

Community Consultative Committee Details

CCC / Project Name:	Winterbourne Wind Farm	Reporting Period:	January - December 2021
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Doug Landfear Project Director

1. Executive Summary

The Winterbourne Windfarm Community Consultative Committee (CCC) was established in February 2021 in accordance with the Department of Planning and Environment's 2019 Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects. The Winterbourne Wind Farm project is a 700MW, approximately 119 turbine, renewable energy development proposal located to the north and east of the town of Walcha, within both the Walcha and Uralla Local Government areas, in the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales, approximately 425 kilometres from Sydney, 180 kilometres north-west of Port Macquarie, 75 kilometres north-east of Tamworth and 35 kilometres south-south-west of Armidale. The project is bounded by Thunderbolts Way to the west, the Oxley Highway to the south, the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park to the east and the Salisbury Plains to the north and covers an area of approximately 22,500 hectares primarily utilised as grazing land. Concepts for the proposal began in 2001 as an initiative by a group of local landowners with Vestas acquiring the major stake and moving forward with the project in 2019. Vestas is a recognised international leader in sustainable energy resources in the manufacture and design of wind turbines world-wide.

The committee comprises:

- five local community representatives;
- One elected representative from Walcha Council
- One elected representative from Uralla Council with the General Manager as the alternate;
- The Project Director for WinterbourneWind, with attendance from other personnel as required;
- one independent Chairperson.

The Committee held the inaugural meeting in March 2021 and planned to hold quarterly meetings, although Covid-19 did cause disruptions to the meeting schedule. As a result, the March, June, and November meetings were held face-to-face with the September meeting via tele/video conferencing, unfortunately accompanied by some technical problems. With the resignation of one community member during the year, nominations were called for a replacement member appointed late December 2021.

As a development proposal of this nature is a relatively new experience for the township and surrounds, there are some mixed emotions within the community. The focus of discussion and questions around the proposal include the Community Benefit Fund and what it actually delivers to the community, workforce and employment opportunities for locals, accommodation, transport and traffic management, road conditions and safety, visual aesthetics; lighting and transmission lines, grid capacity, use of recyclables, waste and decommissioning and broader community consultation.

Other topics discussed and presented at meetings included but not limited to:

- the Company profile and project overview
- development activities and project timelines
- construction and resource planning
- visual guidelines
- noise guidelines
- transport route and assessment updates
- biodiversity assessment updates
- Aboriginal Heritage assessment
- broader community engagement
- infrastructure requirements and timing with other proposals
- NSW Government Renewable Energy Zone
- Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in the months of March, June, September and November via a combination of attendance in person or tele/video conference. A committee site tour was planned for another windfarm but did not eventuate because of Covid-19 and other complications.
- No joint CCC meetings were held during the period.

3. Key issues

As the Winterbourne Wind CCC is a relatively new committee, the issues on the table are fairly consistent with the views of the broader community. As the project progresses through to the lodgement of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), anticipated in the first half of 2022, it is reasonable to expect some matters will be addressed, as potentially new ones are likely to emerge. The Local Government and community committee members have fulfilled their roles in raising such questions and the company has responded in a timely manner.

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
Community Benefit Fund	Committee sought specific structure of the fund to the local community	Detail provided to CCC. Ongoing information provided to broader community. Will form part of consent conditions if project approved.

End of life of project - rehabilitation	Company engaged Aurecon to prepare a Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan.	Provided to CCC at November meeting. Will be included in the EIS submission.
Community engagement	Company has published Frequently Asked Questions, updated its website, consulted with a number of stakeholder groups and Members of Parliament, held two community open days, attended the Walcha Show, maintains an office front in town two days a week and carried out extensive neighbourhood consultation.	Ongoing.
Replacement of community member	Nominations called for during November/December.	Member appointed late December, to attend first meeting in 2022.

4. Focus for next 12 months


Committee meeting dates would normally be set at the end of each calendar year for the ensuing year to avoid any known potential conflicts. However, because of the uncertainty with Covid-19 and timing of the lodgement of the EIS, subsequent meeting dates will be set in consultation with the CCC as 2022 progresses.

The planned activities for 2022 will continue to be guided by the contributions of the CCC members. These activities are likely to include:

- Outcomes of the EIS studies.
- Invitation extended to Director Planning and Communities for EnergyCo NSW as guest speaker on renewable energy projects in the New England REZ.
- Invitation extended to Director Energy Assessments on Department's process and assessment of EIS.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no outstanding or emerging issues that have not been addressed or are in the process of being so, to the committee's satisfaction.

Committee Meeting minutes and presentations are available on the website within two weeks of each meeting.

Signature of Chair:	
Date:	March 3 2022.