

Collector Wind Farm - Community Consultative Committee - Meeting Notes

Date	12 September 2018	Time	6.30pm – 8.45pm – Bushranger Hotel, Collector
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Attendees

Margaret Harvie (MH) Chair	James McKay (JMCK)	Richard Stacy (RS)
Brian Mor (BM)	John Hoskins (JH)	Tony Walsh (TW)
Martha Truelove (MT)	Gary Poile (GP)	
Neil Weston (NW) Ratch Australia	Hugh Sangster (HS) Ratch Australia	NOTE TAKER: Kaye Paterson

Apologies: Mayor Brian McCormack, Upper Lachlan Shire Council (ULSC)

Item number	Discussion	Actions
1	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH welcomed participants, Kaye as the new notetaker introduced herself and all committee members introduced themselves. It was noted that Sharon Swincer had resigned, and MH and committee acknowledged and thanked her for her service to the Committee. It was noted that this takes the CCC to seven community members which is in keeping with the Department of Planning & Environment guidelines. 	
2	<p>Standing declaration of pecuniary or other interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GP will be a wind turbine host MT gets financial benefit due to proximity of her property to the wind farm 	
3	<p>Confirmation of minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was noted that the minutes of 5 July meeting were circulated– they were considered correct. MH noted that in the future these meeting notes will be ratified by the CCC members prior to them going on the website (ideally within 2 weeks of the meeting). That is changes to draft meeting notes will be requested when they are circulated. 	
4	<p>Correspondence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Correspondence received 	

5	<p>CCC Update – round the table with anything that we are hearing in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RS – had received negative comments from locals that feel the Collector Wind Farm was dragging on with no progress on the construction. There are still a number of people against the wind farm. ▪ JH, BM & MT – had no specific feedback to report ▪ GP – The general feedback I am getting is positive and some people are quite excited about the prospect of the project starting soon. This has been reflected at the Collector Community Association meeting, the Collector Enhancement Fund workshops and information sessions held at the Hall recently. ▪ JMck- Concerned around Tax, GST funding – Tax implication of the trust – he wants to know the Tax implications of the Trust and GST funding? ▪ TW - Commented that a new resident on the Currawang Collector Face Book site indicated that they had no knowledge of the Wind Farm. He is concerned that new residents are not aware of Collector Wind Farm. GP advised that he had responded to this person providing a link to the Collector Wind Farm site and Ratch contact details. TW also felt that the maps on the website might not be clear enough for people to understand the location of the turbines. While a visual assessment was done at the time of the environmental assessment he wanted to know about the new housing that will be within line of site? ▪ TW also commented that Collector will get little from the wind farm and was interested to know how locals could access benefits that might flow for local business. ▪ NW briefly spoke to the local employment benefits in Ratch’s other development sites. 	<p>ACTION: NW will review the public facing information (including the website) from the perspective of people new to the area to be sure that they would understand the location of turbines in relation to their property.</p>
6	<p>Ratch Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NW updated the committee on Ratch’s Mt Emerald and Collinsville Wind farms – these are currently in the commissioning stage. With these being completed by the end of the year the company focus has moved to Collector. <p><u>Planning (Modification application & other requirements)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is increased focus on the consent that must be acted on by this December 2018. Ratch is focused on progressing this project within the timeframes of the consent rather than seeking an extension to the consent deadline. ▪ Representatives from the parent company (Ratchaburi in Thailand) recently visited the site. This reflects the commitment from Ratch and the parent company to the project, which will require finance from the parent company. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Question from RS about the Modifications to the Project and whether this will hold up the project going ahead. ▪ NW – No this will not- the modifications are separate. The engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract will trigger the approval being enacted. ▪ JMCK – asked what the other requirements are from the Department of Planning and Environment to trigger consent. ▪ NW reassured the CCC that they were working through the completion of a number of items. ▪ RS raised the issue of the decommissioning of the wind farm/ the turbines. ▪ NW – there are obligations in regard to decommissioning within the Conditions of Consent; based on a defined decommissioning plan. The plan is essentially based on removal of all above-ground infrastructure, with sub-surface elements remaining in place (such as concrete foundations). Roads will be returned to how the property owner wants them. ▪ RS – questioned what happens with decommissioning in the case of Ratch being taken over. ▪ NW confirmed that the obligations of the conditions of consent move to any new owner. GP advised that there are decommissioning clauses in the land agreements with project hosts and funds put aside by the company into a trust account to cover the costs of removal. ▪ MT - Asked why don't they reuse the infrastructure and just put up new turbines ▪ NW – there is the option within the host agreements to extend the leases for use of the land – either for use of the existing turbines or with new technology. He noted that, despite advances in technology, there are wind projects built in late 90s / early 2000s still in operation today. ▪ NW discussed the Modification to Conditions of Consent which has been outlined in information in the newsletter that has been distributed. It is about two things - connecting to the northern transmission line (instead of the southern parallel line) and finalising the details of the Lerida Rd South upgrades. It is most likely that the modification application will go on exhibition. Ratch is also required to obtain a separate 138 approval from Upper Lachlan Shire Council for the Lerida Rd South upgrade. Once approval is granted Ratch will upgrade Lerida South Road by widening, sealing, smoothing the corners, with construction of 3 new T intersections for the wind farm. Ratch is working with private land owners whose land the road corridor is on (which is in some cases is different to where the road is). The aim is to have the road sit in the road easement rather than on private land. 	
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- NW indicated that Ratch will submit the modification to the Department of Planning and Environment before the end of September.
- NW also indicated that the Conditions of Consent require submission of a range of Construction Environment Management Plans such as Noise, Flora & Fauna etc.
- The initial upgrade of the road will be a priority as this is not able to be used unless it is upgraded.
- TW – asked how much of Lerida South Road will be upgraded?
- NW – Approximately six kilometres and this will include some removal of vegetation to allow for the turning of construction vehicles as well as three points where wind farm roads cross Lerida Rd South.

Technical

- With the changes to the connection point there was a need to demonstrate the new layout had no impact to the electrical network.
- NW also indicated that a number of turbines have been moved by no more than 100 metres as allowed in the conditions of consent.

Financing

- In addition to the information reported already Financiers are working with Ratch to have everything ready to commence construction.
- To do this they need to go through a due diligence process.
- RS – asked if the Government was successful to reduce energy prices by 40% of the retail price to what extent does this impact on the future of wind farms.
- NW indicated that Ratch is well progressed with its financial risk analysis on this project, and they are only one element of the cost in the energy supply chain.
- JH – interested in the opportunities for local businesses and employment within Collector? Was concerned that there is no stipulation for them to employ local people.
- NW – indicated that Ratch will soon hand over work to an EPC Contractor who also employ sub-contractors. Ratch will work with the contractors to encourage the use of local people. Ratch have a register of local suppliers and people looking for work and will hand this information to the EPC Contractor. Information and messaging on other sites has led to success in employment of local people. Local businesses can contact the preferred EPC Contractor (Vestas) who are using Downer as their major subcontractor.

Other questions/ Comments

- TW – Wants to know if there will be traffic on Gunning Road and whether Lerida Road South will remain a public road?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NW - The development approval does not allow construction traffic to use the Gunning-Collector Rd. All roads in the area (Lerida Road South, Gunning-Collector Rd, etc) will remain accessible as public roads during construction. ▪ There was concern that the opportunities for patronising the local businesses such as the pub might be restricted by the development approval restricting use of Gunning-Collector Rd. ▪ GP reminded the group that during the planning stages several submissions were made by Collector residents and businesses demanding that Gunning - Collector road should be off limits to all windfarm traffic. ▪ There was a question about whether there is to be accommodation on site. ▪ NW reassured the CCC there would be no accommodation on site. ▪ JH restated that the maps on the Collector website are not very clear as to where the turbines are situated. 	
	<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>Workshop activities & feedback, fund status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NW indicated that they were continuing to go down the route of the two fund process based on the desire of the community to have a fund separate to Council. ▪ A workshop was conducted, there were 14 in attendance and they were able to work through a range of issues. While there is support for the fund the questions were around the administrative arrangement for the fund. ▪ Answers to some of the questions raised at the workshop will be sent to workshop participants and uploaded to the Collector Wind Farm website. ▪ CCC members - GP, JMck and BM attended the workshop. ▪ JMck was concerned about the Conditions of the Trust and strongly supports that the community administer it rather than the Council. ▪ NW indicated that Ratch is trying to meet what the community wants and that a mechanism has been agreed such that the trust can apply for the funding from the 355 fund. <p>Information sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Around 20 people came to the sessions to talk to Ratch, of which around 10 people had some connection with the project. Ratch was prepared for and expecting more local people to attend. ▪ NW introduced the fact that they will be soon engaging a local person as a community representative for the company and that they were starting to investigate some options. ▪ This will be a part time paid position (approximately 1-2 days a week basis) to share information, liaise with local people, as the first point of contact. ▪ JMck believed that this role needs to be clearly set out with a job description. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some of the CCC members felt that this job should be publicly advertised and open to all. NW indicated that there was concern that there would be a high level of interest leaving a number of people disappointed if they were not successful in their application. ▪ Advice from some members of the CCC was that Ratch should ensure that there is an open process for what they consider to be a key position for Collector Wind Farm. 	
7	<p>Charter for the CCC – update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MH sought the permission of the group to update the existing Collector CCC Terms of Reference to bring in more information from the existing Department of Planning and Environment CCC guidelines. MH will distribute an amended Terms of Reference prior to the next meeting ready for discussion at that meeting. ▪ There was further discussion around the requirement of the guideline that there are 7 members. ▪ It was suggested that as there had been 8 members of this committee this should continue. ▪ MH explained that this was because the CCC had commenced prior to the current CCC guidelines and suggested that there may be a need to advertise if there was a desire for a new appointment and the Department of Planning and Environment may ask that a new 7 members be appointed in accordance with the guideline. Given the stage of the project this did not seem to be advisable at this time. ▪ Some members indicated that there had already been a rigorous process that saw them appointed to the CCC. 	
8	<p>Guest attending the CCC meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This issue came about further to the request from Charlie Prell, NSW Regional Coordinator of the Australian Wind Alliance to attend the meeting. ▪ Under what conditions might he or others be allowed to attend? ▪ There was some discussion around the fact that CCC members were uncertain about what a meeting observer might offer or why they would want to attend. ▪ NW and MH indicated that with the introduction of the construction contractor and subcontractors there will be a need to introduce more people to future CCC meetings. ▪ While some members felt strongly that there should be no guests under any circumstances there were some who could see that if the purpose of their attendance was clear guest (not observers) could attend when the reason they were attending (ie details of the information they could present) was seen of value by the CCC. 	<p>ACTION: MH to go back to Charlie Prell and ask him to outline what he might be able to offer the meeting and the request to attend will be reconsidered by CCC members based on his response.</p>
9	<p>Next meeting – will be 21 November 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brian Mor indicated that he will be an apology for that meeting. <p>Meeting finished at 8.45pm</p>	