

**BIALA WIND FARM
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE – MEETING 23**

Date/Time:	Tuesday 14 November 2023
Location:	Grabben Gullen Community Hall, Grabben Gullen
Attendees:	Nic Carmody (NC), Chairperson Paul Hewitt (PH), Committee Member Shane Laverty (SL), Committee Member Lachlan Lambertson (LL), (BJCE), Owner’s Representative Karl Schubert (KS), (BJCE), Owner’s Representative Elizabeth Picker (EP), (BJCE), Community Liaison Officer Paul Culhane (PC), Upper Lachlan Shire Council Representative Josh Brown (JB), Nature Advisory (Guest)
Apologies:	Vince Heffernan (VH), Committee Member Kathy Cosgrove (KC), Committee Member Jenifer Heffernan (JH), Committee Member George Shepherd (GS), Committee Member Jochen Rasmussen (JR), (BJCE) Owner’s Representative

SUMMARY OF MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Introduction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC welcomed everyone to the 23rd CCC meeting • Apologies from KC and GS • NC introduced Biala Wind Farm’s new staff – LL and KS. LL is the new Asset Manager and KS has been appointed as the Head of Corporate Affairs & Investor Relations. • NC welcomed guest speaker JB from Nature Advisory. Nature Advisory is one of Australia’s leading ecological consultancies. LL explained Nature Advisory is undertaking the independent bird and bat monitoring at Biala Wind Farm.
2. Code of Conduct and Agreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of pecuniary or other interests: SL confirmed noise monitoring is currently being undertaken at his property and received a payment in relation to this.
3. CCC Meeting Minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minutes for the 22nd meeting were agreed out of session and are on the website.
4. Correspondence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPIE new CCC Guideline have been published. More resources are available at dpie.nsw.gov.au.

5. General Discussion

Bird and Bat Monitoring – Nature Advisory

- EP explained JB is attending as a follow-up to bird and bat monitoring discussion at the previous CCC meeting.
- JB said Nature Advisory is onsite undertaking the post-construction monitoring. Currently conducting carcass searches, with scavenger trials having been completed in the preceding months. The annual report was finalised a few months ago with the rest of the studies concluding in December 2023. Nature Advisory will send the collected data to an analytics company who will review the data and make recommendations on what Nature Advisory found.
- JB explained most of the bird mortalities onsite have been common species, such as magpies and galahs. There is not a lot of concern for threatened species at the moment.
- The accuracy of the searches was raised in the previous meeting. JB explained how a search is conducted.
 - Nature Advisory put scavenger trials out. They also install cameras to collect the data. The footage from these cameras assist in identifying whether carcasses are being taken between retrievals or not. This is true. The trials generate a correction factor which takes into account the duration a carcass will be on the ground before being scavenged, as this will impact the number of mortalities recorded per month during our searches. Nature Advisory may not find all of the mortalities but they can decipher trends depending on certain seasons, habitats etc. JB noted that there was no concern currently, but a full assessment would be done at the conclusion of the 24 month collection period.
 - Question raised about the frequency of the carcass searches. Carcass searches* are conducted every month, checking every turbine up to 120m radius from turbine..
 - Between September and March, Nature Advisory conduct a pulse search. This is a higher period of bats. 60m pulses are carried out a few days after to account for any they might have missed. This was completed in June.
- Four searches were conducted today and there will be two more conducted in December 2023.
- NC asked if Nature Advisory work with any other wind farms. JB confirmed they have worked with Bango Wind Farm, Collector Wind Farm and Capital Wind Farm.
- JB said BWF is on par with these wind farms in relation to common bird strikes.
- JB explained there are Superb Parrot species around BWF but they have not seen any roosting. They did check the hollows and they are suitable for habitation, but they don't seem to be using the trees onsite. This is the same for the Powerful Owl.
- JB confirmed Nature Advisory did find a Powerful Owl 350m from a turbine but deemed it not a concern. It is harder to assess their habitats. JB noted he hasn't seen any Powerful Owls flying around or displaying breeding behaviour.
- Trial cameras have been out onsite. SL asked how they pick-up what's happening. JB explained the cameras point to the ground, a carcass is placed on the ground in front of the camera. They see a predator come and take the carcass.
- 98 Birds have been struck at BWF (55 birds, 43 feather spots), 46 bats according to annual report. *NB: The total bird strikes was updated from 100 to 98 by NA post-meeting.*
 - PC asked if Nature Advisory proportion the results e.g.; an owl strike to a magpie strike. JB explained they're unable to quantify the magpie population but they're in abundance here. Magpies may make up 24.5% of the mortalities but it's not really an environmental concern. *NB: the magpie mortality was updated from*

30% to 24.5% by NA post-meeting

- JB confirmed he has not sighted any Superb Parrots at BWF. A Superb Parrot strike would initiate an impact trigger, which would result in repeated searches of the turbine and nearby turbines (within 2km) will be commenced within a week, followed by fortnightly searches for a minimum of two month or longer if the species concerned remains in the area. It could be a bigger chunk of their population compared to a flock of galahs.
- PH asked where the carcasses used in the scavenger trials come from, concerned about the biosecurity. JB confirmed the carcasses are the ones they find on BWF. These are frozen and put back on BWF when they need to be used or they use ethically sourced alternatives. They have used mouse carcasses purchased from Pet Barn previously.
- SL asked what would happen if Nature Advisory found a dead Superb Parrot onsite.
 - JB explained they would discuss the impact, and develop a plan that would likely involve intensive searches every couple of days to assess.
- SL asked what would happen if a community of Superb Parrots moved to BWF.
 - JB explained the Project Manager and regulatory body would be informed. They would assess the severity of the situation, and look into mitigation options. There would be a process to work out what's the safest for parrots and the most useful strategy for the wind farm.
- PH asked if there is any evidence of mortality declining over time.
 - JB hasn't read the literature of generational bird patterns to comment. JB did spot some Wedge Tailed Eagles flying very close to the blades today and is unsure why.
 - JB confirmed it could take up to 5 – 10 years to see trends on BWF's bird movements.
- PC asked if there had been any eagle mortalities at BWF.
 - JB said there had been 1 mortality at Biala but the results of this round of searches hasn't been finalised and confirmed yet. JB said he spotted five at one time courting each other. *NB: the mortality rate was updated from 0 to 1 by NA post-meeting.*
- NC thanked JB for attending the meeting.

Project update

LL provided the following update

- BJEI (BWF's parent company) has expanded its team
 - LL joined the company 6-months ago as Asset Manager for BWF, GRWF and GSF.
 - Gustavo Siqueira as an Asset Manager and Sanpu Tang as an Assistant Operation Engineer
 - Karim Ali as Health, Safety, Environment and Quality (HSEQ) Manager
 - Andrew Sinclair as Site Manager for BWF, GRWF and GSF
 - Karl Schubert as Head of Corporate Affairs and Investor Relations
- The substation maintenance is complete
- The bird and bat monitoring is ongoing
- The external environmental audit was completed in October noting nothing of concern
- There have been some minor works onsite
- Noise monitoring has finished and the Operational Noise Monitoring plan is now available on the project website.
- In response to our previous meeting action item - during the July to September quarter, Biala wind farm generated more than 75 Terawatt hours of renewable energy, which is enough to power at least 33,000 homes over the three-month period.

Community Enhancement Fund (CEF)

- EP explained the 2023/24 CEF closed in October 2023 but successful applicants haven't yet been announced.

Landscaping Program

- EP confirmed the Landscaping Program is still open. There have been 32 applications submitted to date.

TV Reception Program

- EP confirmed the TV Reception Program is still accepting applications. The Program has been extended and is set to close in January 2024. There have been over 65 applications submitted to date.
- BJCE will undertake additional engagement with the community to ensure all eligible members have had the opportunity to participate in the programme.

Sponsorships and Donations

- EP confirmed Biala Wind Farm renewed their Crookwell Devils' sponsorship and recently sponsored the Gullen Triple Classics Bowling Tournament in Goulburn. The wind farm team was also at the Crookwell Show in February, raising funds for the local RFS groups. The company added another dollar for every dollar raised through a gold coin donation for children's face painting.

Community Engagement

- Adding to the Programs, LL explained there has been a number of tours conducted at GRWSF including; Goulburn Rotary, two free public tours and the local public schools. The ANU Wind Energy Course students will be touring the site tomorrow.
- KS said BJEI is looking to support and reactivate the STEM program across all of its project in 2024. LL explained the different job roles needed on an operational wind farm varying from engineers to engagement officers to electricians. KS said the company will look to connect with TAFE/CIT in NSW and ACT to find out how they can support them.
- PH said he really likes this idea especially if it keeps local kids in the area.
- PC suggested scholarships and internships are also beneficial and it's good to see some coming along in this area.

General

- SL inquired about the 2022/23 BWF Community Fund and the priority area.
- KS explained the Biala Wind Farm Community Fund aims to support initiatives that benefit the local community through projects and initiatives proposed by members of the community through registered or incorporated not for profit organisations that contribute to neighbouring communities within 5kms of the wind farm or, if no suitable community purpose is available with 5kms, then within 20km of a wind turbine on the Biala Wind Farm.
- SL asked what groups were awarded the funding.
- EP confirmed Gunning District Landcare was awarded \$19,982.18 and Upper Lachlan Landcare Inc was awarded \$13,035.00. The remaining amount was rolled over to the 2023/24 funding round which totalled \$160,302.00.
- General discussion about the community fund, funding allocation, groups who had applied to the fund and long-term strategic project ideas.

- SL raised an issue with the noise monitoring installation processes and biosecurity guidelines. LL to investigate with contractors and follow-up with SL after the meeting.
- EP and KS explained a survey was pushed out earlier this year and received a good response. The findings are available on the project website. A community workshop was also planned to discuss project ideas for Grabben Gullen. This was postponed due to day/time issues for attendees and construction works happening at the meeting place. KS said BWF will host another community workshop in early 2024 to develop project ideas for the next funding round. The committee suggested hosting it on a weekend, ideally a Sunday.
- EP mentioned BWF and GRWF have held grant writing workshops in the past and can offer this again. Only one person attended the last BWF grant writing workshop.

6. **Complaints**

- The October complaints register can be found [here](#).

7. **Next Steps and Close**

Next meeting: 5 March 2024
Location: Biala Wind Farm
Meeting closed: 7.30pm

*Consolidated action item list on the next page.

Consolidated Action Items

Action Item	Update
EP and LL to coordinate a site tour for CCC members.	Ongoing
LL to provide a report on Biala Wind Farm's consumption and number of houses powered on average last quarter.	Completed
LL to provide a report on Biala Wind Farm's consumption and number of houses powered at each meeting in future.	Ongoing
PC to follow-up as to why the letter for Susan Reynolds to be a Council alternate was not sent to NC. PC to resend it.	Outstanding
TM to confirm if the aviation lights change colour	Completed
BJCE to investigate the possible corrugating on some of the road corners between the Leonard's driveway and the old school	Completed
EP to follow-up with SC re; TV reception interference	Completed
EP to follow-up with BC re; program eligibility	Completed
BJCE to develop a TV Channel User Manual for the TV Reception Program recipients	Completed
BJCE to arrange Biala grant writing workshop prior to CEF applications opening	Completed
BJCE to provide updated high level Biala program to CCC members (ongoing)	Completed
NC to respond to Peter Gordon's email	Completed
NC to circulate NWFC presentation and contact details to members	2019 Annual Report can be read and downloaded here .
BJCE to confirm if Biala and Gurrundah localities are within the 5km zone for the Community Enhancement Fund	Completed



Action Item	Update
PH will speak to GGCPA and encourage them to approach Council about turning off the aviation lights	Completed
PC to flag the aviation lights at the upcoming Council meeting	Completed
BJCE to confirm the aviation light operation timings	Completed
BJCE to confirm if the ULSC would like a 100km speed sign installed along Range Road leaving Grabben Gullen	Completed
EP to update Meeting 14 Minutes with updated aviation light information.	Completed
BJCE to issue text message to update community about the oversized loads.	Completed
TM to confirm how many aviation lights are installed on each turbine.	Completed
PC to request USLC to support the community's request to have the lights turned off.	Completed
NC to circulate the VPA to members.	Completed
TM to circulate TV Program map to members when available.	Completed
EP to update member list on website	Completed
NC to contact inactive members to seek clarification if they would still like to be a member of the CCC.	Completed