

**BIALA WIND FARM
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE – MEETING 21**

Date/Time:	Thursday 3 rd November 2022
Location:	Grabben Gullen Community Hall, Grabben Gullen
Attendees:	Nic Carmody (NC), Chairperson Paul Hewitt (PH), Committee Member Derek Powell (JR), (BJCE), Owner’s Representative Jochen Rasmussen (JR), (BJCE), Owner’s Representative Elizabeth Picker (EP), (BJCE), Community Liaison Officer
Apologies:	John McCue (JM), Committee Member Vince Heffernan (JH), Committee Member Shane Laverty (SL), Committee Member Kathy Cosgrove (KC), Committee Member Jenifer Heffernan (JH), Committee Member George Shepherd (GS), Committee Member Paul Culhane (PC), Upper Lachlan Shire Council Representative

SUMMARY OF MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Introduction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC welcomed everyone to the 21st CCC meeting • Apologies from KC and JH noted • Discussion about Councillor Susan Reynolds attending as PC alternate. NC to email Susan to gauge interest.
2. Code of Conduct and Agreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of pecuniary or other interests: None.
3. CCC Meeting Minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minutes for the 20th meeting were agreed out of session and are on the website.
4. Correspondence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC reminded committee members the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) has revised the CCC guidelines. NC circulated information in October.
5. General Discussion
<p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General discussion about effectiveness of the CCC. There haven’t been a lot of questions from the community directed toward PH. PH interested in ensuring community members have factual information.

Project update

- DP provided the following project update:
 - BWF received communication from the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO). AEMO is satisfied with Biala’s performance. The wind farm is now formally in operation under the Development Approval (DA). BWF has notified the DPE.
 - PH asked, “*What does operational mean?*”. DP explained it is as defined in the Development Approval – the turbines are all working and have finished commissioning trials.

Operational noise testing

- General discussion about the requirement for wind farm noise monitoring under the Development Approval.
 - Data collected until have representative data of the noise from the turbines in all wind directions. Could take up to six months. Noise monitors will be installed at each of the locations specified in the Development Approval, as long as the owner of that residence provides consent for the installation.
 - Have six months from operational commencement until the report needs to be finished and submitted to the NSW Department of Planning.
 - Goldwind Australia (GWA) is responsible for the monitoring and has subcontracted the work to Marshall Day Acoustics, a specialised noise consultant.
 - Extensive computer modelling is undertaken before the wind farm construction commences, so BWF is highly confident the wind farm is noise compliant. However, this is an important and necessary check.
 - BWF will discuss the results with the CCC when available and keep the CCC updated on the process.
 - PH asked “*What happens if the wind farm is noise non-complaint?*” DP explained the different things that could happen including ‘turning down’ the turbines in specific wind conditions.

Bird and Bat Monitoring

- JR summarised the bird and bat monitoring annual report, which has recently been completed and is available on the BWF website. The monitoring was performed by Nature Advisory, a specialist bird and bat consultant. One aspect of the monitoring is carcass searching, where they look underneath the turbines for any birds or bats that may have been struck by a turbine blade.
 - 39 common bird strikes and 35 bat strikes were recorded (all non-threatened species).
 - The finding of four Crimson Rosella (again non-threatened species) over a short period of time triggered the need to notify DPE, which BWF completed.
- There was general discussion about the purpose of the bird and bat monitoring program and the requirements of the wind farm Development Approval.
- BWF’s consultant found one deceased Powerful Owl, approximately 360metres away from a turbine. They weren’t looking for carcasses at the time, they were checking hollow bearing trees for signs of nesting birds. Although BWF’s consultant did not think the carcass was related to the wind turbines, as it was too far away, it was reported to DPE as it is a threatened species and the carcass was picked up to investigate the cause of death
- DP explained that Nature Advisory also conducts utilisation surveys – where they stand on a hill and look for Raptors and record their behaviour. They witnessed 4 Raptors flying but no raptor strikes were recorded.
- There was general discussion about Wedge Tailed Eagles, which are not a threatened

species. Although no eagle strikes have been recorded, GRWF has recorded a number of Wedge Tailed Eagle strikes since it commenced operation. GRWF performed additional voluntary monitoring and there was no evidence there was a significant impact on the local population.

- DP explained Goldwind recently received a penalty notice in relation to BJCE's GRWF. There is a requirement for four turbines near woodlands to be turned off at night for a four month period every year, as a preventative measure to protect fledgling Powerful Owl. Due to malfunctions in Goldwind's wind farm control system, these turbines didn't always stop at the correct times. BJCE picked this up during an annual audit – the Annual Environmental Monitoring Report and reported it to DPIE. The malfunction occurred when GRWF systems were upgraded as a result of the connection of the Biala Wind Farm to the GRWF substation. Goldwind Australia has been fined \$15,000 and additional monitoring methods have been instigated. There was no evidence of any harm to Powerful Owls.

Community Enhancement Fund (CEF)

- DP confirmed he attended a meeting at Upper Lachlan Shire Council (ULSC) today to review the BWF Community Fund 2022/23 applications. The fund closed a while ago. Nothing can be discussed until it's announced at the next ULSC meeting.
- DP explained the Fund is run by a Section 355 Committee. There are two community members – Paul Hewitt and Scott Keyworth, Derek, ULSC General Manager and the Mayor on the Committee.
- Discussion followed about the 3-year requirement in the Voluntary Planning Agreement which governs the committee. For the first 3 years The eligible target community for the Community Fund includes members of the community through incorporated or registered not for profit organisations located within 5km of a Biala Wind Farm turbine in the first three years of the Fund or, if no suitable community purpose is available within this 5km distance, within 20km of a Biala Wind Farm turbine.
- PH suggested there was some confusion about the 5km ruling and how the wording had changed from 2021/22 to 2022/23. EP confirmed the wording on the Application Forms was improved in 2022/23 to better reflect the Voluntary Planning Agreement.
- EP explained BWF voluntarily paid the funds in advance to allow the fund to commence in 2021. The CCC commended the project on providing funds earlier to allow community groups to apply this year. After next year (2023/24) the 5km rule will no longer apply.

Landscaping Program

- EP provided a program overview.
- There have been 30 applications received for the Landscaping Program. Only one had opted for option one which is tree planting. The others all opted for financial compensation. EP explained the application for tree planting is from a deceased estate and this is on hold until further notice.

TV Reception Program

- There were over 61 applications received for the TV Reception Program.
- EP said the TV technician had been impacted by the constant rain and floods and has been unable to visit all the applicants.
- This program will end in June 2023.

Sponsorship

- BWF is a long-term sponsor of the Crookwell Devils who won the 2022 George Tooke Shield this year.

- Sponsorship of the upcoming men's and women's lawn bowling major competitions has also been confirmed.
- BWF is in dialogue with Gunning Arts Festival to renew sponsorship for their next event.
- BWF is in dialogue with Crookwell Show to renew sponsorship for the next event in February. Hoping to increase our presence after COVID. Used to provide face painting for a gold coin donation and would like to get back to that.
- BJCE is looking to re-sponsor Meals on Wheels for their Christmas hampers to support for those spending Christmas alone. This is done by covering the cost of hampers through the local IGA.
- Last year BWF sponsored the Community Information Centre Christmas colouring books.
- PH commended BJCE on their efforts especially with community groups like CWA and Meals on Wheels.

Bushfire Season

- A new Bushfire Management Plan has been prepared.
- DP confirmed BWF is in contact with the local Rural Fire Service and has invited them to visit the site.

Biosecurity

- General discussion about biosecurity measures in place on site, including in relation to Foot and Mouth Disease.
- PH explained, with respect to Foot and Mouth Disease, landowners were worried that if a site worker was flying in from holidays, it doesn't look good. PH said it would be highly unlikely but still worthy of consideration.

Roadworks

- General discussion about the state of the local roads. PH asked which roads BWF had to repair. DP explained BWF had an obligation to warrant the roads it repaired for defects, but that that warranty period had expired quite a while ago, and the roads are now like other council roads in terms of council's obligation to maintain them. General consensus that it's a difficult time to maintain and repair roads because of the constant rain.

DRAFT Community Information Plan

- Derek explained BWF developed a Community Information Plan which sets out how the project will engage with the community. EP confirmed this was developed in 2018.
- Plan reviewed page by page by the committee. Refer to document for more information.
- EP confirmed there are over 300 subscribers to the quarterly project newsletter.
- EP confirmed she had contacted Upper Lachlan Tourism to see if the windfarm tours are feasible in 2023.
- EP has also contacted Crookwell High to recommence the local STEM program.
- NC suggested committee members to review the Plan and provide feedback before the next meeting.

6. Complaints

- There has been one noise complaint since the last CCC meeting. BWF checked the turbines for any unusual noises and checked to see wind conditions at the time of complaint but nothing unusual was detected.
- DP explained the complaint's handling procedure, which is available on the BWF website.
- The October complaints register can be found [here](#).

7. Next Steps and Close
Next meeting: Thursday, 9 th March 2023 Location: Grabben Gullen Hall Meeting closed: 7.30pm

*Consolidated action item list on the next page.

Consolidated Action Items

Action Item	Update
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
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



Action Item	Update
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