

Collector Wind Farm Development

Newsletter No4
July 2012



RAC
RATCH-Australia Corporation

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PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Your opportunity to review the proposal and, if you wish, to make a submission in response.

Following exhaustive environmental investigations, and extensive community consultation, we are pleased that the Department of Planning and Infrastructure has approved our environmental assessment for public review.

Now it's your turn to review our proposal, ask questions and provide comment, either informally, or formally by making a submission to the Department. This is a very important part of the planning process and we welcome and encourage your participation. Our proposal is now up for scrutiny, and your views will assist the Government in making a decision on the project. Our Environmental Assessment Report will be on Public Exhibition for 60 days from Thursday 26 July 2012. The documents contain a lot of information and you are encouraged to examine our submission closely.

There are hard copies of the proposal at the Poidevins Café in Collector, the Gunning Library, the Upper Lachlan Shire Council offices in Crookwell, at Goulburn-Mulwaree Council, and at the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure offices in Sydney. We are able to send you an electronic copy of the documents, and it's also available to download at ours and the Department's website at: www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/
www.windfarms.net.au

Any member of the public may contribute to the planning process for this project by making a submission. We particularly encourage residents of Collector and surrounds to participate. If you wish to make a submission, it must be made during the Public Exhibition period which ends on Monday 24 September 2012. Find out more about how to make a submission at: www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/page/lodge-online/

A number of our representatives will host information sessions at in the **Collector Memorial Hall, Bourke Street, Collector** on the following dates:

Friday 27 July 2012 between 3pm and 7pm

Saturday 28 July 2012 between 12pm and 4pm

Wednesday 1 August 2012 between 5pm and 8pm

Thursday 2 August 2012 between 1pm to 6pm

Thursday 9 August 2012 between 1pm to 6pm

We would like to see you there. We will be able to step you through the environmental documentation, and you will be able to view large size print outs of how the wind farm will look. We encourage you to ask questions, make suggestions, or perhaps share ideas for how to obtain maximum benefits from the Community Benefit Fund for Collector which will be established.

Generating electricity from the wind

Wind turbines are very effective at generating electricity. The Collector wind farm will generate approximately 550 GWh of electricity each year. This is enough energy to power 75,000 homes, more than all the homes in the Burrinjuck, Goulburn and Monaro electorates combined. The wind farm will produce clean energy that would otherwise come from carbon dioxide-emitting coal and gas fired power stations.

Our project is making a significant contribution to Australia's Renewable Energy Target and efforts to combat climate change.

A summary of the proposal

- If approved, the Collector wind farm will consist of up to 68 wind turbines, as well as a substation, site office, roads, electrical cabling and other associated infrastructure on private land north west of the village of Collector. The main access to the wind farm will be from the Hume Highway via Lerida Rd South.
- Construction is expected to take around two years
- As part of our proposal, an area of the site will be set aside and protected from ever being cleared or grazed, improving and maintaining critical fauna habitats. This will be covered by a Property Vegetation Plan to be managed by the local Catchment Management Authority.
- We are currently considering a range of turbines for the project ranging from 2.0 megawatts to 3.4 megawatts. Each turbine will have towers with a maximum height of 90m and blades up to 60m. To give an idea of scale, the turbines at the nearby Cullerin Range wind farm sit on 80m towers and have 45m long blades.
- The substation will be located at the northern end of the site, close to the existing Transgrid transmission lines. In this way, the wind farm will be connected into the Australian energy market.
- Most electrical cabling on site will be underground. Where possible, cabling will be run underneath roads to minimise environmental impacts.
- Site roads will need to be built (or existing roads upgraded) as part of the wind farm's development. Most of these roads will not be tarred, and will utilise material either sourced on-site during the construction of the turbine foundations, or sourced from local quarries. All public roads and the Bicentennial National Trail will remain open.

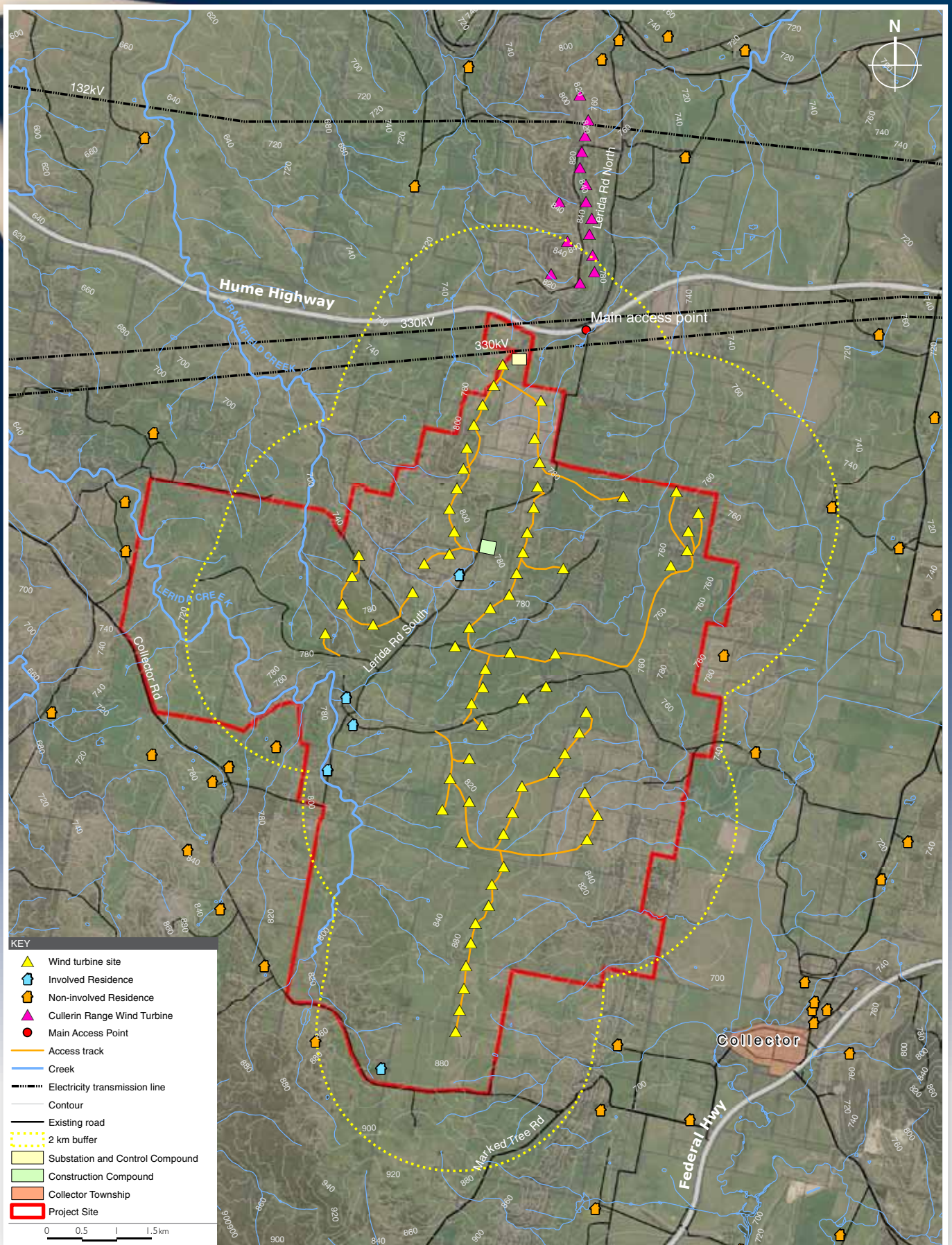
Did you know?

Nine out of ten Australians support renewable energy.

Get more facts about wind energy at:
www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/cec/misc/powerinwind

Where will the Collector Wind Farm be located?

The Collector wind farm will be located on the Cullerin Range between the Hume Highway and the Collector-Gunning Road. This is one of the windiest regions in NSW. The village of Collector is approximately 4km from the nearest of the proposed turbines.



There is **power** in Collector's wind



Wind power is certain to be a cornerstone of renewable energy in Australia and an important part of the "greening" of Australia. This region can be a major clean energy exporter, bringing widespread economic benefits to the community and adding a new business dimension for the future.

The wind farm will be a major source of employment. We will need fencing contractors, concreters, welders, electricians, plant and equipment operators, transport contractors and administrators. Up to 100 construction workers will be required and we plan to recruit as many as possible locally as well as contracting local services and businesses. Once established and operating, there will be between 10 and 15 permanent operational jobs at Collector Wind Farm. We will provide training or retraining as part of our commitment to employing local residents.

There will also be flow-on benefits to surrounding businesses, such as pubs, cafes, motels and shops. Local farmers benefit from the lease payments, maximising the potential for long-term viability in the rural community.

If you are Interested in working on the site please register your interest at www.windfarms.net.au

83% of residents in Collector believe creation of new jobs through our development is important or extremely important.

Local Community Benefit Fund

As part of our wider contribution to the Collector community, we will create a Community Benefit Fund to which we will donate \$200,000 per year once the wind farm starts operating which is \$5m over the life of the project. Our intention is that the community will get to decide where the money is spent through the deliberations of the Collector Wind Farm Forum which is to be established shortly.

Giving back to the community: Pictured is the fire truck Infigen Energy purchased for the Taylors Creek Road Bushfire Service and for the community of Tarago.



The Collector Wind Farm Forum

The Collector Wind Farm Forum will be established to enable open discussion between RATCH-Australia, the community, the Upper Lachlan Shire Council and other interested stakeholders on issues directly relating to the wind farm. Former ABC radio presenter, Deborah Cameron will chair the Forum, which will meet regularly throughout the life of the project. One of the first issues the Forum will consider is how to administer the Community Benefit Fund.

If you're interested in applying to be a member of the Forum, please contact Deborah by email at: d.cameron@kjassoc.com.au



The Collector Village Pumpkin Festival

RATCH-Australia is pleased to be an ongoing sponsor of the Collector Village Pumpkin Festival. Held in the Collector village each May, this fantastic event brings the community together and attracts around 5,000 visitors to the town to celebrate the annual harvest.

With pumpkin growing competitions, soups, scones and other produce on sale, as well as performances and displays, it's a great day out. RATCH-Australia looks forward to joining in the fun at next year's festival.



The wind farms near Bungendore are already having a **positive impact** on the region.

The Capital and Woodlawn wind farms, on the eastern side of Lake George near Bungendore, are both now operating. Every year approximately \$2 million goes into the local community through sourcing supplies from local businesses, payments to land owners and local employee wages. It is estimated that since work began in the area in 2004 more than \$10 million has been invested by the wind farms directly into the local community.

Opportunities for contractors

Goulburn business operator Andy Divall needs no convincing of the benefits of wind farms to rural communities. Divall's, a family owned earthmoving operation in Goulburn, has had key contracts on Infigen's Woodlawn and Capital wind farms as well on the Cullerin Range and Walwa wind farms. Mr Divall said wind farms are "a great economic stimulus package and employment source for rural communities. The economic benefits are clear. There have been few opportunities since we've been in business like these wind farms and we'd be keen to see them continue."

Opportunities for employment

Taralga resident Andrew McDade is one local already seeing the benefits of the growing renewable sector in his job on Capital Wind Farm. "I see the wind farms as an opportunity for locals to grab. The opportunities are few and far between in rural areas, and this is a great one. The money is good and you don't necessarily need the qualifications to get a start. I work alongside a shearer, a butcher, a welder, car mechanics, a helicopter mechanic as well as electricians and fitters. We come from all walks of life and we all learn together. After all, it is a new industry."

Mr McDade said he gets asked a lot of questions about the wind farm. "I suffer no ill effects from being in and around the turbines, and sleep very well at night after a hard day's work. If anything, my life has changed for the better."

No impact on property prices

Bungendore area real estate agents were recently surveyed about their perceptions on the effect of the wind farms on property values – in their opinion, overall property sales and values in the area have not been affected. One agent said: "We sold one in between two wind mills and it didn't impact the sale at all. That was about 18 months ago."

Another commented: "We are still selling properties with views of the wind farm; there's no effect on prices."

A positive step forward for climate change

This development will power the equivalent of 75,000 homes a year, saving up to 11 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over its lifespan of 25 years. That's a significant achievement as we move from fossil fuel generation to clean energy.



Did you know?

Wind fact #1

There is no evidence that wind turbines cause adverse health effects.

We recognise this is a hot topic and there are many views. On this issue, we must pay attention to Australia's peak public health body, the National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Following a review of all available scientific literature the NHMRC determined 'there is currently no published scientific evidence to positively link wind turbines with adverse health effects' and 'there is no reliable evidence that sounds below the hearing threshold produce physiological or psychological effects'. The NSW Department of Health and the Victorian Department of Health both accept the findings of the NHMRC.

So why are health concerns circulated so widely? Whether it's because people nearby are simply annoyed or have other reasons for not wanting wind turbines nearby, we can't speculate. All we can do is to have regard to the weight of scientific evidence on the matter. International research has consistently found no health issues caused by wind farms. The NSW Department of Health has said that the widely circulated fears regarding health issues are "not scientifically valid."

In any event, we welcome continued research into any impact wind turbines may have. RATCH-Australia will continue to be guided by the NHMRC and any future research.

Wind fact #2

Most people in your community support wind farms

We polled the Collector area in November 2010, and found that 68% of respondents support this proposal compared with just 18% saying they oppose or strongly oppose.

These findings are backed by many other independent studies in rural areas. For example, in the NSW Government's survey of community attitudes to wind farms in 2010, 89% of people surveyed in Yass, Goulburn, Boorowa, Collector, Crookwell and surrounding regions favour wind farms, 79% agreed wind farms would benefit their local community, and an overwhelming 98% agreed wind was a clean source of energy.

Wind fact #3

We're meeting some of the toughest environmental guidelines in the world.

We have designed our wind farm to comply with the NSW Government's draft wind farm noise guidelines, which the NSW Planning Minister has called "the toughest in the country, possibly the world". Noise from the wind farm won't exceed more than 35 decibels, day or night, which is equivalent to a quiet library and is less than the wind farm noise levels permitted in Victoria, South Australia, New Zealand, Europe and North America. By comparison, road noise from Federal Highway in Collector can be up to 55 decibels.

We are also observing strict fire safety standards. All wind farms are required to comply with International Electrotechnical Commission safety standards. Although the potential for fires in wind turbines is very low we've incorporated various fire safety measures, including automatic shutdown, electrical and thermal fault alarms and lightning safety. In the event of local bush fires, the new roads will provide easier access for RFS.

Wind fact #4

There are now 54 wind farms in Australia, generating more than 2% of our electricity. In South Australia, wind turbines already supply 20% of the state's electricity.

Wind is the most cost-effective form of renewable energy in Australia. The cost of producing energy from wind has dropped by 80% over the past 25 years and is continuing to fall.

Collector Wind Farm is a highly efficient way to produce energy, and is designed to make the most of what is a very windy area. Wind power does not need any additional backup power from fossil fuel generators.



Public Exhibition of the Environmental Assessment Report

Our Environmental Assessment Report will be on Public Exhibition for 60 days from 26 July 2012. If you wish to make a submission, it must be made during the Public Exhibition.

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Contact details:

If you would like an electronic copy of our Environmental Assessment Report, or require more information, please contact:

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