

**MINUTES OF CRUDINE RIDGE WIND FARM
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (CCC)**

**Tuesday 12 March 2024 at Pyramul Hall, Pyramul
(10.15 am)**

Attendees	Initials	Position
David Johnson	DJ	Independent Chairperson
Dr Robert (Buzz) Sanderson	RS	Community Member
Max Price	MP	Community Member
Owain Rowland-Jones	ORJ	Community Member
Mike McGuire	MM	Squadron Energy
Kath Elliott	KE	Squadron Energy
Jess Jennings	JJ	Mayor, Bathurst Regional Council
Observers:	Lisa Penson Allan Heath	Mid-Western Council Observer (local resident)
Apologies:	Alan Cattermole Ben Deer Des Kennedy	AC BD DK Bathurst Regional Council Squadron Energy Mid-Western Council

Item	Details and Actions
1.0 Welcome and Introductions	<i>Meeting opened at 10.15am.</i> David Johnson welcomed those present, and noted the apologies he had received. He particularly welcomed Kath Elliott, Head of Stakeholder & Community Engagement with Squadron Energy, and Cr. Jess Jennings, Mayor of Bathurst Regional Council.
2.0 Acknowledgement of Country	The Chair acknowledged the Wiradjuri people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting is being held and paid respects to their elders past, present and emerging.
3.0 Declarations of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None.

<p>4.0 Correspondence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair noted further email correspondence received from Mid-Western Council on 28/11/23 relating to the allocation of VPA funding monies. • The Chair also noted correspondence from both Councils in January 2024, nominating new representatives for the CCC – Cr Des Kennedy for Mid-Western and Mayor Jess Jennings for Bathurst.
<p>5.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that the last meeting of the CCC was held on 15 August 2023. There were no comments made regarding the previous minutes; <p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. DJ noted the above-mentioned correspondence from Mid-Western Council on VPA funding allocations (dated 28/11/23), which he tabled. He had also sent an email to Mid-Western Council on 29/9/23 confirming that members of the CCC feel strongly that VPA monies should be spent in the local area, not elsewhere in the LGA. • 2. DJ confirmed that he had sent an email to Andrew Hundy asking if he wished to remain on the CCC, and he had replied that he did wish to continue as a member.
<p>6.0 Proponent's Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MM noted that weed-spraying has continued in disturbed areas, also roadworks on Crudine Rd and some internal tracks. Annual turbine maintenance program commences on 9/4/24 over about 3 months; also some blade repairs due to lightning damage • MM will be moving to the Uungula wind farm project, which is shortly to commence construction, later in the year

7.0 Other Agenda Items

- VPA funding: KE reported approaches from community members re the allocation of VPA funds – referring to Mid-Western Council (MWC) area.
- DJ noted the correspondence he sent to the two Councils in 2023 and the replies from both. KE noted that MWC's letter of 28/11/23 advised that it is Council's discretion how and where funds are committed. The VPA actually notes that the money is to be spent in the land surrounding the wind farm. Squadron will write to Council to seek clarification on whether funds have been spent, and if so where they have been spent.
- MP noted that Bathurst Council spent their share in the Sofala and Wattle Flat areas.
- ORJ suggested possibly funding some tourist information, display map or similar at the public area near Aarons Pass on the Castlereagh Hwy. He also considers that some of the local history in the area could also qualify for funding in some way.
- AH noted that some improvements to the Crudine Hall could also qualify for funding.
- It was agreed by all members that the CCC should pressure MWC to allocate VPA funds to the local area. Both KE (on behalf of Squadron) and DJ (on behalf of the CCC) to write to MWC to press this point, and to ask about allocation of funds to date. (**ACTION ITEM**).
- Terms of Reference: DJ noted that, as required under the new CCC Guidelines, he has prepared a *Terms of Reference* for this CCC, which was circulated to members late in 2023. He received no comments, so that draft has been adopted as the final.
- DJ also reminded members that we are all required to accept and sign the new Code of Conduct forms and that he has hard copies which can be signed today

8.0 General Business

- ORJ asked about bird and bat monitoring; MM said this is continuing & results are available on the website; koalas are not part of the monitoring program as there is not an on-going threat.
- ORJ also asked about threatened plant species (purple pea etc); MM reported that the ecological consultants have been on site recently and the data will be available in due course;
- ORJ asked about the offset block on Hill End Rd – tracks, fencing and weed spraying, fox baiting etc.
- ORJ also noted that Bididi Bush (or Sefton Bush) is taking over the area, particularly some host properties which are not being well managed in terms of weed management. Noted that it is not a declared noxious weed, so authorities are unlikely to provide chemical for spraying and control requires good farm management; sheep will eat small plants but if the properties are unstocked, it needs to be sprayed.
- MP noted that where burnt by fire, it doesn't return quickly.
- MM noted that Squadron's responsibility is for areas around access roads and turbines etc; BS asked if it is possible for Squadron to assist landowners by providing chemical etc., or by helping educate landowners. MM said they have done that before in some cases, and could possibly contribute in some way.
- **ACTION:** Squadron to explore ways in which they could help farmers to deal with the Sefton Bush problem.
- BZ reported that some of the water tanks left after construction of the WF are not being managed or accessible for RFS to use for fire fighting as they often cannot be tapped in case of need. An example is the one at Aarons Pass on the Castlereagh Highway. The intention was that they would be made available in the event of fires.
- JJ asked about the offset property near Hill End. MM said it is called 'Glen May' and is being maintained. It comprises steep land & there is no public access.
- ORJ asked again about whether Squadron have any intention of enlarging the wind farm by adding turbines in the area between the current northern and southern parts, as was originally intended but not approved. MM and KE reported that there is no such intention or plan.
- Discussion followed on Squadron's other projects and plans in renewable energy, and constraining issues such as power connections and high voltage transmission line requirements.

9.0 Next Meeting	The date for the next meeting was selected as <u>Tuesday 3 September 2024, at 10 am</u> , unless there is a good reason to change that.
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Meeting closed at 11.25am

DJ thanked all present for their attendance.

Action Items:

Item	Issue	Action By:
1.	The Chair and Squadron to separately contact MW Council to again stress that the CCC feels strongly that the wind farm VPA funds should be spent within the local area, and to ask for details of funding allocations to date.	DJ/KE
2.	Squadron to explore and consider ways in which it could assist local landowners in dealing with the Sefton (or Biddi) Bush problem.	MM/KE

David Johnson, Independent Chair