

Burrendong Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

TIME / DATE: 12noon-2pm, Thursday 24 March 2022

VENUE: Aden Hotel, 1 Sydney Road, Mudgee

ATTENDEES:

Chairperson: Garry West (GW)

Community Members: Jacqui Coates (JC), (NC), Heather Gough-Fuller (HG-F) by video conference, Justin Gard (JG) Observers: Brenda Ainsworth, Christopher Theocharous

Council Representatives: Cr Sam Paine (Mid-Western Regional Council)

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

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

Energy Corporation Representative: Matthew Sprott (MS) by video conference.

Minute Taker: Garry West

Meeting opened at 12 pm

1. **Apologies:** James Mort (JM)

2. **Welcome**

- Chairperson opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and accepted and uploaded to the Project website. All the actions have been completed.

4. **Correspondence**

NIL

5. **Project overview**

- AW gave general update, PowerPoint presentation: Windfarm progress and stages. PowerPoint to be published on website.
- AW advised that the project is now participating in the Water NSW Renewable Energy & Storage Program and the layout has been expanded to include Water NSW land with the project now being up to 105 wind turbines.
- As a result of the expanded layout a revised Scoping Report has been submitted to Department of Planning & Environment (DPE) and they will issue new Secretary's Environmental Assessment requirements (SEARs). The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is also currently being revised to accommodate the expanded layout.

- The expanded layout does not have impacts on any additional landholders or residences.
- The new SEARs are expected require an assessment of the cumulative impact of the project with other projects in the vicinity and a Social Impact Assessment (SIA). These are being incorporated into the updated EIS.
- Site map was shown, which incorporated the additional turbines and the two options for connecting to the existing 330kV powerline. The map will be uploaded to the project website.
- When the EIS is completed, it will be reviewed by DPE, which is called an adequacy review and it will then be put on public exhibition by DPE with public submissions accepted. The public exhibition period is usually 28 days. Following the public and agency submission process, Epuron will prepare a Response to Submissions (RTS). The department will then complete their assessment and determination of the project. The determination could be reviewed by the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) if the criteria is met for such a review.
- Parallel to the State planning process is the Federal EPBC process. The EPBC referral has been updated. Their biodiversity assessment requirements will be assessed by the NSW DPE under a bilateral arrangement. The federal Department of Agriculture Water & Environment (DAWE) will review the recommended conditions of consent related to biodiversity and then issue their approval.
- Planning to lodge the EIS with DPE for public exhibition in Q3 2022 and hope to have project approval Q2 2023 and then expected construction to commence in 2024.
- Epuron signed a sale agreement with Ark Energy Corporation in December 2021 and expect the completion of the sale in coming months.
- Ark Energy is an Australian subsidiary of Korea Zinc, who have a zinc refinery in Townsville. Ark Energy plans to own, construct & operate their renewable projects which is a different business model from Epuron past activities.
- This is not expected to affect the Burrendong Wind Farm as the project is well advanced in identifying a long term owner for the construction and operation of the wind farm.

6. Matters, which community representatives wish to raise

- **Question JC:** Who will attend the CCC meetings Ark Energy or the new owner?
- **AW** It will be the owner of the wind farm.
- **GW** Following consent the frequency of CCC meetings will respond to the activity of the project and may end meeting only twice a year.
- **HG-F** Can you clarify if Ark Energy will own the project at any time in the future?
- **AW** Following the completion of the sale, Ark Energy will own the project until the new long term owner steps in to take over. These details are still commercial-in-confidence and will be revealed when they choose to do so, however I can indicate the preferred company is an Australian company.
- **Question JC:** Can you clarify the 2024 time?
- **AW** Once the approvals are in place including the required management plans and procurement processes in 2023, with construction is expected to commence in 2024.

- **Question JC:** At the last meeting we were discussing the 3 turbines near our residence and whether they could be removed. Has any decision been made in that regard? Are you able to advise how many turbines are going on individual properties?
- **AW** The EIS will show cadastral boundaries so you could deduce that information at that stage. Personal property details cannot be revealed for privacy reasons. At this stage they are proposed to be built.
- **Question BB:** With the addition turbine layout I presume that will require extra cultural studies.
- **AW** Yes
- **Question JC:** Isn't there supposed to be a 5 kilometre distance from a residence?
- **AW** The assessment requirements refer to specific noise and visual impact criteria, but it do not specify any particular setback distance.
- **Question JG:** Will the placement of turbines in this area make it easier for turbines to be constructed everywhere?
- **AW** That will be a decision by the department within the framework of their new renewable energy zones. Epuron doesn't plan to expand this project any further.
- **Question JC:** What happens with a decommissioning fund?
- **AW** The planning consent will have decommissioning obligations and a draft decommissioning plan needs to be prepared, exhibited and approved before construction commences. I can circulate a typical condition. [ACTION]
- **Question JG:** At the end of the project life does that mean all the turbines are removed and the site returned back to their current condition?
- **AW** Typically all above ground infrastructure is removed, underground infrastructure remains insitu at a determined depth and roads and tracks are left to the digression of the landowner. Alternatively, the wind farm could be repowered for another period and the infrastructure may be updated. This would require a new planning approval.
- **Question JC:** I understand the turbines interfere with GPS equipment which has the potential to impact on agricultural activities.
- **AW** One of the studies undertaken is to assess the impact of radio transmission signals across a range of areas such as TV, weather radar and air traffic control radar. The EIS will include a specialist report and mitigation measures sometimes requires the relocation of turbines where impacts are identified. We don't expect normal GPS signals to be impacted. Since TV has gone digital impacts to TV broadcast signals are unlikely.
- **Question JG:** Is there any electrical impacts potentially affecting communications?
- **AW** Communication with and within the project site is normally done by fiberoptic cabling and microwave signal. As with any electrical equipment there are electric and magnetic fields associated with the wind farm infrastructure. An assessment of these impacts is included in the EIS.
- **Question BB:** Can you clarify the powerline routes?
- **AW** Two routes have been identified and the biodiversity impacts indicate the southern route is preferred. The northern route may be considered as part of connecting to the proposed the new REZ infrastructure.
- **Question BB:** Can you confirm the road access to the site?

- **AW** Access will be via Twelve Mile Road onto Yarrabin Road.
- **Question BA:** Do host landowners sign contracts before the project is approved?
- **AW** Yes.
- **Question BB:** I notice that the status of Koalas has gone from threatened to endangered. Also there has not been a cultural heritage assessment done on the road access routes.
- **AW** The access roads are existing and no further assessment is necessary.
- **Comment HG-F:** There are currently upgrade works being undertaken on the Yarrabin Road by a different company.
- **AW** There are other projects in the region and therefore not all works are associated with the Burrendong Wind Farm (BWF)
- **Comment CP:** As a local I know the area well and I cannot get my head around the logistics of how this project is going to be constructed given terrain and the site access routes. Also concerned about workforce access to the site.
- **AW** It is challenging site, but we have assessed the constructability of the project. Preliminary civil engineering design for roads and other works have been completed as part of the project development process. The EIS and planning application will include any proposed minor upgrades to use the existing public road network for access to the site. Discussions have occurred with Council as part of the planning process.
- **GW** To help CCC members understand the detail in the EIS when it goes on exhibition could Epuron prepare a Summary of Findings document and presentation for a CCC meeting close to that time?
- **AW** Yes, we will respond to that request

7. Energy Corporation of NSW

Matthew Sprott, Director Planning & Policy provided an overview of the NSW Government Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). A link to the website below:

<https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-02/february-2022-cwo-rez-project-overview.pdf>

HG-F: How will you gather the community priorities for projects? How do the community know what projects are being proposed within the REZs?

MS: In the process of developing a benefit sharing model. Extensive consultation is occurring in this process. When a paper is prepared, we will share with CCCs for feedback. There is a DPE website that identifies projects once the SEARs are issued. Look to provide the link for the website through the Chair.

8. General Business

NIL

9. Meeting dates, times, venue

Next meeting proposed for Thursday, 23 June 2022

Meeting closed 1.50pm

Actions

NO.	ACTIONS	ACTION BY
1	Circulate typical consent conditions relating to project decommissioning.	AW