

Burrendong Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

TIME / DATE: 12noon-2pm, Thursday 25 November 2021

VENUE: Horatio Motel, 15 Horatio Street, Mudgee

ATTENDEES:

Chairperson: Garry West (GW)

Community Members: Jacqui Coates (JC), Nathan Coates, (Alternate) (NC), Heather Gough-Fuller (HG-F) by video call, James Mort (JM) **Observers:** Brenda Ainsworth, Christopher Theocharous

Council Representatives: NIL

Stakeholder Representatives: Brad Bliss (BB) & Chris Pilley (CP)

Epuron Representatives: Andrew Wilson (AW), Melissa Pisani (MP), Rebecca Riggs (RR)

Minute Taker: Kristy Cresham

Meeting opened at 12.05pm

1. Apologies:

- Justin Gard (JG), Carmel Vecchio (CV)

2. Welcome

- Chairperson opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- GW noted that Epuron was conducting two community information sessions after the CCC meeting.
- **Question JC:** asked about numbers attending the sessions?
- MP noted approximately 10-12 people are expected to attend each session.

3. Correspondence

- Correspondence from Hargraves Bushfire Brigade and Epuron response tabled.
- AW discussed how the potential impacts from the wind farm on bushfire risk is addressed within the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
 - With any issues raised – how they will be addressed.
 - RFS typically contacts the CCC directly
- **Question NC: What system in place if turbines blow up/catch fire?**
- AW responded that there are protocols in place to respond to fire-related incidents – in consultation with Rural Fire Services (RFS) and others, assessments have been conducted eg: access roads
- **Question NC:** Helicopters unable to fly in certain areas?
- AW – there can be arial firefighting – protocols are in place for this and under the control of RFS

4. Project overview

- AW gave general update, PowerPoint presentation: Windfarm progress and stages. PowerPoint to be published on website.
- Site map was shown, map also in information handed to CCC members
- **Question NC:** asked if this was the correct map as he had seen a few different ones now.
- **Question JC:** questioned number of turbines as originally 69, now there are an extra 3
- AW showed on map where extra turbines are located and discussed how due to the process that turbines have been removed, some locations have changed, and others added. AW stated that map in the information sheets, on presentation and on the wall was the most up to date map of turbine locations.
- AW went into some detail describing that when the EIS is published it will show how the turbine layout was developed over time.
- Question JC/NC: Can we have turbines removed/moved? one located within 2km of JG & CV's home, do Epuron have a minimum distance that turbines can be located from a house eg: 2km from a occupied home?
- AW, No they look at it by a case by case scenario considering noise and visual impacts, DPIE does not prescribe a specific setback distance from houses.
- Noted: AW to look at turbines within 2km of JG and CV's place.
- **Questions JM:** are all the buildings in the project area occupied?
- AW no, not all, some are weekenders and some are not council approved dwellings
- **Question:** how many are occupied full time?
- AW, did not have current numbers to hand, and will advise.
- AW – continued slide slow outlining a brief description of the project. Mentions current maximum turbine tip height of 250m
- **Question:** can they go higher than 250m?
- AW, no, that is the max height. But new turbine models are coming out. Epuron requesting the Department for approval up to 250m. State Government will do a detailed assessment before approval
- AW continued PowerPoint presentation outlining current development stage and work that has been done up to this stage:
 - Wind resource monitoring
 - Field surveys
 - Background noise logging
 - Consultation with landowners
- Assessments are still in progress; AW went into some details on what this entails.
- NC mentioned the visual mapping (photomontage) looks bad from his property
- **Question HG-F:** Askes if the photomontages can be sent to her via email?
- **Action:** AW, yes these will be uploaded to the website and the link shared with CCC members.
- AW continued discussion in regard to noise impacts, question was raised that noise impact assessment was only done in the summer:
- AW replied that they are up to their third survey on background noise, and the data is gathered over multiple seasons.
- Question: is it the blade movement that causes the background noise?

- AW no, its natural noise: on a still day the noise level is low and on stormy days the background noise is higher. AW went into criteria details for this.
- Question HG-F, BB, NC: Noise heard from a buck Koala within 100m of home. NC mention's Koalas are heard in their area also.
- AW replied that they are aware of the assessment requirements for Koala habitat, and that there was no rule on distance to turbine, no specific rule.
- **Question JC:** do we get to see the heritage reports?
- AW, yes, they will be made public
- AW continued discussing other environmental assessments that have been completed or are in progress
- Mobile reception was mentioned again and the direction of where it comes from
- AW went into some detail about how signals work and that it should "bend" around turbines, but more assessments are being done in this area.
- AW also mentions that communications will be a requirement on site when turbines are being constructed and that improved mobile coverage is a benefit to the windfarm project and will also benefit the broader community.
- **Question:** Will this benefit emergency services?
- AW Yes, will help to facilitate access and coordinate in event of emergency
- Question NC: is there a plan yet on where the roads are going?
- AW: Yes, the routes are identified on the map which is in the information handout. There is a link on the website to roads.
- AW continued updating CCC on the impact assessments that have been done in Ground Water, Social and Economic impacts, Aviation impacts etc, list is outlined in presentation.
- AW shared pictures of wind monitoring mast, went into some details on what it does. Also showed picture of SoDAR, discussed detail on what it does and how it collects data.
- **Question NC:** can it get too windy for the turbines?
- AW: yes, turbines will shut down if winds reach about 96km/h to ensure that the structures are not overstressed.
- **Question CP:** do you lose power when turbines shut down
- AW, No. Went into detail on what happens when turbines shut down

Planning and assessment process

- AW outlined progress on the planning and assessment process, discussed the outline and went into detail on submissions and EIS process
- **Question JC:** Asked when EIS is being lodged?
- AW held discussion on the process for lodging the EIS, who was involved and what was needed to be done in the leadup to submitting the EIS. This is outlined in the presentation
- Timeline: SEARs in Oct 2020
- AW noted that the EIS is likely to be lodged around April 2022, then another 9-12mths for approvals.
- Question HG: who was included in the transport route?

- AW replied that Epuron had made an effort to contact everyone on 12 mile road, Yarrabin Road and Goolma Road who will be effected by the transport route

Community benefits

- Discussion on Community Enhancement Fund
- **Question:** is the Community Enhancement Fund a one of payment?
- AW, no. Plan is to work with council and community to manage funds from the Community Enhancement Fund. Annual payment of approximately \$200,000 a year
- **Question:** is it indexed?
- AW, yes
- **Question JC:** in terms of regulatory over fund, how easy would it be for council to ignore community input?
- AW – discussed other established funds with wind farms and community groups, no real format for the funds.
- AW prefer the community to handle the fund and not the council.
- GW said if voluntary planning agreements are entered then councils tend to determine where money can go.
- Discussion on how councils handle funds ongoing into the future. Concern by the members for the funds to stay local.
- AW discussed other committees and what has progressed there and their models.
- **Question HG-F:** Can this be put in application when submitted to DPIE – can their preferences on how the fund is run be added and spelled out in detail in application?
- AW, Yes it can
- **Question:** how can we do that?
- Epuron suggested the CCC submit a letter detailing their preference on how the community fund should be administered and how benefits can be distributed to the local community
- **ACTION:** Epuron to compile some examples of how other wind farm community funds are administered and share with CCC.

5. Matters, which community representatives wish to raise

- **Question JC:** is money put aside for decommissioning of wind farm?
- AW – Yes. Decommission fund built and updated over time.
- **Question:** what is a permanent met mast? Are they 250m tall as well?
- AW – discussion on mast – location (blue crosses on map), temporary met masts for 3-4yrs during development, permanent met masts for the life of the wind farm will be the same height as the turbine hub height (~150 m). Marker balls are installed on the met mast guy wires to make them more visible to aircraft. CASA has to be notified of all met mast details.
- **Question NC:** Liability insurance, is that required?
- AW –Yes, they need cover eg: fire caused by wind farm spreads to neighbours property etc

- **Question NC:** New Federal and State taxes – will they be rezoned, any rate changes?
- AW – No, different rules for different states. Councils in NSW do not get additional rates.
- **Question NC:** Heard any more from WaterNSW?
- AW – noted the proposed powerline corridors are on land owned by:
 - Crown,
 - Private landowners, and
 - WaterNSW
- Discussion with these landowners is in progress. **Question BB:** Proposed grid connection powerline?
- AW – Proposed connection is to the existing TransGrid Wellington to Mt Piper 330 kV line, but Epuron is also in discussion with NSW government Energy Corp regarding possible connection to the proposed Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Discussed the Energy Corp’s role in facilitating connection of renewable generation around the state.
- AW showed map. Energy Corp was put together to better coordinate the connection of new solar, wind and hydro assets. Epuron still a little unclear, have had meetings on how it will all work. Discussed new renewable energy zone, route on where it is going, looking to where it’s changing.
- Discussion on where network was strong, AW used Wilcannia as an example on why these projects are not feasible in these locations, no powerline infrastructure.
- Government has a bit more control over where things will go/be approved.
- **Question JC:** why cannot route go through National Parks?
- AW – these have/are being looked at
- AW showed on Powerline Map where other places are, where they might connect into lines, substations and existing lines.
- BB mentioned other renewable plans in other locations, plus battery storage systems – surveys being done now.
- **Question:** What is timeframe once approved to sell on to operator?
- AW, was discussed at last meeting, went into background of Epuron and how they do not generally own and operate wind farms.
- **Question:** When do you hand over?
- **AW-** can vary. Once DA approved, it is around that time. Epuron has previously run procurement/tender process for equipment supply and construction of wind farms. Once approvals are all in place approx. 3-6 months after that.
- **Question:** are you negotiating with operators and can the proposal fall over this far in?
- **AW –** Yes, we are always in discussions with potential partners to construct and operate our wind farm developments. Based on our experience and track record in developing wind farm projects we expect that this project will proceed to construction, but details of the project can change during the assessment and approvals process. Once the project has been acquired by a new owner it is extremely unlikely to not go ahead.
- **AW –** discussed other projects and outcomes and what can happen in the process. Can be a delay between approvals, acquisition and construction starting.
- Department of Planning require CCC to continue with new owners.

- Discussion on how ownership can change.
- **Question NC:** has costing been done on developing roads?
- AW- no costing has been done at this stage.
- **Question:** Will you do this?
- AW – Post approvals stage – detailed design etc, costing could happen there, not part of core business for Epuron.
- **Question CP:** have you driven out to site?
- AW – Yes

6. General Business

- **Mention:** there is a website with a community information page where CCC minutes are easily accessible.
- AW mentioned GW contact details are on website plus Epuron contact details
- CCC members who are happy to have contact details published are to send to GW, and GW will forward to Epuron for addition to the community page on the project website.

7. Meeting dates, times, venue

Next meeting proposed for Thursday, 24 March 2022 prior to lodgment of the EIS.

Meeting closed 1.20pm

Actions

NO.	ACTIONS	ACTION BY
1	Information session materials including photomontages to be uploaded to the project website and link shared with CCC. (Done)	AW
2	AW to research on how other wind farm community funds are run and share outcomes with CCC.	AW
3	CCC members to supply contact details to be added to the project website	CCC members & GW

