



Minutes of Barneys Reef Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee

Monday 4 July 2022, Gulgong RSL Club
Gulgong

Attendees	Initials	Position
Garry West	GW	Independent Chairperson
Brad Bliss	BB	Wellington Valley Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation
David Menchin	DM	Community Representative
Peter Willis	PW	Gulgong Chamber of Commerce
Leeanne Ryan	LR	Warrumbungle Shire Council
Jack Pennell	JP	Warabinga Native Title Claimants
Eleanor Cairns	EC	Development Project Manager, RES
Darren Chesterfield	DC	Community Engagement Manager, RES

Meeting commenced: 5.30pm

1. Welcome & Introductions

GW: Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed attendees. Noted Leeanne Ryan and Brad Bliss attending via videoconference.

2. Apologies

Cr Dale Hogden (Warrumbungle Shire Council), Grant Gjessing (Community Representative)

3. Declarations of Pecuniary / Conflict of Interest

No new declarations

4. Minutes previous Meeting

Previous minutes had been circulated and agreed and uploaded to the project website. Report on impact to property values was circulated after the last meeting.

5. Correspondence

NIL

6. Proponents Report

Project Update

EC: The DA submission has been delayed. Most of the focus since the last meeting has been related to land tenure issues. Half of the involved landholders have signed up by way of either lease or purchase and the other half are close to finalising. We've been in discussion with swept path landholders and should have some initial documents signed with them in the next few months. It is important to progress these for the progress of the project.

EC: We are also going through a turbine optimisation exercise. We have a lot of constraints on the project at the moment so this will mean potentially some small micro-siting of turbines. Expecting to have a layout to complete the remaining EIS studies by the end of July.

DM: Are you talking about the turbine type/size, or is this not part of the optimisation.

EC: We won't decide on the turbine type until much later. We need planning approval and more wind data before the final selection is made. A turbine manufacturer will then be selected based on both of those inputs.

DM: How does that relate to the turbine design?

EC: The optimisation relates to layout, not turbine type.

DM: So what are you trying to do with the optimisation?

EC: Minimise impact and optimise generation output.

JP: Is this about planning for the maximum, but then peeling it back?

EC: Yes.

EC: It is hoped that development approval for the project will occur towards the end of the year. Test pitting as part of the archaeological studies is now required prior to the submission of the EIS, whereas in the past it was required as a condition of consent. This is an unexpected delay by up to six months. Test pitting is very reliant on weather and the rain events are causing further delays.

BB: What is the rough time line? REZ have recently put out a big discussion paper on doing the powerlines in the area so there may be a shortage of qualified people available to do the work. I expect it may be mid- September before we can get things going. There are several projects happening at the moment.

JP: Agree that there is a shortage of suitable people to do this work.

EC: Once we have a timeline sorted, our consultants will be in touch.

PW: Have you worked an access point from the Castlereagh Highway yet?

EC: Yes and we are looking to upgrade tracks of a property of an involved landholder but it is premature to announce that detail publicly.

Community Consultation

DC: Provided a high level overview of ongoing community consultation, ongoing activities and reported on current and future community sponsorships.

LR: What is the timeframe for 2022 sponsorships?

DC: Timeframe is pretty informal and there are budget limits that have to be observed. Please let us know if there are projects or groups that provide a community benefit and could use some support this financial year or next and we will do what we can to assist.

DC: Our focus is on providing support to Gulgong and Dunedoo community projects, however, for other areas, where a project has merit from our perspective, we will consider providing some small support as we did recently in sponsoring the Louisa Lawson statue project promoted by Mudgee Rotary Club.

Mention was made that The Mudgee Lions Club is evaluating interest in establishing a Club in Gulgong.

Tallawang Solar Farm Update

DC: The Tallawang Sola Farm Project will be submitting their EIS to the Department of Planning within the next couple of weeks for approval. Community will be notified when this occurs as it will be on exhibition and submissions can be made.

EC: If there are questions about the Solar Farm Project we can bring the Project Manager to a future CCC meeting.

DC: The panels will be about 6 m off the ground and will be bi-facial in nature, that is there will be panels facing up and down so as to absorb reflected sunlight from the ground. It is expected sheep grazing will occur beneath and between the panels.

DM: Has all the land allocation started?

EC: Yes, all but one of the option agreements are signed.

DM: What is the timeline of the Tallawang Project?

EC: The Tallawang Solar Farm and the Barneys Reef Wind Farm are both waiting on the construction of the transmission line for the REZ and approval by Energy Co to connect which is expected by April next year (2023).

7. General Business

DM: What does test pitting involve?

EC: Where there have been sensitive cultural areas identified we need to have the RAPs do digging in selected locations to see if there are sub-surface artefacts.

BB: That's correct. The amount of artefacts we find determines the extent of salvage and excavation required. Generally, in the areas we've looked at there's not that much surface deposit – more at 30 – 50 cm depths at most. Finds of artefacts may necessitate small turbine layout changes.

EC: This could still happen even if we get consent though.

BB: This process that things back as they were pre-2013. It is good because it minimises risk of projects getting approval that have extensive impacts on cultural sites.

EC: From our perspective it puts an upfront delay on the project. If it were done post consent, there would be a smaller impact because the study corridor would be smaller.

PW: Are discussions occurring in regard to road upgrades of the highway?

EC: It is less likely that major upgrades will be required on the highway as it is already well maintained.

PW: There are a lot of potholes between Gulgong and Dunedoo.

DM: Have you resolved access to the wind farm?

EC: We are looking at two options – one from Merotherie Road and another on the Castlereagh highway. This will be part of the EIS submission.

DM: Will the turbines be coming in from two access points?

EC: Yes, The Castlereagh highway access will need approval from ARTC due to the rail crossing so we are keeping our options open.

8. Actions Required

GW will circulate the link to the Department of Planning website for the Tallawang Solar Farm Project when it goes on exhibition.

9. Next Meeting

Next meeting scheduled for Monday 10 October 2022.

6.20pm Meeting Close