

Minutes of the Community Consultation Committee (CCC) Meeting held at Soldier's Hall, Wednesday December 9th, 2015



Present

(List of names)

Apologies

(List of names)

1.0 Introduction

The meeting opened at 7pm. All attendees agreed to the meeting being recorded.

Greg asked Nick to establish current committee members. Nick read out the list of members, and advised that Bev had contacted him because her husband Alex had recently passed away, and she has now appointed Andrew and Sarah as their alternates.

Jane was also appointed as an alternate by [Ginny or Jenny?] Elliot.

2.0 Declaration of pecuniary or other interests

Nick outlined the guidelines about declaring pecuniary or other interests, including landholders, any employee of Trustpower, or any person who may be in a position to profit by the approval or non-approval of the project.

No new declarations were made.

3.0 Introduction of new attendees

Nick introduced Andrew, Jane and Sarah who have been appointed as alternates for those members of the committee which the guidelines allow.

Nick also mentioned that he has been having difficulty communicating with Mike at Trustpower, and had sent emails to him regarding the official procedure for new members to be appointed to the committee when existing members leave, and for new members to join.

ACTION POINT

[Unidentified male] to follow up with Mike regarding Nick's emails during an upcoming meeting

4.0 Committee guidelines

Nick read out the committee guidelines, including the following comments:

4.1 - Committee lifetime

When you read the guidelines you'll see that the committee is actually supposed to stay alive for the project – not just for the application but for the project so when the turbines get built (when they get built), it's up to this committee to make sure they're operating properly, and if people have concerns or complaints, they can bring them to us and it's up to us to bring those concerns to the proponents. So the committee is supposed to stay alive and there's somewhere in here where they recommend how many meetings we should have per year over the process of the project.

4.2 - Committee meeting frequency

With the timing of the meetings, there are times when the committee needs to meet often, and there will be times when we don't need to meet, because we don't need to talk about exactly the same things over and over. I think the stage of the process we're up to is the proponent addressing the submission that are with the department now, and they're going to lodge their submission we've talked about hopefully by the end of the year.

So the project is up to addressing submissions. If you want to have a look at the Dept. of Planning website, you can see the submissions – some are in favour, some are just comments, some are against, and you can have a look at all those comments and objectors. All three of the councils have lodged submissions. So you can go on the Dept. of Planning website, if you have trouble finding it ring me and I'll guide you to it and you can find it. So committee meetings are just every three to four months depending where we're up to and then once it's built, three to four times a year and then two times a year thereafter.

ACTION POINT

Nick to provide copies of community guidelines to all committee members

5.0 Confirmation of previous Minutes

Review minutes from last meeting/the minutes were **not** initially accepted as a true and fair record:

General discussion about wording of previous minutes re: three separate funds vs single fund and position of council vs committee on the subject and who had made the original comment and who should administer the funds.

Comments by Jane expressing concern about accuracy and completeness of previous minutes, and the fact that they hadn't been circulated prior to the meeting.

ACTION POINT (I)

Previous minutes to be amended to reflect agreement/disagreement of committee members on subject of funds.

ACTION POINT (II)

Michael to circulate previous minutes, people to provide feedback to Nick, and then Nick will edit and publish to the website.

6.0 Actions arising from previous minutes:

6.1 - Financials

Michael provided some draft financial figures in response to questions by Andrew at previous meeting.

The figures reflect one-trips rather than two-way trips, and are only a draft version with the preliminary investigation and based on previous experience of other wind farms. At the information day the information boards featured two-way trips.

6.2 - Cranes

General discussion about cranes and the estimated numbers of movements they will make onsite during construction, how many times they will need to be assembled/disassembled and about the need for roads to be bituminised.

Concerns raised about whether cranes will move from property to property without having to go onto the roads, requiring removal of fences etc. Comment made that having a continuous internal site access will provide better access for firefighters.

Note: Information on individual roads was not available due to the early stage of the process. That information will be available once through the approval phase and into design. This information is not included in the Environmental Impact Statement.

ACTION POINT

Members to read Michael's draft report and come back with comments/questions next meeting

7.0 Project Update

7.1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

The EIS hasn't been submitted to Dept. of Planning, although was intended to be submitted at end of November it wasn't because they wanted to add more detail to the report before submission.

Additional survey work is being undertaken out onsite to help identify the biodiversity offset, the clearance and impact that the project will have, and the total area and the required offset are being estimated.

Individual consultants are currently putting their chapters together, and Michael is reviewing with the help of Nicola. Once it's complete, it will be put together as a complete volume, reviewed and submitted.

It will then be re-exhibited, and the community will be invited to make further submissions on it.

7.2 - EIS Submission date

At this stage the tentative goal is to complete and submit the EIS by the end of January 2016. Apologies were made for the delay, however the reason is that it needs to be done properly and thoroughly.

In regard to the EA, the submission that were received from that are being addressed/responded to within the EIS report. They will be published as part of the EIS to be submitted at the end of January.

A side comment on Trustpower was made: Nick and Ross went and checked out Snowtown, said it's fantastic to see what's been achieved and how the community is involved and working together. Some objections raised to 'sweeping statements'.

7.3 - Website information

Trustpower is in the process of redesigning the Australian assets information on the Trustpower website, and make it easier to navigate and locate the information when people try to access it via the Trustpower website, rather than the website for the project.

ACTION POINT (I)

Councils to look into adding informative links on their websites to enable members of the public to find the information about the windfarm.

ACTION POINT (II)

Michael to bring copies of windfarm maps to the next meeting, and to send out link to booklet from exhibition

8.0 General Business

8.1 - Snowtown output reduction

Question raised by Bert about the reported downgrading of the Snowtown output.

Answer: There was modelling done on the projected output of the turbines, and the project was budgeted to come in at \$468m but came in at \$438m ahead of time.

As a result of that, just after it was commissioned some independent consultants came in and re-valued the windfarm for book purposes based on its projected output, what you'd sell the output for and what the value of the windfarm was based on that.

After 12 months of operation the projection was on the high side by 9% and so the upward swing in the valuation was (off the top of my head) three-hundred-and-something million dollars, and it came down by \$70m so it's still a fantastically good windfarm, it's just not exceptionally, exceptionally good; just very good.

It's the first time anyone in Australasia had built a windfarm using these latest technology wind turbines, and you do get a certain amount of what we call shadow effect from one to the other under some wind conditions, and there's new modelling software out there and more information available so from here on in Siemens and everyone will be better placed to model those turbines.

Stage one of the windfarm is exceeding what it's projected to do, so this just relates to the second age and the bigger gearboxes on the turbines.

8.2 - Charlie: Introduction

Charlie works for a community organisation named Australian Wind Alliance, which is not linked to any windfarm owner or developer. They advocate for good outcomes for everyone – windfarms, communities and councils, and everyone involved in the game.

He's a farmer from Crookwell, who has been trying to build a windfarm on my property for 15 years now with a Spanish company [Union Fornosa?], and has no links to any other windfarm company except them.

Australian Wind Alliance is a community organisation funded by membership and donations with no ties to anyone in the industry.

Wants to raise awareness that the Yass Valley Council has developed a community enhancement funding policy and it's a really good initiative. It's on the table at the moment and he spoke to the last council meeting about it.

He encourages everyone to read the draft policy and make submissions about it, because it helps with transparency and could be a very important policy for the region.

8.3 - Trustpower: How many neighbours are in the Snowtown project?

The windfarm there is 52km long and spans three ridges so the community is huge – not just the people of Snowtown but people from neighbouring towns including those whose property isn't affected but who can see the turbines.

ACTION POINT

Estimates of the total number of houses within 5km, and total number of properties without houses in the same distance to be provided at next meeting by Trustpower

8.4 - Property values

Concerns raised and discussion about whether the property prices and perceived attractiveness of the area for people to move in and purchase property may be affected by the presence of windfarms. Comparisons were made with other windfarm communities in Australia where properties are or are not selling.

Concerns raised about proximity of Rye Park School to the turbines.

Comments made urging everyone to think about the greater good, and the opportunities which will potentially arise as a result of the development. Schools at risk of closing may survive if just a couple of families move into the area.

Assurances made that cumulative impact assessments are implemented when developments are proposed in areas that already have windfarms. It's in the hands of the Dept. of Planning.

8.5 - Allocation of community funding

Discussion about allocation of funds and how council policies and procedures apply.

Question asked of councillors: would council be of the view that these funds should be spent within a certain radius of the windfarm?

Answer given was that further information about what funds are available and discussion into how to manage them needs to take place but the preference would be for the money to be used on the communities directly affected by the developments.

Comment from Trustpower that community and council will be taken into account regarding allocation of funding but that no neighbourhood benefit agreements have been signed as yet.

Council believes that the neighbour benefit fund shouldn't be linked to the community fund but should be managed separately.

Discussion comparing different states (Victoria and SA) and whether the windfarm properties have rates increases as a result of industrial activity on their land.

Trustpower confirmed that in states where councils are paid rates based on the value of the land, they pay the landowners for any increases in rates as a result of the development, so they are not out of pocket.

Comment made that [unknown female] feels that communities will not grow as a result of wind turbines around them, and that schools will be at risk with less pupils because the lifestyle population won't continue to grow.

8.6 - Trustpower: Does Snowtown have as many ecologically sensitive areas as here?

Trustpower commented that the predominant groundcover at Snowtown is native grasses, which are important in South Australia where native grassland care has come a long way in the last decade. If you look at the sites you'd think they're totally different, however from an environmental impact perspective, there are similar impacts and biodiversity issues with the exception of the presence of parrots due to there being less trees, however they have endangered pygmy bluetongue lizards to take into account at Snowtown.

Comment made by [unknown] that looking at the photos of the construction of Snowtown during the site visit that they were impressed by the minimal visual impact and disturbance of the landscape and the apparent care taken.

Concerns raised by [unknown] that Snowtown is being compared with Rye Park all the time, and that they're not being treated as a separate project.

8.7 – Fishburners.org

Greg commented that a good use of the community money is for [fishburners?] which helps young people create their own entrepreneurial enterprises. Handed out information to attendees. <http://fishburners.org/>

8.8 - Water allocation

Concerns raised about the utilisation and management of the water resources in the area and the impacts that the increased water use will have on the community and how it will be allocated. The Dept. of Land and Water will be making a decision on how and where water will be extracted and how much will be allocated for use.

Next meeting date:

17 Feburary 2016

Meeting closed

[time]

ACTION POINT SUMMARY

#	Action	Meeting action occurred from	Owner	Deadline	Comments
1.	Follow up with Mike from Trustpower regarding Nick's emails about appointing new committee members	3.0	[unidentified]		
2.	Provide copy of Committee Guidelines to all committee members	4.0	Nick		
3.	Previous minutes to be amended to reflect agreement/disagreement of committee members on subject of funds	5.0	Michael		
4.	Michael to circulate previous minutes, people to provide feedback to Nick, and then Nick will edit and publish to the website before the next meeting	5.0	Michael/Nick		
5.	Members to read Michael's draft report and come back with comments/questions next meeting	6.0	Attendees		
6.	Councils to look into adding informative links on their websites to enable members of the public to find the information about the windfarm	7.3	Councillors		
7.	Michael to bring copies of windfarm maps to the next meeting, and to send out link to booklet from exhibition	7.3	Michael		
8.	Confirmation of the total number of houses within 5km, and total number of properties without houses in the same distance to be provided at next meeting by Trustpower	8.3	Trustpower		