

Rye Park Wind Farm Community Consultation Committee
Meeting No 24 held at Yass Soldiers' Memorial Hall, Yass
Thursday 4th March 2021

Present

CCC Members: Nic Carmody (Independent Chair), Andrew Field, Christine Hawkins, Jayne Apps, Sara Brown, Cr James Wheelwright, Malcolm Day, and Graeme Privett

Proponent: James Beckett (Land Development Manager), Martine Holberton (Community and Stakeholder Engagement Advisor) Matt Glass (Project Manager).

Observers: Lorraine Skupien, David Sainsbury

The meeting opened at 7.10pm.

1. Welcome/Apologies

Apologies: Cr John Walker, Cr Geoff Frost. Thank you to the Committee members present for their attendance.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary or other interests

All attendees had no changes to their declared Code of Conduct and Pecuniary Interest forms.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2020 were adopted.

4. Actions arising from previous Minutes

Action sheet updated.

5. Correspondence

Email from Martine that Malcolm Day has advised that he intends to resign from the CCC at this meeting.

6. Rye Park Wind Farm Project Status

Martine Holberton

Tilt Renewables (TLT) is still in a holding pattern with Department (DPIE). We are waiting for a decision from the Department on the Modification Application. They have requested further information which has been provided and published. Currently we are working on a Response to Submissions report for the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Referral from the Federal Government. There were a total 24 submissions. As part of the Response to Submissions process, we will respond to the submissions in relation to the specific EPBC listed threatened species and communities, objections outside these do not form part of the assessment.

Andrew Field: Why were not we informed about this at our last meeting?

Martine Holberton: We did not have it at the time.

James Beckett: Typically, you expect more submissions on the State approval process than the EPBC. The EPBC is a lot narrower.

Christine Hawkins: The EPBC came out in January. You have been negligent in keeping us and the community informed.

Jayne Apps: It should have been up to you to let the committee know. When was it put in?

James Beckett: I will let you know when we submitted it.

ACTION: Timeline:

- TLT made a decision to re-refer the project / action under the EPBC Act because the previous Referral was no longer valid for the modified project. **DATE: 17 November 2020**
- DAWE assessed the referral to determine how the Project should be assessed. TLT included mention of the EPBC approval process in the **December newsletter**
- A decision to request Preliminary Documentation was made by DAWE and communicated to TLT. **DATE: 16 December 2020** – this was AFTER the last CCC meeting (which was the first time TLT was made aware of going to public exhibition)
 - The CCC meeting was held on the 4th of December
- The Preliminary Documentation was put on public notice and exhibition. **DATE: 15 January – 29 January** (10 business days + Australia Day).
 - Promotion was undertaken in line with requirements stipulated by DAWE (an ad in a regional publication (Boorowa News) was optional and two ads were placed in the Daily Telegraph, the documentation was also supplied to an additional location)
- Response to Submissions report has been prepared and submitted to DAWE
 - Publication required 10 business days after submission to DAWE
 - 19 March 2020 – 6 April 2020
- DAWE decision (40 days)

Christine Hawkins: It would be a courtesy to keep everyone informed. If you want community support, you need to give us information and not leave out the community.

Sara Brown: There is no excuse as to why you are not communicating. This whole consultation process has been lacking by 3 separate entities. There is no improvement in the consultation. It is not difficult – just be transparent and honest and allow people to respond. It is not a big ask to send out an email or send something to the Chair to forward on.

Christine Hawkins: I would hope that the Minister takes this into consideration.

Project update

Matt Glass: We have been meeting with contractors, progressing with the designs of public road upgrades and assessments of bridge infrastructure. Over the next few months, we will continue with geotech investigations, finalise management plans, key contracts and the final layout. Consultation with key regulatory agencies will continue.

James Beckett: We are continuing to engage with all landholders and continue to offer neighbourhood agreements to non-involved landholders.

Martine Holberton: We will conduct construction community drop-in information sessions as well as supplier information sessions. The goods and services register remains open for interested suppliers. Estimated 250 jobs during build. 10 full time jobs during operations.

Chair: When and where are you planning to hold these drop-in meetings?

Martine Holberton: We have not finalised that yet, we are waiting for final project approval.

Andrew Field: Yet you seem to be progressing with everything else?

James Beckett: In order to be shovel ready, should an approval be handed down, we need to proceed with development activities prior to receiving the final project approval.

Sara Brown: In relation to the full-time jobs created by the project, can they operate offsite? Will the 10 people be local people?

Matt Glass: The jobs are required to work onsite. The company will pay cost of relocation to employees, so it is in our interest to employ locally.

Sara Brown: Will any onsite injuries be reported back to the CCC?

Matt Glass: Does it impact on the community?

Sara Brown: It is important for the community to know and for the project to be transparent and honest. It sends the wrong message otherwise.

Chair: Other local Wind Farm projects have a complaint register and the information comes back to the CCC. The lead contractor attends the meetings and things can be dealt with on the spot.

James Beckett: We will look to do that.

ACTION: outstanding

Martine Holberton: A project specific complaints management plan will be developed.

The Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with Councils will provide community investment funds for 65 turbines in Hilltops Council, 16 in Upper Lachlan and 11 in Yass Valley. Separately, Tilt is looking at providing further funding under a Benefit Sharing Plan (BSP). We are interested in receiving feedback/ideas for this funding.

Sara Brown: Can I clarify – you get the Renewable Energy Certificates (REC) - If you are generating an income why are you not beginning payment of the VPA?

ACTION: The VPA commences as per the agreement, which states upon obtaining a Construction Certificate.

Matt Glass: We receive REC funding as soon as they generate power. I am not sure how the VPA was created.

Martine Holberton: Outside the VPA we have set aside additional community investment funds to be delivered during construction. We are investigating options to determine the best outcomes for this investment across three focus areas: Local, Regional and Educational.

David Sainsbury: Can you tell us what the wish list is for the Rye Park Community Association?

Martine Holberton: Mostly infrastructure. You would need to ask them for the list. They are the only ideas we have received. Some of them could be considered during construction.

James Beckett: It is a list of their priorities as an organisation. We were invited to their meeting last night and gave a presentation.

Cr Wheelwright: I have been insistent that there is a Council Rep on these sorts of community organisations. The right hand needs to know what the left is doing. There is no point one going off and doing one thing and not letting the other know, Councils need to be kept informed.

Malcolm Day: There is a black zone for communication. Has there been any talk of improvement of telecommunication in the area? This will improve safety.

Sara Brown: I raised this previously. It should be the windfarm's responsibility to remedy.

Martine Holberton:

Plan for the next 6 months: March Newsletter, Financial investment decision, Finalised benefit sharing plan, construction info sessions, Supplier engagement, Construction activity schedule, Road upgrades, site preparation.

Questions relating to project update:

Christine Hawkins: Re quarries – in December you said it would be up north.

David Sainsbury: It would be great if they go straight from the quarry and into the footprint. They are saying the traffic will be going through the village.

Matt Glass: There are quarry developers keen to tender for the wind farm contract. The development consent they usually require will be for the worst case i.e., through the village. They will be going from the quarry and into the development boundary wherever possible.

James Beckett: That is what we represented in our modification – you present the worst-case scenario and then work within the parameters to reduce local impacts.

David Sainsbury: Talking about 70,000 tonnes per quarry per year and then operate 6 months after completion. It will run for three years. 7am to 6pm 6 days a week, for 12 months.

Matt Glass: That's incorrect. It is tonnes not cubic metres – 70,000 tonnes equate to approximately 8 weeks.

Andrew Field: What is the estimated water usage and project timeframe?

James Beckett: It is unchanged from the 118ML outlined in the modification application to the existing Development Consent.

Matt Glass: Project timeframe – 2 ½ years.

Christine Hawkins: Why a drop-in session not a meeting?

Matt Glass: Not everyone can attend a meeting.

David Sainsbury: What about on a Saturday.

Martine Holberton: We could look at that and have a weekday and a weekend.

Sara Brown: When Dept of Planning put on a meeting they got a good attendance. They spoke to people about the process. A lot of people do not know what questions to ask. You need to lead it.

Andrew Field: Are you going to source water from Yass like Bango?

James Beckett: Sourcing water is the responsibility of the construction contractor we will engage to complete the construction of the wind farm. Due to this, we have presented the possibility of obtaining water from existing surface water storages and from groundwater sources within the wind farm until a decision is made by the contractor.

7. General Business – questions without notice

Website listing: to give people contact details of the community representatives of the CCC.

Martine Holberton: Several other windfarms have their CCC members listed.

Varying responses to publishing the community Representatives names etc. Decision made to provide the Chairs contact details who can then forward the enquirer to specific committee members.

Committee Vacancy:

Malcolm Day has advised that he is resigning from the Rye Park Windfarm Community Consultative Committee.

Chair: presented an attendance sheet and thanked Malcolm for his 8+ years of support to the CCC in representing his community.

Chair: We now have 5 Community members on the committee, the guidelines allow for up to 7. We do not have to have them all. To fill the 2 vacant positions, it will need to be advertised. We call for applications, then they are reviewed by me then sent to the Department for appointment/approval.

James Beckett: It would be good to have better community representation of the southern end of the windfarm.

Chair: The Department often has a preference to having people who are impacted by the project or living nearby. So, when would the committee like to begin this process?

General view is to begin in June after our next meeting.

Other business:

Andrew Field: Are all the involved Landholders signed up?

James Beckett: We have agreements in place with all landholders affected by the windfarm. We do vary/review agreements from time to time. We require all the landholder's consent to build the windfarm. It is a continual process of reviewing the agreements in relation to the project design.

8. Next Meeting

Next meeting to be held, 7pm Thursday 17th June 2021, Yass Soldiers' Memorial Hall Annexe.

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm

ACTION LIST?

Action	Meeting	Owner	Status
When was TLT notified about the EPBC Referral and public exhibition?	4 March 2021	TLT	Complete
VPA commencement – when does it start?	4 March 2021	CCC	Complete
Water usage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the reporting obligation to the Department on how much is used and what happens if TLT goes over? • Will TLT / can TLT use untreated water? • Will TLT source water from Yass? 	4 March 2021	CCC	Outstanding
CCC vacancies	4 March 2021	CCC	TBD
CCC Chair contact information to be made available on the RPWF project webpage	4 March 2021	TLT	Complete