fund management or advisory group operating within your Local Government Area

- all members of any relevant S355 Committee or other committee type entity operating within your Local Government Area, which is specifically related to a wind farm
- all individuals or organisations who have made a submission in regard funding allocation or expenditure associated with funds from a wind farm related voluntary community enhancement fund regardless of whether that application was successful or not successful

Thank you for your consideration of this request to participate in the experience-sharing research regarding the optimal management of community funds from wind farms.

Yours sincerely



16 OCT 2015

**GORDON FRASER**  
**Regional Clean Energy Coordinator, Hunter Central Coast Region**  
**Regional Operations**

Enclosure: Attachment 1

**ATTACHMENT 1: Survey of Wind Farm Community Enhancement Fund experience: Research method:**

Survey goal	To understand from community fund committee participants for existing wind farms their views with regard to fund structure, benefits and obstacles.
Relevant wind farms	Constructed wind farms in NSW having community funds administered with the assistance of a community committee: Boco Rock, Capital and Woodlawn, Cullerin, Gullen, Taralga
Method	Telephone and/or email questionnaires. In the case of comments gathered orally, the survey staff will email back to the respondent the interviewer's summary record of interview, for information, and for any correction or clarification by the respondent.
Survey questions	See enclosed questionnaire.
Confidentiality	The identity of each respondent will not be disclosed in the research report without the permission of that respondent. Aggregated results will be published (see 'Output', below).
Survey team	<p>The Survey Team consists of following participants in the Liverpool Plains Community Consultation Committee workshop held in Cassilis on 15 September 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator: <i>Gordon Fraser</i> (Office of Environment and Heritage) Mob 0455 093 631 <a href="mailto:Gordon.Fraser@environment.nsw.gov.au">Gordon.Fraser@environment.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>• Interviewers: <i>Linda Gant</i> (community member) Ph (02) 6376 1044 <a href="mailto:lindagant1@bigpond.com">lindagant1@bigpond.com</a></li> <li><i>Eleanor Cook</i> (Coolah District Development Group) Mob 0427 774 644 <a href="mailto:elecook7@gmail.com">elecook7@gmail.com</a></li> <li>• Survey report compilation: <i>David Robinson</i> (Epuron) mob 0405 127 224 <a href="mailto:d.robinson@epuron.com.au">d.robinson@epuron.com.au</a></li> </ul>
Output	A report detailing the number and category of respondents, an overview of responses generally and reproduction of a selection of particular comments.
Distribution of survey report	By emailed document to all respondents, and to any individual, or private, government or non-government body requesting a copy. The survey is intended to be shared for public information.
Timing	Questionnaires distributed, completed and returned, and (in the case of oral responses) telephone interviews conducted and summary records emailed back to respondents for checking: 15 October - 18 November 2015.