

Tallawang Solar Farm and Barneys Reef Wind Farm

Community Information Sessions [Online] Summary

Session 1: 9th September 2021 5.30pm – 7pm

Session 2: 10th September 2021 4pm – 5.05pm

Attendees

RES	Umwelt / Specialists	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andrew Douglas (Solar Project Developer) Daniel Leahy (Head of Wind Development) Darren Chesterfield (Community Engagement Manager) Eleanor Cairns (Barneys Reef Wind Farm Project Manager) Rebecca Meek (New Sites Team Manager) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alison Dodds (Envisage Consulting visual assessment specialist) Ashley Robertson (Moir Landscape Architects visual assessment specialist) Jessica Anagnostaras (Umwelt Social Impact Assessment Consultant) Malinda Facey (Umwelt EIS Project Director) Penelope Williams (Umwelt EIS Project Manager) Sheree Ansen (Umwelt Social Impact Assessment Consultant) Stacey Brodbeck (Envisage Consulting visual assessment specialist) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session 1: 14 attendees Session 2: 10 attendees
5	7	24*
36*		

**Note: Some community members may have attended both Information Sessions.*

Each Community Information Session was scheduled for 1 hour; however, Session 1 received more attendees and had more questions raised by the community. This session took 1.5 hours in total. Session 2 was 1 hour and 5 minutes in duration. The content presented at each session was the same, however we have highlighted where differences may have occurred between the two sessions, for example, where the information was presented by different representatives across the sessions.

Session Introduction (Jessica Anagnostaras, Session Facilitator and Umwelt Social Impact Assessment Consultant)

Welcome to attendees and explanation of meeting structure to include an overview of each Project and a designated Q&A discussion at the conclusion of the presentation. Introduced Project team. At Session 2, attendees were asked to share their contact details with the Project team via private message if they would like ongoing communications with the Project teams.

Introduction to RES (Daniel Leahy, RES Head of Wind Development (Session 1) and Rebecca Meek, RES New Sites Team Manager (Session 2))

Daniel and Rebecca introduced the RES company as a British family-owned leader within the renewables industry. Currently there are strong gridlines between Liddell and Wollar creating an energy “super-highway”. The NSW Government are connecting into the 500 KV line and are releasing areas for renewable projects. The areas for each Project were selected due to having good wind speeds and solar resources, being compatible land uses with these Projects, and both having good road accesses for larger scalability of commercial Projects.

Introduction to the Tallawang Solar Farm Project (Andrew Douglas, RES Solar Project Developer)

The Project will have a 500MW capacity and include battery storage. The Scoping Report has already been submitted to the NSW Government and the Project team are expecting feedback via the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs), which will then feedback into the EIS assessments. The planning application is expected to be lodged in quarter four (Q4) 2021, with forecasted construction in 2023 and operations commencing early 2026. There is 1,370 hectares available for the Project, however, this includes areas of vegetation, heritage sites, ecological buffers and drainage lines. The development footprint is only 1,119 ha. Access was originally proposed via Puggoon Road, but this has been revised and will now be from Castlereagh Hwy. This revision was made to improve traffic on local roads. Specialist studies for the Project were introduced with a reminder to attendees that these are yet to be finalised. The design requires detailed assessments, as well as the integration of feedback from the Government and the community consultation program.

Explanation of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Process (Malinda Facey, Umwelt EIS Project Director)

Malinda Facey explained that the size and value of the Projects have triggered the State Significant Development (SSD) process and provided an overview of each of the technical studies that that will be undertaken to inform the planning assessment.

Explanation of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Process (Jessica Anagnostaras, Umwelt SIA Consultant)

Explanation of the SIA process, including the recently released SIA guideline for SSD’s. Explained the purpose of the SIA is to integrate local issues/concerns via a community consultation program to inform the overall EIS. Requested feedback and involvement from any interested parties.

Project Locations

Andrew Douglas (RES Solar Project Manager) provided specific details of each Project including location of each Project.

Preliminary Visual Impact Assessment

Allison Dodds (Envisage Consulting, visual assessment specialist) explained the preliminary findings of the visual impact assessment, acknowledging that visual impacts are often a key concern of renewable projects. The computer-generated modelling showed various areas highlighted yellow, indicating areas that could potentially view the Solar Farm. This modelling, however, was explained that it is conducted as a “bare ground assessment level only” which doesn’t include trees or structures in existence. The assessment showed 50 private (residences) viewpoints and 10 public viewpoints (roads/lookouts) that could likely see some part of the Project. No one viewpoint could see the whole Solar Farm or transmission line infrastructure. The most affected viewpoints were identified from Lagoon Road to the east, Castlereagh

Hwy (2km away) and Flirtation Hill (8km away), which would all see some part of the Project. It is likely that the transmission lines to the north will be viewed by some residents. Some residents to the east and north (who are more elevated) will likely see some part of the Solar Farm. It was explained that these investigations consider the worse-case scenario and that affected viewpoints will likely not extend as far as the modelling indicates. The Project team are looking at measures to mitigation visual amenity impacts such as vegetation screening and colour treating elements of the Solar Farm (using darker colours) to reduce the Project's visibility.

Preliminary Noise Impact Assessment

Malinda Facey (Umwelt EIS Project Director) explained that the noise impact assessment has also been conducted via operational data modelling. To meet the requirements under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, noise and vibration impact assessment are required to inform the EIS. Modelling during the construction phase of the Project suggest that there will be some impact above 35dB (levels of regular background noise) in some areas (up to 45dB). Therefore, mitigation measures are being considered in these cases. The dark green line indicated on the noise map represents 35dB (or background noise levels). Noise is predicted to be within that green boundary area of the Project area and doesn't go above 35db outside the dark green line. The yellow spots indicate residents/houses, and all are located outside the dark green line boundary. A complaints procedure will be in place if there is excessive noise and hours of work is during regular business hours.

Preliminary Traffic Impact Assessment

Malinda Facey (Umwelt EIS Project Director) explained the preliminary traffic impact assessment outcomes. Panels will be sourced via the Port of Newcastle and will be delivered to the Project via the Golden Hwy/Castlereagh Hwy. It is expected that between 70-130 trucks during peak times will enter the Project daily along this route and through the construction phase, will include up to 300 light vehicles per day. Mitigation measures considered to reduce the volume of traffic on these roads is to include shuttle buses for the construction workforce, reducing the number of light vehicles. During operation it is expected that 10 vehicles will access the site per day. The Project team is currently in consultation with the road authorities regarding potential upgrades along Puggoon Road and Castlereagh Hwy.

Preliminary Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Malinda Facey (Umwelt EIS Project Director) explained the mapping and ground truthing activities undertaken as part of the EIS. The key aim of the Project is to minimise the impact on native vegetation and threatened species and the assessment has identified approximately 150 ha of threatened communities within the Project area. Mapping will be ongoing throughout the upcoming seasons. The EIS will also be referred to the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE) for assessment. The Project design has tried to minimise ecological impact areas, including near the Castlereagh Hwy, with buffers around dams and creeks to minimise impacts.

Introduction to the Barneys Reef Wind Farm

Eleanor Cairns (RES Barneys Reef Wind Farm Project Manager) introduced the Barneys Reef Farm Project consisting of 63 turbines. The battery system has been over-planned and is likely to be less than the available 441MW. The Scoping Report was submitted in July 2021 and the EIS is proposed to be submitted in December 2021. If approved, construction would commence in late 2023/early 2024. The development footprint is actually less than the area of 7,548ha available (and will likely be only 1-2% of the total land available). The preliminary studies that have informed the Project's layout and design has tried to avoid high ecological sites, Aboriginal Heritage sites, to minimise vegetation disturbance, and to improve traffic

flows, as much as possible. Community consultation is scheduled to occur in coming months. To date, six months of wind data has been collected and the Project team is currently working on finalising the layout.

Local Road Access

Penelope Williams (Umwelt EIS Project Manager) introduced the local road access analysis, with access to the Project most appropriate from Gingers Lane and Merotherie Road. Most traffic will be associated with the construction phase and a route analysis indicates that delivery of materials will be from Newcastle down the Goulburn Hwy, but there may be works required along the access road to allow sufficient access. A detailed traffic assessment will be undertaken as part of the EIS.

Noise Impact Assessment

Penelope Williams (Umwelt EIS Project Manager) introduced the noise analysis with 35dB as background noise and modelling indicating a worse-case scenario indicating that three residences located close to the Project would be exceeded and require mitigation once the layout is confirmed. The focus of the detailed assessment will have a 6-week background noise modelling program undertaken.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment

Penelope Williams (Umwelt EIS Project Manager) indicated that there are two cultural sites and one active native title claim registered, within the Project area. A detailed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment has commenced, and Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) will be asked to review the assessment. Consultation with RAPs will be undertaken in October 2021.

Visual Impact Assessment

Ashley Robertson (Moir Landscape Architects visual assessment specialist) explained that the visual assessment tools used to identify dwellings requiring detailed assessment indicated approximately 80 dwellings. Assessments are based on the topography alone and show the worse-case scenario. The proposed turbine height is required to be assessed from within an 8km area, but assessments will be going further toward Dunedoo and Gulgong (approximately 12 kms) as part of the EIS. During Session 1, a community member raised the point that Gulgong was not shown on the visual impact assessment map. Penelope Williams acknowledged that the full modelling figure is located in the Scoping Report on the DPIE website that does show Gulgong located. For Session 2, the map was zoomed out to include Gulgong and Dunedoo. (The latter map is presented in the attached presentation). Modelling shows the Project will not be visible from Dunedoo, but will be visible from Gulgong, although likely to be reduced from vegetation and mitigation measures that will be in place. The visual assessment is conducted in line with the Government's Wind Energy: Visual Assessment Bulletin for State Significant wind energy developments (Dec 2016).

Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Penelope Williams (Umwelt EIS Project Manager) introduced that surveys targeting threatened fauna and flora have been undertaken indicating that approximately 460 ha of threatened ecological communities exist within the Project site, including the large-eared pied bat and acknowledged that further assessments are required. Penelope Williams outlined all further assessments that will be undertaken as part of the EIS.

Community Consultation Outcomes to Date – Both Projects

Jessica Anagnostaras (Umwelt SIA Consultant) explained what we have heard so far in the community consultation process for each Project and explained the categorisation of social impacts in line with the Social Guideline for SSDs. Livelihoods includes personal property values, employment opportunities and

distributive equity. Surroundings includes concerns on landscape, farming land, noise and visual changes. Accessibility concerns relate to access to private properties and possible strain on local services e.g., short stay accommodation, and Decision-making systems includes people's abilities to participate in the planning process.

Jessica Anagnostaras (Umwelt SIA Consultant) described that communities' perceptions relating to the key benefits of the Projects included the potential to bring community investment, training and employment opportunities. Positive impacts to the natural environment e.g., through the transition to clean energies and accessibility benefits via improvements to local infrastructure as a result of community investment.

Project Benefits – Both Projects

Eleanor Cairns (RES Barneys Reef Wind Farm Project Manager) explained the number of jobs expected throughout the construction and operational periods. Employment will ideally be sourced from the local community, where possible. Accommodation of employees will be within local areas and surrounding towns and RES is very aware of concerns that workers will be taking up accommodation (especially with mining and tourism already existent in the area). Large materials such as turbines and blades will sourced via the Port of Newcastle and brought to the Project via the Goulburn Hwy. For smaller materials, RES is working with the local Councils to source materials and to identify the best access routes utilising local roads. Services and contractors are to be sourced locally as much as possible and RES will consult with existing businesses to understand their capabilities and capacity to service the Project.

Future Community Consultation

Darren Chesterfield (RES Community Engagement Manager) for RES described RES' intention for meaningful benefits to the community to come from renewable projects. Community funding will be set up to support local initiatives and community groups. The Project team is in the process of developing a community fund and would like feedback from the community on what types of projects the community would like to see funded. RES are also exploring the idea of a dedicated benefit sharing program specifically for near neighbours of the Projects, which is a new and innovative approach in the industry, so will be reaching out to near neighbours in next few weeks to get feedback on this program. Both programs will be designed to be fair and equitable for the community.

Darren Chesterfield (RES Community Engagement Manager) requested opportunity for feedback and ensured that future engagement will continue. Darren explained that in March 2021, RES visited the community (before lockdown) to introduce the Projects. Project updates have also been distributed to the community via the Australia Post system. However, lessons have been learnt with the postal service, that some correspondence wasn't received by all community members and thanked the community for providing this feedback. RES are considering other forms of communication that could improve future engagements with the community. Darren acknowledged the challenges faced to meet with regional communities, particularly during COVID restrictions. Darren encouraged feedback via the Community Information Session Feedback Form or by speaking directly to RES. Darren explained RES' commitment to face-to-face engagement where possible and thanked the participants for registering their interest. Links to the application for SEARs and the feedback form link will be distributed to all attendees who provide their contact details.

Q & A Session

During the Q&A sessions, several community members requested direct communications with RES team.

Question	Answer
<p>How does RES work in with Re-alliance in achieving community benefits for everyone?</p>	<p>Rebecca Meek (RES New Sites Team Manager) responded: Re-alliance have recently set up a round table for developers also we can collaborate with community benefits as an industry rather than individual projects. First meeting occurred a few weeks ago and another one is scheduled. Rebecca is a part of this group.</p>
<p>50 viewpoints for solar farm but no mention for windmills – not showing Gulgong on the visual impact map - thousands of people will be able to see these windmills, with some sections seeing 4-5 windmills. The whole horizon will be windmills. It will be very visual for a lot of people, especially from Queens Street Gulgong. People probably don't realise that they are going to be impacted by the visual aspect and for a rural township that has many heritage and historical things behind it. I don't know any other windfarms this close to a township. I'd be interested to know that. Think more people need to be aware of it.</p>	<p>Penelope Williams (Umwelt EIS Project Manager) acknowledged that the Scoping Report does cover views form Gulgong and will continue to be included in the detailed EIS assessment. Barneys Reef Wind Farm however is in earlier stages than the Tallawang Solar Farm, so doesn't have quite as much information as yet, but this will be revisited and fed back to the community when the data becomes available.</p>
<p>Can I just ask, what is the purple/pink icon representing? (Relating to the Barneys Reef Wind Farm Heritage slide (slide 18))</p>	<p>Penelope Williams (Umwelt EIS Project Manager) explained that these are recorded sites of heritage locations e.g., a burial site and water hole and scatter artefacts. Jessica Anagnostaras suggested to provide a legend on the figure. Penelope confirmed that the full figure (including legend) is available on the Scoping Report on Major Planning Project Sites.</p>
<p>I have a lot of questions. I'm really concerned about the wildlife, the birds, the weather, the rain and how all these windmills will affect my place, noise especially. I'd like to be able to meet with someone to discuss all these things.</p> <p>I did have a meeting, but didn't have enough information to go on then, so would like another meeting.</p>	<p>Jessica Anagnostaras (Umwelt SIA Consultant) recognised that we wish we could have had meetings by now and that COVID restrictions have made this harder. Daniel Leahy would love to have a telephone conversation with the attendee and if possible, will meet face to face when restrictions ease. Daniel Leahy (RES Head of Wind Development) will make contact with the attendee to meet a time that is convenient and run through the design and respond to any questions they have.</p>
<p>There is limited knowledge in the community of these sessions and those that didn't see the newsletter won't be aware of the sessions. Why are they not advertised in local media etc?</p> <p>I received the invitation in the paper, but not in the mailbox. I am subscribed to the local paper but didn't see it there. Joined the mailing list, but I had to chase people to contact me. I called the 1800 number and they had never even heard of the Project. It was very frustrating having to chase people and not being responded to.</p>	<p>Jessica Anagnostaras (Session Facilitator and Umwelt SIA Consultant) thanked attendee for their feedback and explained that we have tried quite hard to get the word out, so it is useful feedback that the methods used were not received by the community. Three weeks ago, we distributed a community information sheet in the mail to all residential addresses between Gulgong and Dunedoo. Also advertised a one-page version of the information sheet with details of the information sessions in three local papers – Mudgee Guardian, Dunedoo Diary and Gulgong Gossip. Apologies they were not received.</p> <p>Jessica acknowledged to check the phone line and will follow up with RES/Umwelt contact details for the attendee to ensure contact details are up to date. We</p>

Question	Answer
	will send any notifications that the attendee has missed.
Seems you can't hear us, but we didn't receive it and live 2kms from the project.	Response as above
<p>There is another proposed development close to this project. Where does this project sit with the Vena project and are they considered in the scoping report?</p> <p>Appreciate they are separate, but still a concern that there is more projects in the same area.</p>	RES has made the following correction to amend the issued minutes to reflect more accurately our company position – RES is engaging with Vena and other project proponents in the area to understand the potential cumulative impacts and benefits of proposed renewable projects and other forms of development in the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone. Social license and broad community support is essential for the successful implementation of the Renewable Energy Zone, and RES looks forward to working with other developers in the industry to maximise benefits to the local community.
<p>There seems to be a lot of social response that we need to be consulted but how realistic is your time frame to be able to engage with everyone and to understand the social impacts before you lodge your SIA report?</p> <p>How will that relate to ensuring you are given SEARs?</p> <p>Grateful for the forum to get a project update.</p>	<p>Jessica Anagnostaras (Umwelt SIA Consultant) responded – we fully recognise that we're not at the end of the consultation program and there are still several more months to go to ensure consultation occurs before the social assessments are scheduled to go in. We are trying to adapt to the current COVID circumstances to understand individual and community issues through more innovative ways. It is likely that many engagements will be via phone conversations. We recognise that there are a lot of people to be heard and we are working through that process.</p> <p>Daniel Leahy (RES Head of Wind Development) recognised that the intent is to include feedback of community consultation to be built into the Project design and there is a lot of work to do, and we need to understand views through consultation.</p> <p>Daniel Leahy (RES Head of Wind Development) explained that as part of awarding access to the grid, we need to have a social licence and be able to demonstrate it. NSW Government is prioritising this for all renewable energy projects.</p> <p>Jessica Anagnostaras (Umwelt SIA Consultant) explained that RES are expecting the SEARs to be released any day now. It is normally a 2-year period to have all the studies completed. These two projects are working to less time frames than that.</p> <p>Malinda Facey (Umwelt EIS Project Director) – hoping SEARs will come in soon, but we have continued to do the environmental assessments and once SEARs are received, we will make sure these are compliant with the SEARs and will continue with the EIS</p>

Question	Answer
	development, including cumulative effects (taking into account other Projects as mentioned).
What will happen to landowners that live bordering these projects?	Darren Chesterfield (RES Community Engagement Manager) – we are ramping up engagement with near neighbours and community groups to understand your concerns and how the Project will interact with individual properties.
At this point, how fixed are those turbine locations at Barneys Reef?	Eleanor Cairns (RES Barneys Reef Wind Farm Project Manager) explained that the current turbine locations are based on preliminary assessments, and we do expect they may change as more information comes in. We go through a de-risking process to develop the layout and become more certain as we go along. These changes will be communicated to stakeholders.
You mentioned "community projects" for neighbouring landowners, but what about compensation as community projects won't help immediate neighbours whose entire properties and way of life will be impacted on a continual basis.	Darren Chesterfield (RES Community Engagement Manager) explained that the benefit sharing scheme will be monitoring contribution to neighbours and it is expected that contributions to landholders will be proportionate to the interaction of each property with the proposed development. The team will be in touch to start this conversation with neighbours and then the broader community. Please reach out / fill in the feedback request form and we will get in touch.
Will you please get in touch with us too? Our block borders the wind farm project. Our home is not on the land, but it will have a significant impact on our property.	The team will be in touch to start this conversation with neighbours and then the broader community. Please reach out / fill in the feedback request form and we will get in touch.
What is the best way to contact you?	The team will get in touch directly with participants via a thank you email which will have his direct contact details.
We're a local company, is there opportunities for us during construction? Appreciative of being involved.	<p>Rebecca Meek (RES New Sites Team Manager): RES are passionate about local involvement in our Projects and RES currently support a local workforce on our other projects e.g., Murra Warra Horsham in Victoria – trained locals to be the turbine OEM and they now have a job for 30 years, which is a great success. We are definitely passionate about this as a business.</p> <p>Jessica Anagnostaras (Umwelt SIA Consultant): as part of the social and economic impact assessment we engage with services and business via a survey to understand the capacity (it is already underway) – interested, experiences, skills, potential to service/supply the project.</p> <p>Sheree Ansen (Umwelt SIA Consultant) will send the survey to the attendee.</p>
Are the majority of landowners on board?	Rebecca Meek (RES New Sites Team Manager): there has been good feedback from neighbours so far, on the whole.

Question	Answer
Has there been any discussion about Agri-solar with landholders?	Rebecca Meek (RES New Sites Team Manager): RES are interested at looking at agri-solar. Globally we have sheep under the panels, and we are currently managing one on another project that has native grasslands and bees. It is definitely something we are open to suggestions about and to talk to the landholder about.