



Minutes of Barneys Reef Wind Farm

Community Consultative Committee

Monday 10 October 2022, Gulgong RSL Club
Gulgong

Present:

Garry West (GW)

Darren Chesterfield (DC)

Grant Gjessing(GG)

Peter Willis (PW)

David Menchin (DM)

Eleanor Cairns (EC)

Brad Bliss(online) (BB)

Jack Pennell (JP)

Cr Dale Hogden (online) (DH)

Nikolai Liu (online) (NL)

Independent Chairperson

Community Engagement Manager, RES

Community Representative

Gulgong Chamber of Commerce

Community Representative

Development Project Manager, RES

Wellington Valley Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation

Warabinga Native Title Claimants

Warrumbungle Shire Council

Observer

Apologies:

Leanne Ryan (LR)

Warrumbungle Shire Council

Meeting commenced 5:33pm

1. Welcome & Introductions

GW: Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country, and welcome attendees. Noted that Brad Bliss and Cr Dale Hogden were joining the meeting via video. Also a neighbour of the project was attending by video as an observer.

2. Apologies

Leanne Ryan, Warrumbungle Shire Council

3. Declarations of Pecuniary / Conflict of Interest

No new declarations

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Previous minutes had been circulated and agreed and uploaded to the project website.

5. Correspondence
NIL

6. Proponents Report

Project Update

EC: Project updates since the last meeting: layout has been optimised, based on wind data collected to date and EIS studies undertaken. This has meant an increase in the number of turbines to 69. We are not expecting any additional impact as a result of the change in WTG numbers. The preliminary LVIA has been re-run on this layout and indicates no additional impact.

Next major piece of work for the EIS is archaeological test pitting, due to commence within the next two weeks.

DM: have the access points changed? Where are they?

EC: We will have an access point on two sides of the project. On the Western side, we will be entering a host landowner's property directly off the Castlereagh Highway. On the other side, there are a few access points proposed along Merotherie Rd. The north-eastern cluster of turbines requires its own access due to some topography constraints. The main access point to the rest of the site is further south along Merotherie Rd (refer to map in ppt).

EC: The LVIA tool has been re-run on the new layout. There are some houses within 3.75km of turbines that are impacted, RES will be discussing the impact with those neighbours and discussing potential mitigation options. Some of those discussions have started, with the remainder to occur over the next couple of months.

Project timeline, DA submission is expected in early 2023. Despite the delay, we are not expecting any delay to the beginning of construction.

Community Consultation Update

DC: In late September, there were some Community Information Sessions coordinated by EnergyCo. Part of their session was to invite generators to come along and participate in the consultation. RES attended at Dunedoo and GulgongAs expected, there was better attendance at Gulgong

No major issues came up, a number of questions from the community on access points, what their likely impact is, and how we fit into the REZ.

We were seeking feedback on how to structure benefit sharing programs and businesses that could serve projects (what would stop them from being able to participate in the project)

DC to send around links to surveys for committee to share **[ACTION]**

DC: We are undertaking ongoing engagement with community groups, neighbours, and a variety of stakeholders.

RES is interested in hearing about any new short term benefit opportunities, please get in contact if you have any ideas.

Sponsorships throughout 2022 (listed on the ppt) more added for the remainder of 2022. We have committed to another 6 months of sponsoring the community bus, the feedback has been that this is well received.

Red Hill Environmental Centre's request has been sponsored in full, other advanced discussions about what we can do in the long term. We have entered into collaboration agreement with Red Hill Environmental Centre, potentially to provide an excursion destination once the projects are operational.

Another new sponsorship is Gulgong Amateur Swimming/Pool association. They have recently re-started activities, and our support is to help get this up and running again.

Longer term benefit sharing-

Neighbour Benefit Scheme is designed to not be associated with impact, simply for benefit sharing. The terms and conditions are still being finalised with our lawyers, but doesn't place any restrictions/limitations on the people involved in the scheme.

EnergyCo's role is to construct and develop transmission line. They have developed merit criteria or formal guidelines for proponents to participate in the REZ. Some of these criteria relate to project economics, environmental impact, research and development (e.g. is this project innovative?), targets around local employment and first nations participation.

JP: What are you doing about decommissioning bonds?

DC: decommissioning is a recognised 'unknown' for communities across Australia in relation to renewable energy. This is because this technology is so new that decommissioning has not been demonstrated nationally. RES however has significant international experience and a strong track record in decommissioning of wind projects. Some of this may be covered off in agreements we have with landowners to ensure components are decommissioned. Much of the concern with this issue is because wind and solar farms are new in Australia so we haven't been through the decommissioning process.

JP: Would bonds or insurance be better?

DC: Not sure what this looks like. Suggest you take a look at Codrington Wind Farm in approx. 4 years. It's the oldest commercial wind farm in Australia, due to be decommissioning or re-powered soon.

GW: Decommissioning is a condition of consent with the planning approval, happy to share conditions of consent with the group **[ACTION]**

DM: does it raise guarantees with it?

JP: Bond upfront or with third party

DM: No guarantee that we will be involved

JP: needs to be seriously considered

EC: we are likely to sell our project to e.g. a big bank or investment company with significant amounts of cash flow. This means it's less likely for the company to go bankrupt,

further reducing the risk of decommissioning not occurring. Whoever owns the project will need to comply with all contracts agreed to prior to construction, including the decommissioning part of the conditions of consent.

DM: companies should set aside funds upfront and secured to ensure decommissioning can occur

GW: mining companies give money to DPE to ensure land will be rehabilitated

JP: This will be different to mines, need to rehab as you go

DC: It's also worth noting the value in the infrastructure itself, can be sold/recycled etc., in contrast to projects like mines. Drastically offset cost of decommissioning etc. Fairly substantial value of materials to cover part of the cost of decommissioning.

JP: steel likely to be at used by date at the end of 30/35 years. Should we be looking at recycling fibreglass etc?

DC: There are great examples of blades being turned into playgrounds. Research and development going into recycling turbine components and creating entirely recyclable blades.

DC: Lastly, regarding benefit sharing development, I wanted to highlight our interpretation of merit criteria from EnCo.. They will also have their own benefit sharing scheme, comes out of our access fee to be shared across the whole REZ

DC: **Tallawang solar farm update**, DA has been submitted to DPE. Yet to be registered, accept registration fee etc. Final few requirements to go to DPE, should be registered in approx. a week.

JP: how long does it take for a project to get approved?

GW: varies. Can take 6-9 months. DPE currently overworked with reviewing a significant amount of management plans. Other factors include number of objections to the project and is the department satisfied with the process of the RTS phase?

7. General Business:

NIL

8. ACTIONS

GW to circulate link to Community Survey

GW to circulate Conditions of Consent relating to Decommissioning and Rehabilitation

9. Next Meeting

Next meeting, late January. Will liaise with DC and EC for the best date.

Meeting close: 6:21pm