



BANGO WIND FARM COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

CCC MEETING #1 MINUTES

Thursday 8th August 2013
Old Council Chambers, 65 Court Street, Boorowa

Attendees:

Lisa Andrews (LA)	Independent Chair
Adrian Maddocks (AM)	Wind Prospect CWP (WPCWP)
Thomas McGrath (TM)	Community Representative
Terry Sellwood (TS)	Community Representative
Andrew Winterflood (AW)	Community Representative
Wendy Tuckerman (WT)	Mayor, Boorowa Council
Jayne Apps (JA)	Boorowa District Landscape Guardians

Apologies:

Ann Daniel (AD)	Councillor, Yass Valley Council
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Meeting commenced at 12:05pm.

Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Bango Wind Farm (BWF) Community Consultative Committee (CCC), hosted by Wind Prospect CWP (WPCWP). Each person was invited to introduce themselves and state their position on the Committee.

Apologies

Clr Ann Daniel sent her apologies.

Declaration of Interest

The Chair declared her interest as Independent Chair of the BWF CCC.

Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Not applicable.

Role of the Committee

The Chair explained the role of the Committee in that it is an advisory CCC initiated by WPCWP, until such time as the Draft Planning Guidelines: Wind Farms (Draft Guidelines), issued for consultation in 2011, have been approved by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DP&I). In the interim, the Committee will operate under the Draft Guidelines. All members were given a copy of **Appendix C: Guidelines for wind farm community consultative committees** as taken from the Draft Guidelines.

A copy of **Appendix C** is also attached to these minutes.

Business Arising

Not applicable (inaugural meeting).

Reports and Updates

WPCWP gave a presentation providing an overview of the BWF, the justification of wind farms in NSW and the timeframe moving forward. The BWF Environmental Assessment (EA) was submitted for adequacy review by the DP&I by the 31st May 2013 in order to meet the Part 3A planning submission deadline. Comments have been received back from the DP&I and other stakeholders, which requires WPCWP to update the EA before it can be placed on exhibition.

It is anticipated that the BWF EA will be placed on exhibition towards the end of the year, once all updates have been applied. At that time, electronic copies of the EA will be provided to the Committee members and will also be publically available to download from the DP&I major project website.

During the exhibition period, comments are expected on the proposed BWF from a range of government and non-government stakeholders, including neighbours to the project. WPCWP will be required to address all the issues raised in the Preferred Project Report and Response to Submissions document. Only then will the project be subject to determination based on all the information provided.

This presentation then lead into the discussion on the BWF project and a Q&A session. A handout of the slides is attached to the minutes.

Questions & Answers – incorporating General Business

Q: Have any geological surveys been undertaken yet?

A. WPCWP is aware of how technically challenging the soils and landscape can be in and around the BWF project site and has considered this in the design of the wind farm layout. Desktop analysis using GIS data, plus site walkovers and anecdotal discussions with landowners have formed the basis of the assessment to date.

Geotechnical and geophysical surveys will be undertaken post-consent, during the pre-construction phase of the wind farm. This is due to the cost associated with carrying out such surveys and no immediate need for such detail in preparation of the EA.

Q: Would WPCWP consent to commissioning an independent valuation assessment of the likely impact of BWF on properties in the vicinity of the project?

It was explained that current studies do not indicate any long-term adverse impact on property values in the vicinity of a wind farm. The initial fear of a new project can reduce property prices, due to the uncertainty of what such a development may bring to an area. However, once a wind farm is operational, the fear factor is removed and property prices return to their previous levels.

Three members of the Committee, being AW, TS and JA, supported the idea that WPCWP carry out such an exercise, but it was explained that although the Committee wished to see such a report, there was no formal requirement for WPCWP to undertake one. It was suggested the Committee contact the DP&I to seek their opinion on the matter.

Attached to these minutes is the relevant section from the BWF EA, detailing the potential impacts on land and property values, for the Committee's information.

Actions Arising: WPCWP to consider the request and report at next meeting.
Chair to make enquiries on whether the DP&I can instruct WPCWP to undertake an assessment of local property value impacts.

Q: What is the distance of the closest turbine to Boorowa and Rye Park?

The distances based on the centre point of the closest turbine to the edge of each settlement is 6.0 km to Boorowa and 3.5 km to Rye Park.

Q: How is the fact that a landowner disapproves of turbines being within 2 km of their property presented in the BWF EA?

The EA outlines those instances where the Proponent is proposing to construct one or more wind turbines within 2 km of a dwelling. Under the Draft Guidelines the Proponent must seek an agreement with neighbouring landowners when placing turbines within 2 km of their dwelling or remove such turbines when an agreement cannot be reached. A third option available to the Proponent is the placement of turbines within 2 km of a dwelling and providing justification that the impacts are acceptable, placing the onus on the DP&I to assess the impact. The DP&I will consider whether those turbines are appropriate, based on noise and visual impact, and can proceed as planned, or should be removed.

Actions Arising: WPCWP to review wording of EA to account for neighbouring landowner objection to turbines within 2 km of their dwelling.

Q: Rugby Wind Farm (RWF) has a shop front presence in Boorowa. Would BWF consider doing the same thing?

WPCWP have no intention at this time of doing so. BWF has been promoted in the local and wider area through the use of door knocking, distribution of materials through AusPost, advertising in local media, articles in the local press and the ongoing project website. An Open Day was held in August 2012 and a further Open Day will be held within a 2-3 weeks of the EA being put on exhibition by the DP&I.

Q: How frequent will the CCC meetings be?

The suggested timeframe is every 2-3 months. WPCWP suggested 3 monthly, especially as there is little to report at this time until the project is ready to go on Public Exhibition. It was acknowledged that extra-ordinary meetings can be called if an important matter arises.

It was agreed the next meeting would take place in 3 months time, possibly to coincide with the placement of the EA on exhibition.

Q: Concern has been expressed about the Bushfire risk of wind turbines, the ability to carry out aerial fire-fighting activities.

During a bushfire in the wind farm array, the wind turbines would be shut down to allow aerial fire-fighting to take place. The Rural Fire Service (RFS) operate on visual flight rules and will assess the risk before operating in and around a wind farm. Tall structures like transmission lines and trees also provide a risk, though it is acknowledged that wind turbines are considerably taller but their size makes them easier to avoid. The ability to effectively fight bushfires from the air is only a concern within the immediate vicinity of, and amongst, the wind turbines.

Similarly, the construction of access tracks on hilltops allows quicker and easier on-ground access to fight fires. Limited fire-fighting equipment will be available on-site during construction and retained during the operation of the wind farm.

Actions Arising: WPCWP to carry out further consultation with the RFS to confirm position on BWF and wind turbines in general.

Q: How can local business become involved/benefit from BWF?

BWF will eventually require two main contractors to carry out the work in constructing the wind farm, namely the turbine supply contract and the civil engineering contract. Local businesses are always welcome to provide details of their capabilities to WPCWP, who will then pass this information on to the main contractors. Although WPCWP cannot force the contractors to use local businesses, it would seem logical for local businesses to be used due to the cost-savings versus bringing in outside businesses.

BWF has a page on the project website where local contractors and businesses can register their details. It can be found here: <http://bangowindfarm.com.au/contractors>

It is also proposed that the landowner Lease Agreements have a clause in the contract asking the Proponent to consider using local businesses for the construction/operation of BWF.

Q: What is the purpose of the CCC, what is its main aim?

The CCC is a forum for members to report issues which have arisen in their local area and through discussion with their neighbours. To quote the Draft Guidelines:

The purpose of a community consultative committee is to provide a forum for open discussion between representatives of the proponent, the community, the council and other stakeholders on issues directly relating to the assessment of the wind farm and if approved, its environmental performance and community relations, and to keep the community informed on these matters.

The process is two way, with people reporting to the committee and for the committee to provide information back to the community.

For a more detailed overview of the purpose of the CCC, please look at the attached Appendix C from the Draft Guidelines.

Q: How will the Community Fund be distributed / managed?

Meetings with both Boorowa and Yass Valley Councils have initially agreed the pool of money available through the Community Fund should be split according to the number of wind turbines constructed within each area. WPCWP are in agreement with this, though the exact process has yet to be formalised.

It has not yet been determined how the Fund will be distributed in the local area. Both Council's have requested that they control the distribution of the money as they are best placed to understand and manage the local issues. It could be that a committee is established which determines how the Fund is spent, with representatives from the Council, local community and possibly CCC members.

Date of Next Meeting

11am on Thursday 14th November.

It was agreed that the Old Council Chambers, Boorowa was a suitable venue for the next meeting. Tea and coffee, followed by lunch would be provided.

Meeting Closed at 1:50pm.

Attachments

1. CCC Members Contact List (Not for public distribution of minutes).
2. WPCWP Presentation Handout.
3. Appendix C: Guidelines for wind farm community consultative committees, Draft Planning Guidelines: Wind Farms 2011.
4. BWF EA Land Values section.

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Wendy Tuckerman	02 6385 3351	0428 853351	mayor@boorowa.nsw.gov.au
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Bango Wind Farm

Community Consultation Committee

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Presentation Overview

- Wind Prospect CWP
- Project Introduction – Justification
- Project Introduction – Description
- Project Update – Current Activities
- Assessment Timeline
- Consultation
- Photo Gallery
- Community Fund
- Discussion

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Wind Prospect CWP

- Joint venture between Wind Prospect Group (WPG) and Continental Wind Partners (CWP)

Wind Prospect Group


- Over 18 years – 2,500 MW – over 50 wind farms around the world (UK, Australia, Europe, South Africa)
- Newcastle Office – NSW portfolio of wind farm developments (Boco Rock, Sapphire, Crudine Ridge, Bango and Uungula)

Continental Wind Partners

- CWP is a full-service developer focused on large-scale projects in Europe and Australia
- Recently finished managing the construction of the second largest onshore wind farm in Europe, the 600 MW (240 WTG) Fantanele project in Romania

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Project Introduction - Justification

- International, National and State wide commitments support the development of clean and sustainable energy projects
- Renewable Energy Target – 20% renewable by 2020 – supported by NSW government
 - Market based incentive designed to lead to lowest cost clean energy
- Need for new power generation in NSW
- Wind Power is suitable and well supported by Australians
 - 85 % of residents supported wind farms being built in NSW with 80 % supporting wind farms in their local region (DECCW survey)
- Sustainable regional investment and employment

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Project Introduction - Justification (Continued)

- Economic Benefits (50 megawatts of wind farm capacity)
 - Generates:
 - Direct employment of up to 48 construction jobs
 - *Approximately \$25,000 per person spending in the local area (shops, restaurants, hotels and other services). That totals up to \$1.2 million*
 - Direct employment of around five staff
 - *\$125,000 per annum influx of personal expenditure locally*
 - Results in:
 - Indirect employment during construction, approximately:
 - *160 people locally*
 - *504 State jobs*
 - *795 Nation-wide jobs*
 - Provides:
 - *Up to \$250,000 for farmers in land rental income per annum*
 - *Up to \$80,000 on Community Projects each year*

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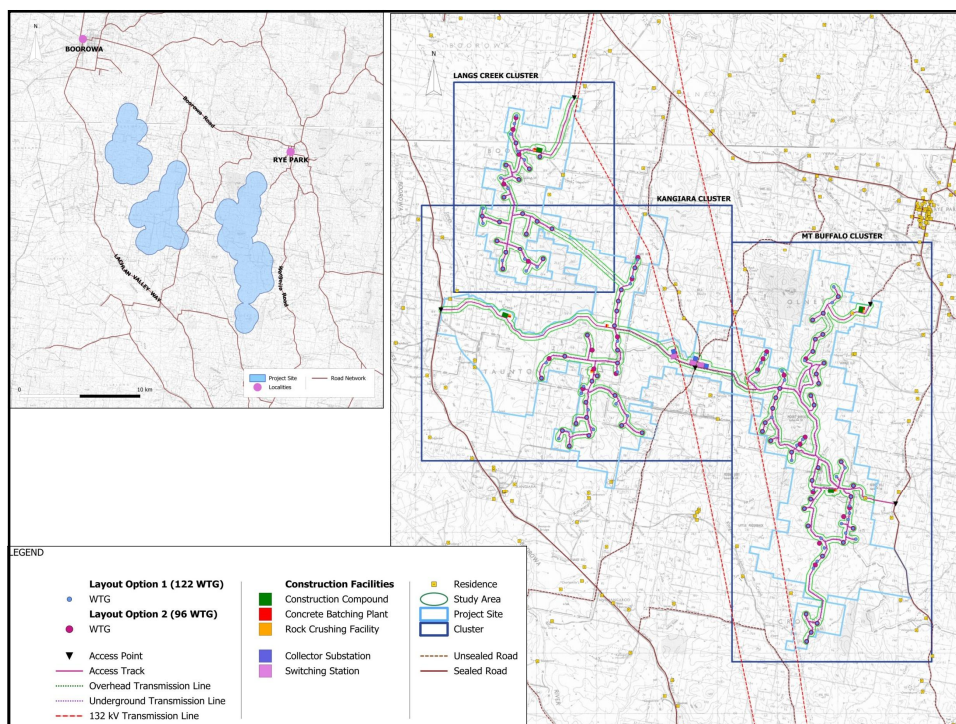
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Project Introduction – Description

- Location – 20 km north of Yass, 7 km south-east of Boorowa and 80 km west of Goulburn:
 - Roads surrounding the Project include Lachlan Valley Way, Rye Park Road, Yass Valley Way, Rye Park – Dalton Road and Wargeila Road.
- Site Design – Up to 122 wind turbines and two planning layouts
- Ancillary Infrastructure including:
 - Collector and Switching Substations
 - Site Compounds (Temporary and Permanent)
 - Underground / overhead electrical transmission lines
 - Wind monitoring masts
- Potential power connection points to the 132 kV transmission line are between the Mt Buffalo and Kangiara Clusters.

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Project Update – Current & Ongoing Activities

- Submitted Environmental Assessment 31st May 2013
- Adequacy comments received from DP&I and Agencies
- Implementation of the Community Consultation Committee
- Identification of stakeholder issues
- Consultation with neighbours, local Councils
- Design refinement based on stakeholder comments
- Exploring environmental offsets and BioBanking opportunities

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Assessment Timeline

Project Assessment	Approximate Date
1. Landscape & Visual Impact	Environmental Impact Assessment carried out 2012 – 2013 in preparation for the Environmental Assessment
2. Noise Impact	
3. Ecology Impact	
4. Cultural Heritage	
5. Traffic & Transport	
6. Aviation	
7. Electromagnetic Interference	
8. General Environmental	
9. Socio-Economic Assessment	
10. Grid Connection Studies	Ongoing until preferred Wind Turbine is selected
11. Adequacy Review	Submitted May 2013
12. Project Exhibition (Public and Agency Feedback)	Quarter 3 2013 – Quarter 2 2014
13. Response to Submissions and Preferred Project Report	
14. Project Determination	

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Consultation Timeline

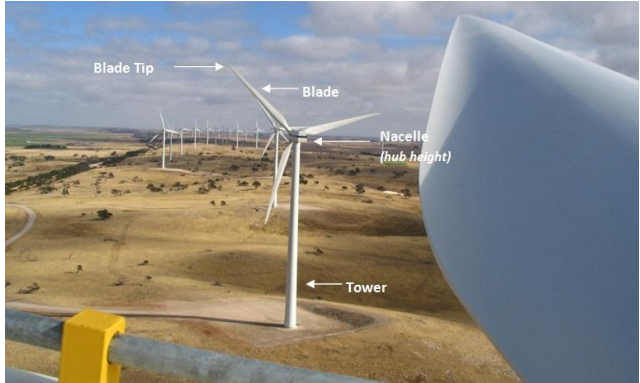
Project Activity	Approximate Date
1. Website & Media Discussions	March / April 2011
2. Discussions with neighbouring residences (within 2 km of a wind turbine)	March 2012
3. Face-to-face meetings, Website, Media Discussions	July / August 2012
4. Newsletter #1, Opinion Survey #1	
5. Letters to Key Stakeholders and Interest Groups, call for CCC participants (#1)	
6. Public Open Day #1	August 2012
7. Face-to-face meetings, Website, Media Discussions	
8. Call for CCC participants (#2 & #3), Newsletter #2	Between Sep 2012 to Q2 2013
9. Face-to-face meetings, Website, Media Discussions	
10. Community Consultative Committee Established	August 2013
11. Public Open Day #2 (TBA)	Quarter 3 to Quarter 4 2013
12. Project Exhibition (Public Comment and Agency Feedback)	Quarter 3 2013 – Quarter 2 2014
13. Response to Submissions and Preferred Project Report	
14. Project Determination	
15. Community Information Dissemination	Ongoing

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Photo Gallery – Wind Turbine Generators (WTG)



Wind Farm and Wind Turbine components

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Photo Gallery - Construction



Temporary on-site concrete batching plant and rock crusher

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Photo Gallery - Construction



Transformer foundation (foreground) and electrical substation and switchgear infrastructure (background)

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Photo Gallery - Construction



Typical hardstand area adjacent to a rock anchor footing

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Photo Gallery - Construction



Laying underground electrical cable within road network

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Photo Gallery - Construction



Installation of overhead transmission lines

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Photo Gallery – Turbine Erection



A range of typical turbine erection photographs

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Community Fund

- CCC may play a role in reviewing / managing funds
- Public amenities, conservation and transport / infrastructure needs analysis could be undertaken by the CCC
- Money to be paid annually by Bango Wind Farm

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Discussion / Q&A

Adrian Maddocks

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Appendix C: Guidelines for wind farm community consultative committees

Purposes of the committee

A community consultative committee will generally need to be established by the applicant for all major new wind farm proposals in NSW. For these wind farms, the Director General Requirements and the conditions of approval will provide for a committee to be established and operated by the applicant generally in accordance with this guideline.

The purpose of a community consultative committee is to provide a forum for open discussion between representatives of the proponent, the community, the council and other stakeholders on issues directly relating to the assessment of the wind farm and if approved, its environmental performance and community relations, and to keep the community informed on these matters.

The committee provides a forum to:

- establish good working relationships between the proponent, the community and other stakeholders in relation to the wind farm
- provide for the ongoing communication of information on the assessment, operation and environmental performance of the wind farm, including:
 - on project assessment including scoping of issues for assessment and comment on the implementation of conditions of approval, the management plan and any other management plans (including rehabilitation and wind farm decommissioning plans)
 - the results of environmental monitoring
 - annual environmental management reports
 - outcomes of audit reports (including audits required as a condition of approval)
- discuss community concerns and review the resolution of community complaints
- advise on the allocation of community enhancement funds in the community
- discuss how best to communicate relevant information on the wind farm and its environmental performance to the broader community, and
- work together towards outcomes of benefit to the wind farm, immediate neighbours and the local and regional community.

The committee will:

- provide feedback to the proponent and/or relevant State agencies regarding environmental management and community relations outcomes relating to the wind farm
- undertake visits of the wind farm's operations, as necessary
- review the wind farm's complaints-handling procedures and the handling of concerns from the community regarding the wind farm environmental management or community relations
- provide advice to the proponent on how to address community relationships, including on:
 - how the proponent can provide information to the community
 - community initiatives to which the proponent could contribute
- liaise with community consultative committees of other wind farms where there are common issues or where there is the potential for cumulative impacts, with a view to information sharing and joint meetings on matters of common interest

Responsibility for oversight of the wind farm's compliance with the project approval and all other government approvals remains with the relevant consent authority.

Membership of the committee

The membership of the committee should comprise:

- an independent chairperson
- five to seven representatives of the local community and other stakeholders, including at least two representatives of any landowners that own houses within 2 km of a proposed wind turbine
- one representative of the local council

- two or three representatives of the proponent, including the person with direct responsibility for environmental management at the wind farm.

The representatives of the proponent are part of the committee. State government agencies will not be represented on the membership of the committee. State government agencies will, however, attend committee meetings at the request of the committee and at the discretion of the agency.

Independent chairperson

The role of the chairperson is to be a convenor, facilitator, mediator and advisor for the committee. They must undertake their role in an independent manner, and refrain from perceptions of bias either for or against the proponent or any individual or group of representatives on the committee.

The chairperson will be appointed by the Director General of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, following such consultation as the Director General may consider appropriate. In selecting the chairperson, preference will be given to a candidate who can manage and represent the concerns of a variety of interest groups. Selection criteria are:

- ability to convene and manage stakeholder committees in an independent manner
- experience in community relations, facilitation, mediation or public advocacy
- understanding of the wind energy industry and awareness of local issues.

The chairperson will report annually to the Director General on the operation of the committee and will make this report publicly available. The Director General may review the appointment of the chairperson from time to time (e.g. every five years).

Community representatives

The local community and other stakeholder representatives will be appointed by the Director General, following advertisement in the local press and such consultation as the Director General may consider appropriate. Community representatives will be selected to represent neighbours (including those within 2 km of a wind turbine that do not host the wind farm facility) and the broader local community. Representatives may also be selected from environmental organisations or other affected or interested stakeholders. Employees of the proponent are not eligible to be appointed as community representatives.

In selecting the community representatives, preference will be given to candidates who can represent the concerns of a variety of interest groups. Selection criteria are:

- willingness to contribute constructively
- experience and ability to provide feedback to the community and stakeholder groups
- current residence in the local area and / or awareness of local and other relevant issues.

The Director General may review the appointment of community and other stakeholder representatives from time to time (e.g. every 5 years).

Proponent and council representatives

Proponent and council representatives are to be appointed to the committee by the proponent and the council respectively.

Alternate representatives and observers

Alternate community representatives may be nominated by a community member. An alternate representative may substitute for a community member of the committee when the member is unavailable to attend a meeting. Alternate representatives for proponent and council members may be appointed by their organisation and similarly may substitute for proponent and council members of the committee.

The committee may agree to any person acting as an observer to any meeting of the committee. Observers cannot participate in the business of the committee unless invited to do so by the chairperson. State government agencies, for example, will attend committee meetings (on an as needed basis) at the request of the chairperson

Committee meetings

Timing and location of meetings

The committee should determine the frequency of its meetings. It is suggested that the committee meet at least every two or three months during the assessment period (between when Director General's Requirements are issued and the committee is established and when the application is determined). If the project is refused, the committee will be abandoned. If the project is approved, then it is suggested that the committee meet:

- every 3 or 4 months during the period of wind farm construction and during the first 2 years following commencement of operations.
- after the first 2 years, it is suggested that the committee should meet 2 times per year.

Any member may request that the chairperson convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee to discuss any matter warranting urgent consideration. The chairperson shall determine whether an extraordinary meeting is warranted.

At least 2 weeks' notice must be given to all members of any meeting of the committee. Meetings should be held at a time and place generally convenient to the committee. The proponent should provide facilities for committee meetings, if required to do so by the committee.

If regional committees have already been established, clustering of meetings or committees may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the situation, this could include a single committee with permanent standing members and other members that rotate and attend for part of a meeting relevant to a particular project. In this way, a single committee could accommodate multiple projects.

Meeting proceedings

The chairperson should convene and chair meetings of the committee. Meetings of the committee should follow good meeting practice. The committee may agree to adopt any particular set of standard meeting practices if it wishes to do so. As the committee is not a decision-making body, it is not a requirement that consensus be reached on issues discussed.

The chairperson should determine the agenda items. Any member may propose a matter for inclusion on the agenda, either before or during a meeting, providing the matter is within the purpose of the committee. The chairperson should ensure that issues of concern raised by community representatives on behalf of the community are properly considered. Late items may be deferred to a following meeting.

The committee may decide to undertake its regular inspections of the wind farm in conjunction with its meetings, or at other times convenient to it. The meeting agenda items would normally include:

- Apologies
- Declaration of pecuniary or other interests
- Confirmation of the previous meeting minutes
- Business arising from previous minutes – response to issues raised or provision of additional information requested
- Correspondence
- Proponent reports and overview of activities:
 - progress at the wind farm – assessment or operational issues
 - issues arising from site inspections
 - monitoring and performance
 - community complaints and response
 - information provided to the community and any feedback
- General business
- Next meeting.

Minutes of meetings

Minutes are to be kept of all meetings of the committee. The Minutes must record issues raised and actions to be undertaken, who is responsible for taking those actions and by when. If a member so requests, then the Minutes must record that member's dissenting views on any matter.

The Minutes are normally recorded by the proponent. Meetings can only be tape-recorded with the agreement of the chairperson and the committee. The Minutes are to be distributed to all members. The proponent should ensure that a copy of the Minutes is made available on the proponent's project website and in another public place agreed to by the committee (e.g. the local council offices or a public library) within 28 days of each meeting. The Minutes must be endorsed by the chairperson prior to them being distributed or placed on the proponent's project website.

The Minutes must be endorsed by the committee at its following meeting. If the Minutes are amended by the committee, then the amended version must be placed on the proponent's project website.

Conduct of members

In meetings of the committee and when otherwise involved in the business and activities of the committee, members and alternate representatives shall, to the best of their abilities:

- act properly, honestly and in accordance with an open and transparent process
- perform their functions impartially and in the best interests of the local and broader communities
- be respectful to fellow members and not engage in unconstructive, threatening, intimidating or disorderly behaviour
- refrain from any form of conduct which may cause any reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment.

The chairperson should bring any breach of these requirements to the attention of the persons concerned. Following three such breaches, the chairperson may request the Director General (in the case of a community or other stakeholder member), organisation which appointed them (in the case of a proponent or council representative or alternative representative), or community member (in the case of an alternative community representative) replace the member or alternative representative.

The chairperson may similarly request the replacement of any member who fails to attend committee meetings for more than four meetings.

Pecuniary and other interests

Members should declare any pecuniary or other interest which may be considered to prevent them undertaking their role impartially and in the best interests of the local and broader communities. Examples include holding a private contract with the proponent or holding voluntary acquisition rights. These guidelines establish no requirement in respect of personal interests other than declaration. However, the committee may determine that a personal interest is sufficient that a member should withdraw from discussion on a particular issue.

Committee training

The committee may seek funding or other assistance from the proponent to develop the skills necessary to achieve the purposes of the committee. Examples may include training or skills development in best practice environmental management of wind farms. The proponent should make every endeavor to support reasonable requests from the committee for necessary training or skills development.

Committee funding and remuneration

The committee may seek annual or one-off funding from the proponent for activities related to its purposes. It is within the proponent's discretion whether or not to agree to such requests. The chairperson, community and other stakeholder members of the committee may seek the payment of sitting fees and / or personal expenses from the proponent. Again, it is within the proponent's discretion whether or not to agree to such requests. If such fees or expenses are paid, then the proponent should indicate that this is occurring on the proponent's project website, so that the broader community remains fully informed.

Dispute resolution

The committee is encouraged to discuss and seek agreement on all matters that may be the subject of substantial disagreement between its members. The chairperson carries a particular responsibility in respect of dispute resolution, in regard to both disputes between members of the committee and also between the committee and the proponent.

If a dispute between the committee and the proponent cannot be resolved by the chairperson, the chairperson should seek the advice of the Director General. For example advice may be sought from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure in determining the appropriateness of the environmental performance of certain aspects of the wind farm, whether the wind farm is complying with approval conditions or whether the wind farm's response to community complaints has been appropriate.

If a dispute between community or council members cannot be resolved by the chairperson, then the chairperson may request that the Director General review the appointments of any or all members of the committee, with a view to making a new appointment or appointments.

Where three or more members are concerned about the manner in which the chairperson is fulfilling the role (e.g. there is an ongoing perception of bias, inappropriate control, refusal to share information or to adhere to the wishes of the committee), they may request that the Director General review the chairperson's appointment, with a view to making a new appointment.

Responsibilities of the proponent

During the assessment process, the proponent must provide the committee with updates on the assessment studies being prepared and the issues being investigated, and design and layout options being considered.

Once the project is approved, the proponent should regularly provide the committee with timely, accurate and comprehensive reports on the wind farm's operations and performance on its environmental management and community relations. The proponent should also provide the committee with copies of:

- the wind farm's development approval including conditions of consent,
- any management, decommissioning or rehabilitation plans
- results of environmental monitoring
- annual environmental management reports
- audit reports (including audits required as a condition of approval)
- reports on community concerns or complaints and proponent responses
- any other information specified by the Director General.

Annual environmental management reports, audit reports, monitoring reports and the like are to be distributed to committee members at the same time as they are submitted to agencies. The proponent must consult with the committee if it intends to seek amendments to conditions of approval, to change operational requirements, or to expand the operations of the wind farm.

The proponent should respond in a timely fashion to any questions or advice the committee may give it concerning the wind farm's environmental performance or community relations. The proponent should forward to each committee member within 28 days of the committee's meeting:

- a copy of the minutes
- the proponent's response to any questions or advice by the committee
- any information requested by the chairperson

The proponent should organise inspections of the wind farm for the committee. The frequency of inspections is to be determined by the committee, but the inspections should usually be undertaken in conjunction with committee meetings. In addition, the proponent should accommodate any reasonable request by the chairperson for the committee to undertake additional inspections, providing at least 48 hours notice has been given to the proponent by the chairperson.

Communication with the broader community

Committee members are encouraged to discuss issues and disseminate information about the wind farm with the wider community, including special interest groups. If appropriate, the chairperson of the committee may also give briefings to community organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Parents and Citizens Committees and environmental and heritage organisations.

The committee may agree to release statements or other information to the media or to adopt other approaches to public dissemination of information. However, only the chairperson may speak publicly on behalf of the committee. Individual committee members may make comments to the media or in public forums on behalf of themselves or the stakeholders that they represent, but not on behalf of the committee.

There is a presumption that all documents and other information considered by the committee should be generally available to the community. However, any member may request that particular information (e.g. a declaration of a personal interest, or information which the proponent considers to be commercial-in-confidence) be kept confidential to the committee. In the absence of full consensus amongst the committee over whether such information should be kept confidential, the decision of the chairperson shall be final and be binding on all members.

Land Values

As with any property and land holding there are many factors which can influence perceived and actual property values, including prevailing and permitted land uses, economic conditions, access / proximity to markets / workplaces and lifestyle considerations. In most agricultural areas the main determinant of property and land values is the productivity of the land for agricultural or livestock purposes.

There have been a number of studies conducted to determine the significance, if any, of wind farms on such values. These studies have predominantly concluded it is not possible to isolate the sole effect of wind farms on property and land values due to the myriad of factors (as outlined in the first paragraph) influencing value. By comparing the positive and negative impacts of the construction and operational stages of a wind farm to existing knowledge of what causes changes in property values, it is possible to predict the relationship between wind farms and property values.

Henderson and Horning Property Consultants (H&HPC 2006) conducted a study covering a fifteen year period into the relationship between wind farms and property / land values by assessing local property values around the operating Crookwell 1 Wind Farm in the NSW Southern Tablelands. The study also reviewed other overseas wind farms to compare with the Australian market. The conclusions from H&HPC relevant to this Project are:

- That agricultural productive capacity of the land subject to the wind farm and the surrounding property is not in any measured way affected by the wind farm;
- The associated property has additional revenue and benefits from the lease agreement, improved roads, erosion control and passive wind protection for stock from the substation and wind turbine towers;
- The future development of the land under existing planning controls would continue as zoned 1(a) Rural Zone;
- The wind farm development has the potential to slow down the shift of productive agricultural land to rural residential use in the short to medium term;
- There was no measurable reduction in values of properties that have a line of sight to the Crookwell 1 Wind Farm; and
- Soils, improvements and access to services are more important drivers of property values than visual impacts.

The United Kingdom perceptual study conducted by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS 2004) concluded that the main negative impacts were visual impact, fear of blight and proximity of a property to a wind turbine. In a straw poll conducted by Nuridin (2009), she spoke with the Real Estate Institute of Australia and several other real estate agents operating in locations with wind farms to see if wind farms did influence property / land values. All interviewed agents replied that “there is no indication of any depreciation in the value of properties hosting wind farms, or those adjacent to, or in sight of turbines” (Nuridin 2009). In fact according to some agents in Albany, Western Australia, the wind farm is used as a marketing tool and in Ararat, Victoria, the wind farm has caused the town to prosper (Nuridin 2009).

The NSW Valuer General released a report summarising the impact of wind farms on land values in Australia, analysing impacts of eight wind farms across NSW and Victoria (NSW Valuer General 2009). This report found that wind farms do not appear to negatively affect property values across varying land uses, including rural, rural residential and residential. Results suggested that a property's underlying land use may affect the property's sensitivity to price impacts. There were no evident reductions in sale price for rural or residential properties located in nearby townships with views of the wind farm. Due to the remoteness of the wind farms, only a small number of samples were available for inclusion, limiting the conclusions that could be drawn, and highlighting the need for future studies.

It is common for surrounding landholders to raise the fear that the wind farm will reduce the value of their properties. This fear has been further promoted by negative media coverage of the purported issue. South Gippsland Council decided in early 2013 to reduce rates for a coastal property which abuts the yet to be constructed Bald Hills Wind Farm. The CEO of the council made the relevant comment that it may be that after construction has been completed, the impact is less than perceived and the valuation may rise again. The leading research in this area is by Hoen (2011), whose key conclusion is that "conclusive evidence of persistent post-construction effects from wind facilities have not been discovered despite a number of studies using a variety of sophisticated statistical techniques". In fact the Pyrenees Shire Council in Western Victoria is home to one of Australia's largest operating wind farms, Waubra. A land evaluation report presented to council in August 2012 showed that from 2010 to 2012, residential properties in the Waubra area increased in value by 10.1 percent.

The value of land suitable for subdivision or land which possesses a dwelling entitlement could be affected. In this regard, and as discussed in Chapter 4 Project Justification, the Proponent has identified where potential land use conflicts occur surrounding the Project, and will be discussing potential impacts with relevant landowners. Beyond these, subdivision applications which have been approved in the region by Boorowa Council and Yass Valley Council will not be directly impacted upon. Conversely, due to the additional revenue from hosting wind turbines to associated landowners, subdivision of involved landowner properties is less likely to occur in the short to medium term and the land will continue to be used for sheep and cattle grazing.

Some surrounding landowners have raised the concern that construction and operation of the wind farm will decrease the number of potential buyers within the market, which in turn could diminish property values. As already discussed, there are many factors that influence an individual's decision when purchasing a property and the presence of a wind farm may or may not have an influence on this decision. For example, a potential buyer may seek a lifestyle with a green energy aesthetic or have no issue with wind turbines.

It should be noted that the Project cannot be developed without some risk of property value impacts during the construction and operational phases, as personal perceptions and tastes will likely come into play. Due to the difficulty in assessing the real impacts on property values there are no suggested mitigation methods to apply. However as the Community Wellbeing and Local Economy can be positively affected by the construction of the Project, such effects can be considered to contribute to the mitigation of any loss of property value that may occur.