

Bango Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee Annual Report 2023-2024

CCC / Project Name:	Bango Wind Farm CCC	Reporting Period:	April 2023 to July 2024
Independent Chairperson:	Lisa Andrews	Proponent Contact:	Grant Stepien

1. Executive Summary

The Bango Wind Farm is located to the east of Lachlan Valley Way between the regional centres of Yass and Boorowa in the Southern Tablelands of NSW.

The site is located in the Hilltops and Yass Valley local government areas and forms part of a larger rural area used primarily for grazing.

Originally the project proposed the construction of up to 75 turbines, however, following submissions during the assessment process, mainly regarding biodiversity and visual concerns, it was reduced and approved by the Independent Planning Commission for 71 turbines. Following an appeal to the Land and Environment Court by third parties, consent was granted for 46 turbines (to be positioned within 49 locations). The project also involved the development of associated ancillary infrastructure.

The proponent, CWP Renewables Pty Ltd, consulted with the community from the commencement of its preparation for their development application in 2013. First meeting approximately once per year, the CCC now meets on a quarterly basis, alternatively between Yass and Boorowa venues.

The project commenced construction in April 2019 with the awarding of the tender to the successful civil works and turbine supplier contractors and in 2023, the project was purchased by Squadron Energy.

The Community Consultative Committee (CCC) operates in accordance with the revised Department of Planning's Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Development. The committee's membership consists of:

- Two local community representatives
- One Yass Valley Council delegate
- One Hilltops Regional Council delegate
- Two stakeholder group representatives (Boorowa District Landscape Guardians & Yass Business Chamber)
- One host landholder; and
- One Independent Chairperson.

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

The project has now moved to operational.

In 2022, the CCC met in March, July and November. At the November meeting it was agreed to move to bi-annual meetings, which were held in May 2023 and November 2023. During these meetings members received presentations and updates from the proponent's representatives on:

- Site map progress for the erection of the turbines in both the western and eastern clusters
- Site infrastructure (internal roads, etc)
- Rehabilitation and remediation works
- Testing and commissioning for the energisation of underground system to progress to being brought online.
- Generation of the turbines.
- Energisation/commissioning/hold point testing of units

- Complaints register
- Establishment of the Community Enhancement Fund
- Community engagement
- Community competitions (Christmas Light Up)
- Educational activities at local schools
- Presentations to local business groups
- Preparation and approval of Management Plans
- Local contractors and employment information/statistics
- Management of the superb parrot population
- Substations and Meteorological Masts
- Micrositing of the turbine locations
- Community Sponsorship Program
- Water Usage
- Maintenance program
- Site staff numbers
- Voluntary Planning Agreements with both Councils.

At the November 2023 meeting it was agreed by members that the CCC would move to an annual meeting. Accordingly, a meeting was held on site at the wind farm 30 July 2024. Responses were provided on previous enquires in relation to:

- Bird & Bat Monitoring. Explanation of monitoring program.
- Impact triggers in relation to bird strikes
- The mitigation for threatened species
- Supply of roof top solar panels for residents' of a neighbouring development
- Solar panels vs turbines

Members also received updates on the:

- The project's EPBC Compliance report
- Noise Compliance Testing
- The second round of the Community Enhancement Fund with both Councils
- Sponsorship of local community events by Squadron Energy
- Annual maintenance program and warranty repairs of turbines
- Occurrences of Outages via Transgrid
- Weed maintenance
- Bush Fire Management
- Confirmation that local emergency services will be attending site to look at access tracks
- Current staffing numbers on site
- Civil maintenance on site
- The CCC received a presentation by the Independent Chairperson on the Department of Planning's revised guidelines for SSD CCCs; outlining the changes and providing an opportunity to reinforce the objectives of the CCC and role of members. The members of the CCC have developed a specific Terms of Reference for this committee as well as completed the necessary governance forms (Pecuniary Interest Declarations and Code of Conduct), which will be reviewed annually.

Review of Effectiveness of the CCC

In accordance with the revised CCC guidelines, it is deemed that the CCC operates effectively. The proponent provides comprehensive presentations, ongoing notifications, timely responses to requests and completion of action items. There have been no concerns raised by CCC members.

The CCC is a successful communication forum between the community, the Council and the company. It fulfils its objectives under the Department's guidelines and has a diverse membership, representing the broader community.

There were no joint CCC's held in the region.

3. Key issues

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
Management of the Superb Parrot	Condition 13 of the project approval requires CWP to contribute \$100,000 over 5 years to prepare and implement a Superb Parrot Conservation Research Plan. This will be incorporated with two other wind farm approvals in the region.	Ongoing updates to be provided to CCC.
Updates from the project's Community Enhancement Fund (CEF)	The CEF committees have been established with Hilltop Council and Yass Valley Council who meet to consider applications and allocate grant funds in accordance with the selection criteria contained within the CEF guidelines.	With the turbines now being operational, the CEF is activated and will continue to function for the life of the project, providing grant funding for community projects.
Community Sponsorship	Squadron Energy also operate a separate sponsorship program to assist the local community in staging events.	Information provided to members at each CCC.
Bird & Bat Management	Bird & Bat monitoring is undertaken in accordance with the project's conditions of consent and the Bird & Bat Management Plan.	Information provided and available on project website.
Noise from turbines	Noise monitoring is undertaken in accordance with the project's conditions of consent and Management Plan.	The noise monitoring to date is compliant.
Preparedness for bush fire season	Arrangements have been made for emergency services to visit the site to ensure appropriate access is available should an event occur on site.	Updates to be provided to members.
Suggested "Open Day"	Following suggestion that an Open Day occur on site for the local community to view the turbines.	To be considered by proponent.
Replacement of Community Engagement Officer	Following the resignation/retirement of the Community Engagement Officer, it was felt that the role should be replaced.	To be considered by the proponent

The focus for the next 12 months will continue to be the construction stage of the project, with a number of civil works being undertaken in and around the site.

4 Focus for next 12 months

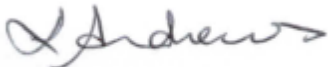
The planned activities for 2024 will be guided by the contributions of the CCC members. These activities are likely to include:

- Continued updates on environmental monitoring of the site.
- Updates on mandatory reviews (Annual Report/Independent Environmental Audit, etc)
- Management Plan reviews
- Weed management
- Continued engagement with the community regarding education programs and sponsorship opportunities.
- Updates on the National Superb Parrot Conservation Plan.
- Continued updates on the project's Community Enhancement Fund with the two Councils.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no outstanding or emerging issues that have not been addressed.

CCC minutes and presentations are available on the website.

Note: At the 30 July 2024 CCC, the Independent Chairperson advised that she was stepping down from this committee and that a replacement Chair would be appointed by DPHI. The committee members were thanked for their support and contribution to their community over the past nine years whilst she chaired the meeting.

Signature of Chair:	
Date:	15 August 2024