

BOWMANS CREEK IND FARM COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, 27th October 2021

VENUE: ON-LINE via zoom

ATTENDEES:

Chairperson:	Dr W.E.J Paradise AM	WP
Community Members:	Catherine Ball	CA
	Martin Cousins	MC
	Brigitte Thomas	BT
	Nigel Wood	NW
	Peter York	PY
	Nola Conner (Alternate)	NC
Council Representatives:	Cr Godfrey Adamthwaite (Singleton Council)	GA
	Dr Paul Smith (Upper Hunter Shire Council)	PS
Epuron Representatives:	Julian Kasby	JK
	Andrew Wilson	AW
	Melissa Pissani	MP
James Bailey & Assoc:	James Bailey	JB
Minute Taker:	Kerri Garvie	

Meeting opened at 6.00pm

1. Welcome:

WP welcomed everyone on zoom.

2. Apologies:

No Apologies

3. Declaration of pecuniary interest:

WP confirmed himself and Minute Taker were paid to do the meeting. The zoom meeting has been recorded for Minutes only.

4. Minutes from the last meeting:

The minutes were accepted and uploaded to website by JK on 27th October 2021.

5. Business Arising

WP acknowledged the email from NW circulated to all members of the CCC referring to allegations of bullying and intimidation. The email and allegations have been referred to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry

and Environment (DPIE) for investigation and action. While the Department had been advised department officers preferred that the meeting be held as scheduled.

6. Project Update

JK presented the project update (Powerpoint presentation). JK provided an overview of the presentation including a summary of the project as exhibited, the submissions received, amendments made to the project following exhibition, the amendment report and then an overview of the approvals process. A project layout from the exhibited EIS was presented to show the access roads and where the 60 turbines would be situated. The disturbance footprint in the EIS was estimated to be 515ha. JK said he would discuss the amendments to the exhibited project later in the meeting.

JK then asked JB to address the key issues raised during the exhibition (believed to be 16). JB went through the key issues raised by government agencies. The Agencies were BCD, CASA & Department of Defence, Upper Hunter, Singleton and Muswellbrook shire, RFS, RMS, Crown Land, Heritage NSW Fisheries water group and all issues have been updated to comply to these Agency requirements. GA had read today that the number of turbines was 59 not 60. JK confirmed it is now 56 and will discuss this amended report later. GA also asked if the letter from DPIE have been answered, JK confirmed it had not.

JK discussed the public submissions. There were 148 public submissions. The top 5 issues raised were landscape and visual, noise and vibration, traffic and transport, biodiversity, and property value. JK discussed the project amendments as a result of the submissions and included 4 turbines deleted, 3 turbines re-sited, minor adjustment to 10 turbines, reduction to onsite access tracks of 15km, reduction to underground reticulation of 10km, reduction of overhead reticulation 13km and overall reduction of project disturbance footprint of 98ha. The table discussed and shown on the Powerpoint presentation was in the amendment document. The amended project layout was shown.

JB discussed the additional assessment in the amended report including visual, noise biodiversity, heritage and obstacle lightening. JK discussed the EIS proposal to pay council an annual contribution of \$3000 per turbine to go into a community enhancement fund to support local community projects. The amendment report outlines the need for the project and the benefits it will bring on a local and state level as well as providing cleaner electricity to the grid.

JK asked JB to discuss the slides on Merit Evaluations. Project design, regulatory context environmental impacts, and the Commonwealth and State approvals process as well as the consultation process were discussed. The public submissions report has been submitted to DPIE and covers submissions and amended reports. The Independent Planning Commission (IPC) will do a merits based review and undertake the ultimate determination on the project. The Commonwealth government then has a period to consider this determination and make their own formal determination on the project.

7. Questions and discussion

PY asked JK out of the 11 supporting submissions how many are from the local area? JK didn't have numbers at hand.. PY asked out of the number of lodged objections how many people reached out to JK privately to discuss these issues? JK indicated that since submissions had been made he has had discussions with approximately a dozen residents.

JK went through answering a number of questions which had been submitted by PY and NW prior to the meeting. These questions, as submitted, have been appended to the minutes.

PY raised the following:

What is current status of the sale of Epuron, which was recently reported in the Media? I have been unable to find a press release.

JK indicated that Epuron having engaged an investment advisor to explore new investment in the company due to the growing interest in the pipeline of projects with more details to appear in the new year.

What is the total amount of rock excavation required to construct the base footing for each turbine prior to the concrete installation? What is the calculated throughput of the proposed rock crushers i.e. the total amount of rock required to be crushed for all construction activities (turbine install, road construction, substation pads, cement etc)?

JK answered that it depends on which turbine model & design is selected and geotechnical results from testing conditions on each turbine site. A modern turbine needs approx. 500cubic meters concrete. The throughput of the rock crushers will also depend on conditions. Approval has been sought for temporary mobile rock crushers to be utilised as needed and will meet the guidelines for the minimisation of dust and noise.

The response to submission report does not seem to include my concerns about blade trespass during transport along Hebden and Scrumlo Rd? Areas of blade trespass were identified in the EIS. The response to submissions does not detail how this issue will be managed or resolved, proposed controls and mitigation strategies and how the property access agreements will be negotiated.

JK indicated that "swept path" analysis has been done as part of the transport route assessment reviewing the impact of oversized loads.

Barotrauma and the impact on microbats does not appear to be discussed in the response to submissions? This was a concern that I raised. The impact of barotrauma is still grouped in with Blade Strike in the Biodiversity Assessment when they are two separate issues. There is no published research on the impact of large wind turbines (220m) on the air pressure changes around the turbine blades and their impact on micro bats. The document referenced by Epuron is from 2008.

The amended report did assess the impact on micro bats and barotrauma.

Will the CCC be given the opportunity to review and provide input on the management plans as the project progresses?

JK said these would be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the relevant agencies. Input from the CCC would be always welcome.

NW raised the following:

NW asked why the table "objecting Public Submission Register" was not complete?

JK described how submissions had been dissected and issues allocated. JK noted in the register that bushfires, property values, air quality and health issues had been allocated. The register does not note waste and decommissioning but these issues are dealt with in the submissions report. JK noted that it was a particularly large submission and that JK/JB would review the submission particularly looking for waste and decommissioning and report back.

NW indicated that he did not feel his issues had been ticked off in his submission. NW said he had submitted a property report but that JK had said there was no loss of property value. NW said that was incorrect. NW says he raised 6 issues with the EIS and that JK has not acknowledge that NW has raised those issues. JK indicated that he read from the question that the register did not reflect the issues raised. JK said he was happy to go

back and review that. JK indicated that DPIE will review the EIS, submissions and Epuron's response and request additional information from Epuron. DPIE have already sent a letter requesting further information and may send an additional letter.

PY asked about the letter from DPIE requesting additional information. PY asked when does Epuron need to respond? JK indicated that they had 6 weeks from time letter was sent so they had to respond by the 6th December 2021. MC asked why the EPA did not respond? JK responded that the EPA is the agency that will issue licences for various environmental parts of the project (such as noise) and will audit the licence. The assessment of the project is undertaken by DPIE. JB indicated that if the EPA had any concerns with the assessment methods they would have raised them. MC also expressed his concerns with the impacts on raptors and wedge tail eagles in particular. MC wanted to know if anything has changed on this issue in the report and where would he find it. JK responded that there was updated work done on bird strike and barotrauma as had been mentioned but not sure about raptors. JK to discuss with JB and forward relevant sections to MC.

BT asked JK if they had considered the people with properties that are in the 3 and 5km radius but do not have a house on their property yet? JK said they have classified properties based on distance in the EIS and the amendment report. Any property within 3km radius is classified as a near neighbour. JK has said they have offered any house within 3km a near neighbour agreement. JK said while they have not proactively gone out to offer near neighbour agreements to properties within 3 kms without a house, however if someone was planning to develop their block, and were within 3 km, Epuron would consider offering a near neighbour agreement. Any property with a house within a 5km radius are eligible for the neighbour benefit program. Need to have a house on the block to be eligible. If someone were to build a house later in this sector they would be eligible for the neighbour benefit program.

PY asked for more details regarding the neighbour benefit scheme? Details will be advised by newsletter shortly.

Chair canvassed all members for any other questions.

NC would like to do a non-zoom meeting next time. Chair confirmed this zoom was only due to covid restrictions.

MC asked about the participation of Muswellbrook Council. Chair indicated that Muswellbrook staff are being allocated to CCCs in Muswellbrook lga but at this stage there hasn't been any advice about attendees.

8. General business

Nothing raised

9. Next meeting

JK and WP advised the next meeting will be scheduled following DPIE providing their recommendations on the project. Two weeks noticed will be given prior to meeting.

10. Meeting close

Meeting closed 7.13pm

Annexure 1 – Questions submitted by Peter York prior to the meeting.

What is current status of the sale of Epuron, which was recently reported in the Media? I have been unable to find a press release.

What is the total amount of rock excavation required to construct the base footing for each turbine prior to the concrete installation?

What is the calculated throughput of the proposed rock crushers i.e. the total amount of rock required to be crushed for all construction activities (turbine install, road construction, substation pads, cement etc)?

The response to submission report does not seem to include my concerns about blade trespass during transport along Hebden and Scrumlo Rd? Areas of blade trespass were identified in EIS. The response to submissions does not detail how this issue will be managed or resolved, proposed controls and mitigation strategies and how the property access agreements will be negotiated.

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Will the CCC be given the opportunity to review and provide input on the management plans as the project progresses?

Annexure 2 – Questions submitted by Nigel Wood prior to the meeting.

I have a question for tonight's meeting. Why isn't the table "Objecting Public Submissions Register" complete? My objection feedback to the EIS included the following that have not been included in the Register:

- Bushfires
- Property values
- Air Quality
- Waste
- Health
- Decommissioning.

I spent a considerable amount of time preparing my feedback and to see it excluded from the register is a major concern for me. Some of the areas not included will have a major impact on my wife's and my properties and way of life.

Bowmans Creek Wind Farm



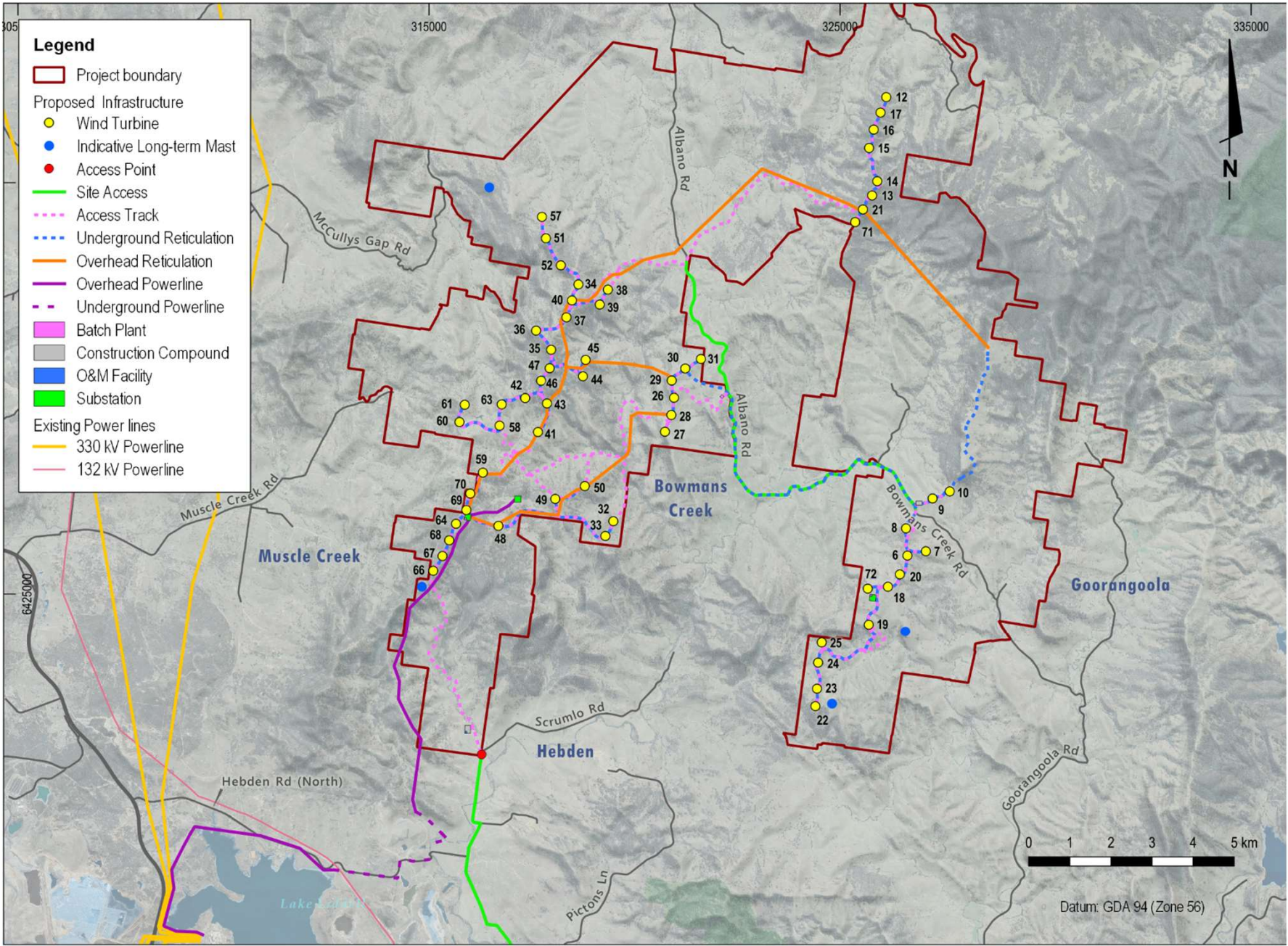
CCC Meeting

Project Update

Wednesday 27 October 2021

Project Update – October 2021

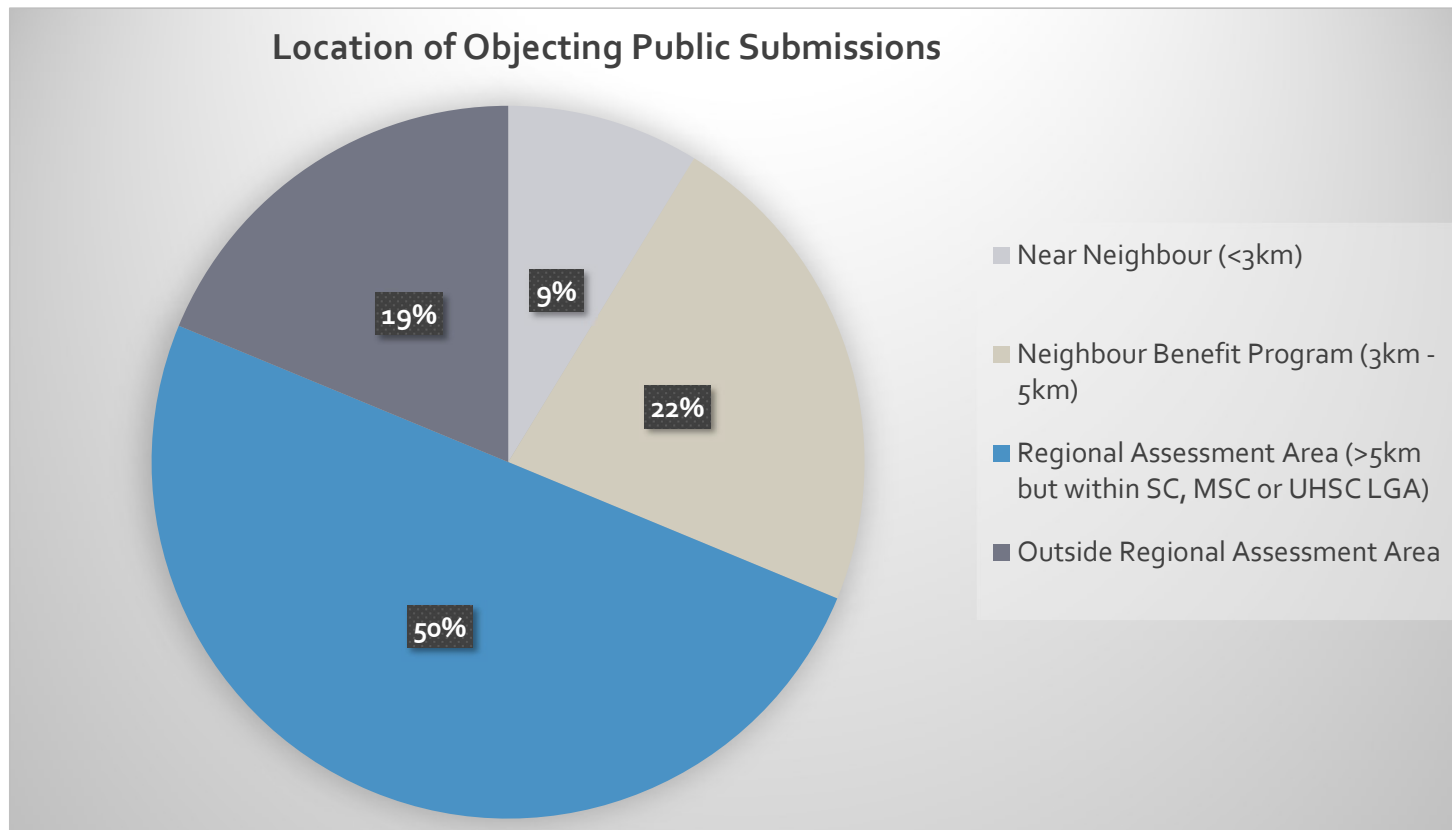
- ▶ Project Exhibited
- ▶ Submissions Report
 - Agency
 - Public
- ▶ Project Amendments
- ▶ Amendment Report
- ▶ Approvals Process



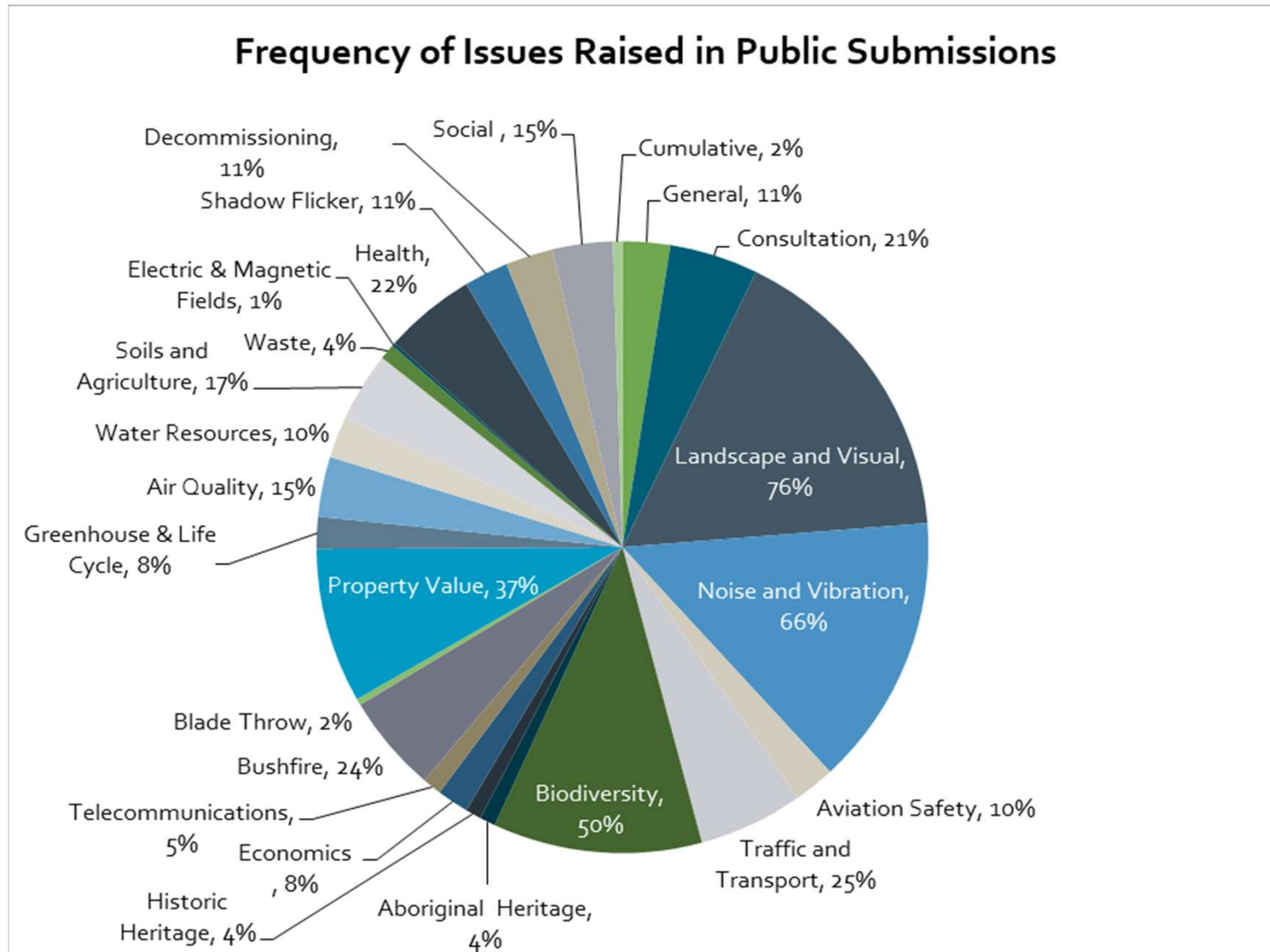
Agency	Primary Comments	Actions Take
BCD	Revise BDAR & compliment with additional field work	Completed further field work BDAR updated
CASA & DoF	CASA and DoD recommend the wind farm is obstacle lit in accordance with Civil Aviation Safety Regulation 139.	Consultation with CASA and DoD Draft Obstacle Lighting Layout Plan provided to CASA and DoD for comment Operating protocols proposed to DoD to minimise night time lighting
Upper Hunter, Singleton & Muswellbrook Shire	VPA Discussions Road upgrades	VPA offer with Councils, further discussions to be held Road upgrades to meet council specifications
RFS	A Fire Management Plan to be prepared in consultation with NSW RFS	Fire Mgt Plan to be prepared in consultation with RFS
RMS	Further investigation into intersection upgrade for the left and right-turns out of Hebden Road	Further consultation ongoing to discuss mitigation options, additional information to be provided
Crown Land	Confirm interaction with various Crown Land lots (Trig station, TSR).	Amended Project will avoid these crown land parcels
Heritage NSW Fisheries Water Group	An ACHMP to provide adequate controls for the avoidance and minimisation of harm to Aboriginal sites All roads and access tracks for the proposal must comply with the relevant standards and guidelines All works on waterfront land to be in accordance with relevant guidelines and ensure sufficient water entitlement held	Updated ACHMP provided in Submissions Report Roads, Access Tracks & waterfront works to meet relevant guidelines

Public Submissions

- ▶ 148 Submissions, 11 Supporting 137 Objecting (131 individuals)



Issues raised in Public Submissions



Concerns Raised in Submissions

▶ Landscape and Visual

- Visual Assessment conducted in accordance with DPIE Visual Bulletin
- Amendments to the layout proposed in response to submissions and recommendations of LVIA
- Neighbour Agreements sought with landowners < 3km

▶ Noise

- Noise assessment shows compliance at all but one residence. In discussions with impacted landowner for Neighbour Agreement
- Curtailment option available

▶ Biodiversity

- Resolved through revised BDAR & Project Amendments

▶ Property Values

- Independent Government commissioned studies relied upon

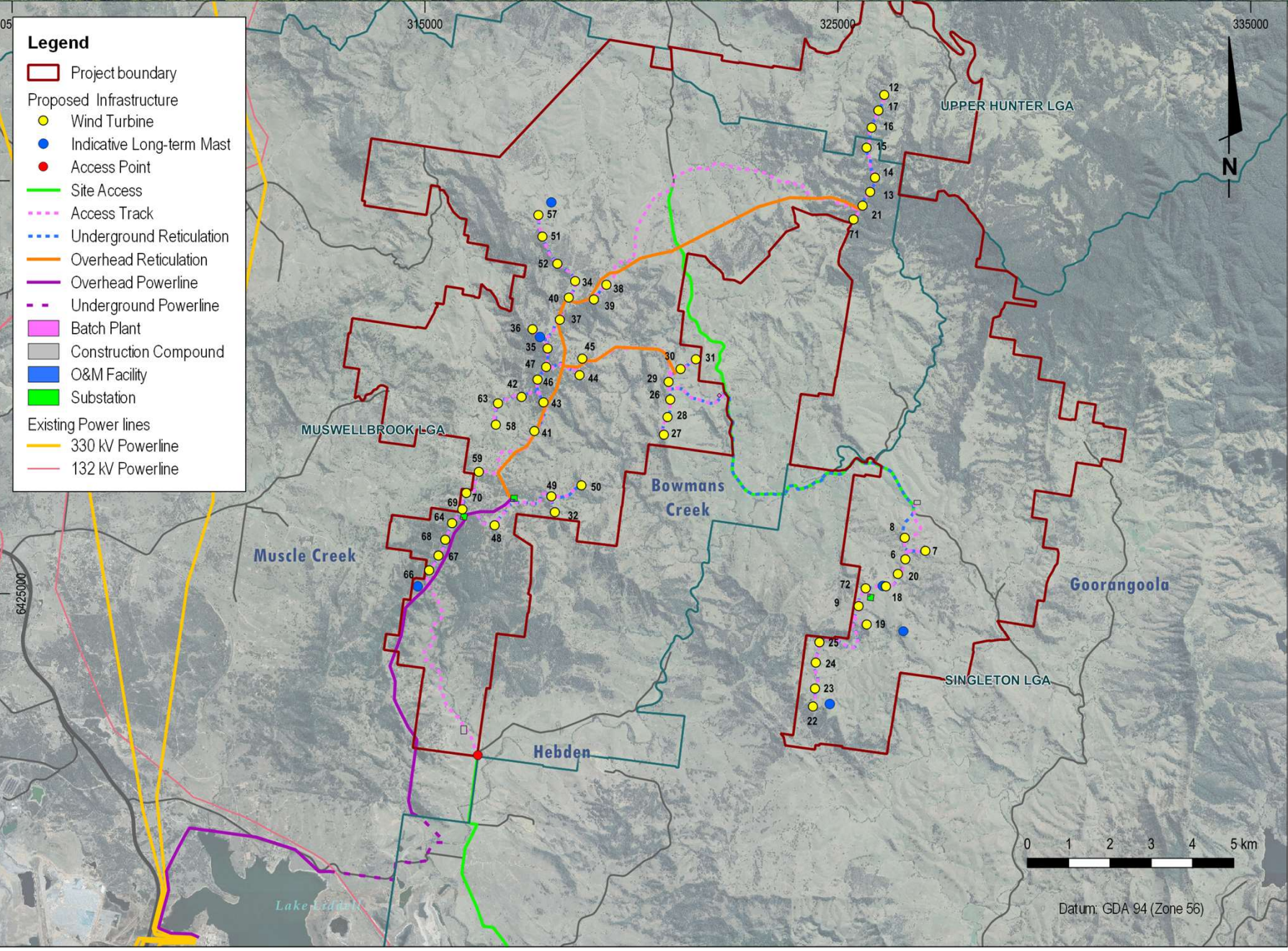
▶ Traffic and Transport

- Heavy Vehicle Route selected to avoid Muswellbrook, Muscle Creek and McCullys Gap

Project Amendments

- ▶ Deletion of 4 turbines
- ▶ Re-siting of WTG 8, 9 and 32
- ▶ Minor adjustments of 10 turbines (up to 100m)
- ▶ Reduction in on site access tracks - 15 km (net)
- ▶ Reduction in underground reticulation of 10 km (net)
- ▶ Reduction of overhead reticulation of 13 km (net)
- ▶ Overall reduction of project disturbance footprint ~98 ha

Aspect	EIS	RTS
Project Layout		
Wind Turbines	60	56
Access Tracks (km)	67	51.6
Overhead reticulation (km)	30	16.5
Underground reticulation (km)	50	39.6
Transmission Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.5 km of overhead • 4.5 km of underground 	
Compounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 2 substations • 2 construction compounds • 3 batching plant locations • Mobile crushing plants 	
Disturbance Footprint	515 ha	417 ha
Site Access	Upgrades to Hebden Road, Scrumlo Road and Albano/Bowmans Creek Road	
Capital Investment	\$569 million	



Additional Assessments for Amendment Report

▶ Visual

- Supplementary Report included in Amendment Report
- Several sensitive receptor improvements

▶ Noise

- Several sensitive receptor improvements

▶ Biodiversity

- ~98 Ha less disturbance, 3 PCTs avoided, Material reduction in BC's
- Additional field work conducted in consultation with BCD
- New BDAR prepared in consultation with BCD

Additional Assessments for Amendment Report

▶ Heritage

- Supplementary Arch & Historic desk top assessment conducted
- Low probability of additional impacts
- No further consultation required at this stage
- Commitment to resurvey with RAPs at micro-siting

▶ Obstacle Lighting

- Conceptual Lighting Layout Plan prepared for Visual Impact Assessment
- Commitment for further consultation & Preparation of an Obstacle Lighting Management Plan
- Lighting impacts of Conceptual Layout Plan assessed in Visual Supplementary Assessment Report

Community Enhancement Fund

- ▶ The Proponent will establish a VPA with each of MSC, UHSC and SSC (an annual contribution of \$3,000 per turbine offered)
- ▶ The VPA is proposed to be distributed via a “Community Fund” mechanism administered by each individual Council
- ▶ The Community Fund established in each LGA may be used to support local community projects such as:
 - Funding to sporting clubs, infrastructure or education;
 - Funding to local environment and cultural heritage projects.

Project Need

- ▶ Provision of additional generation capacity into the NSW grid to assist in meeting load demand as a result of retiring thermal generators
- ▶ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to cleaner electricity generation under the Federal Paris Agreement commitment
- ▶ Supply of renewable energy to assist in meeting State targets under the 'Net Zero Plan Stage 1 2020-2030'
- ▶ Providing an opportunity for regional investment as the renewable energy sector grows in NSW and the Hunter Valley
- ▶ Reducing a significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions through the avoidance of carbon dioxide from coal fired power stations
- ▶ Direct injection of funds into the local economy through the provision of jobs, use of local services, ongoing landowner payments and contributions under the Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA)
- ▶ The production of 347 MW of clean, renewable energy, equivalent to the consumption of around 145,000 homes (greater than the total existing houses in the MSC, SSC and UHSC Local Government Areas)
- ▶ Improvements to the local road network

Merit Evaluation

▶ Project Design

- Assessment conducted in accordance with *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- Environmental consequences have been assessed on a “worst-case scenario” basis, where if potential serious or irreversible damage was identified, an appropriate re-design of the Project was implemented to avoid those consequences

▶ Regulatory Context

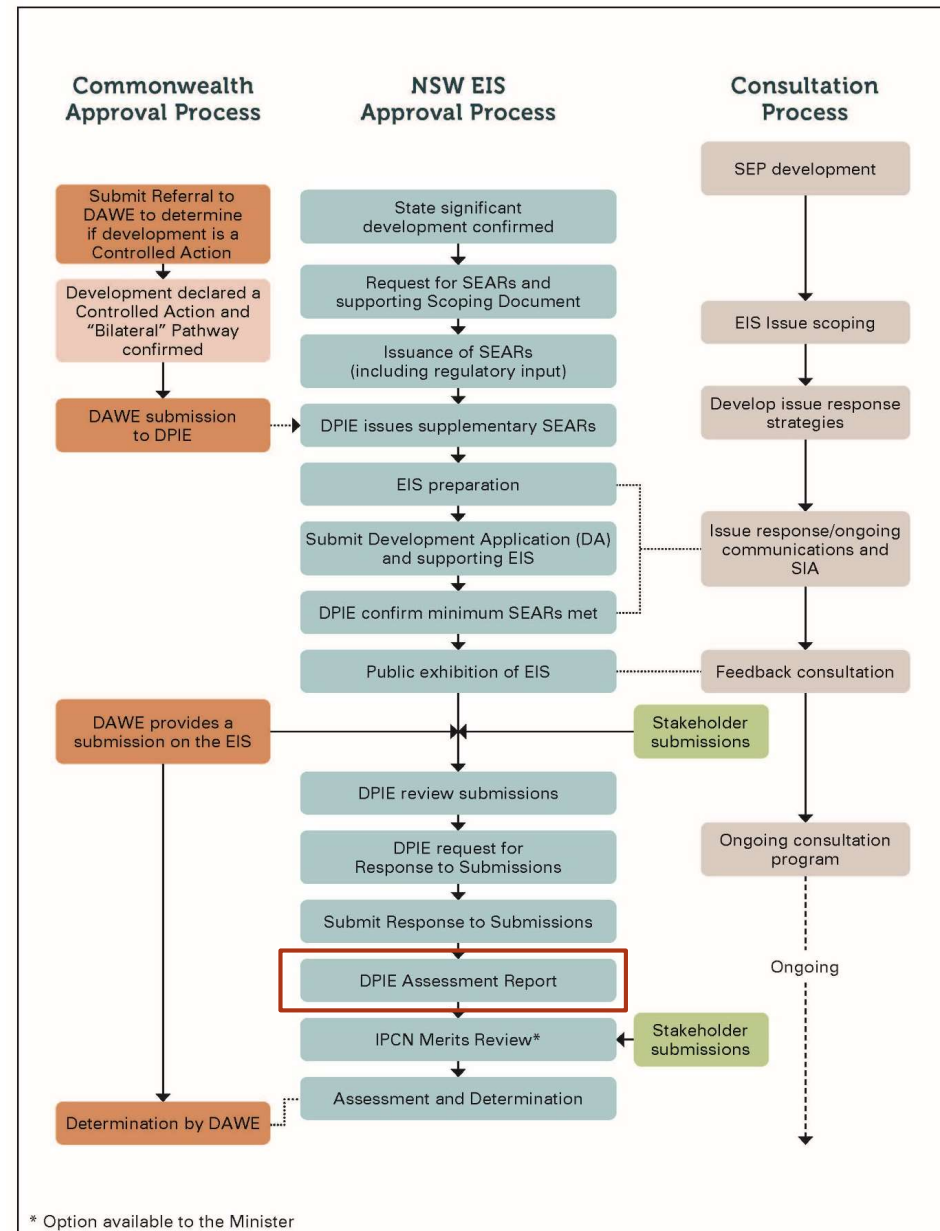
- Assessment documentation provides the consent authority with a comprehensive assessment of the potential environmental, economic and social impacts and benefits of the Project
- Documentation developed through a comprehensive planning, stakeholder engagement and environmental assessment process to ensure that the principles of Ecological Sustainable Development are addressed
- The Project is a sustainable development designed with consultation with the landowners and the keepers of the Cultural Heritage knowledge of the land

▶ Environmental impacts considered via:

- Environmental Risk Assessment
- Stakeholder engagement to identify issues to be addressed
- Technical assessments conducted in accordance with industry best practice and the SEARs
- Quantification of impacts with certainty
- Application of and commitment to environmental management and mitigation measures for any residual issues

Approvals Process

- ▶ Consent Authority currently preparing Assessment Report
- ▶ Minister to refer Project to IPC for determination
- ▶ IPC will most likely hold public meeting to inform their determination
- ▶ Project assessment documentation can be found at:
www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects




Thank you



More information:

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