

APPENDIX D - CROOKWELL II WIND FARM COMMUNITY WORKSHOP REPORT (DECEMBER, 2004)

Crookwell II Wind Farm
Community Workshop Report

Prepared

by

Quatro Communication Group

for the

Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources

December 16, 2004

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1: Introduction and Purpose of the Community Workshop

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) is currently assessing the proposal for a Wind Farm at Crookwell, the Proposed Crookwell II Wind Farm. As part of the assessment process a community workshop with individuals who made a submission on the proposal as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS) was convened on the 30th November 2004.

44 invitations were issued from DIPNR to individuals who contributed submissions, to Council and to landowners where turbines would be located if the application is successful. The workshop was convened with an acceptance received from 52 participants. Invitees were asked to bring up to two representatives from each household. The workshop was convened at the Crookwell Memorial Hall between the hours of 6.30pm and 8.30pm. With the consensus of the meeting this time was extended, and the meeting was formally closed at 9.30pm. The workshop was actually attended by 47 individuals.

The Wind Farm Joint Venture proposes 55 turbines of 2MW, installed on 67 metre towers, with the top of the blade sweep 107 metres above ground level. It includes an electrical substation and connection to the electricity transmission network; control room and facilities next to the substation; a network of tracks connecting to each turbine, access from Crookwell Road and Woodhouselee Road and an underground electrical cable network linking the turbines to the substation. The proposal was publicly exhibited from 13 August to 14 September 2004.

A total of 50 submissions were received from individuals, households and companies.

The purpose of the workshop was identified as being:

- To ensure Upper Lachlan Shire Council and the Crookwell community are appropriately informed about:
 - o The NSW State development assessment process
 - o How issues relating to Crookwell II will be addressed, and
 - o DIPNR's specific approach to dealing with visual and landscape matters; key issues identified in submissions received and impacts on local amenity.
- To provide a focused forum for landowners who made submissions to address and elaborate on the specific concerns and issues that they raised in their submissions.

2: Workshop Agenda, Methodology & Presentations

The workshop agenda was constructed around a two hour time period. However, due to the size and desire of the participants the workshop time was extended to three hours, starting at 6.30pm and closing at 9.30pm. The workshop was facilitated and chaired by Christine Marsden of Quatro Communication Group.

The agenda comprised two parts. Part One dealt with providing information and background to the participants. Part Two was the specific discussion and feedback from the participants on areas of visual assessment and other key issues raised in discussion.

Presentations covered the following topics:

- o Introductions and overview provided by Christine Marsden from Quatro Communication
- o Strategic overview of wind farming and energy provision presented by Madeline Cowley from DEUS
- o Scope of the proposal for Crookwell II Wind Farm presented by Tom Hanselmann and Mick Cooper from the Wind Farm Joint Venture
- o Overview of the assessment process and key issues raised in the submissions by Neville Osborne and Jacqueline Ingham from DIPNR
- o Elements of Visual Assessment Process by Dennis Williamson of Scenic Spectrums

The workshop then moved into working groups to respond to the following questions with the intention of providing detailed feedback to assist DIPNR in the process of visual assessment. The questions that participants were asked to provide responses on were:

1. *How do you regard the scenic quality of the study area in general as compared to other places you have seen in Australia?*
2. *Are there any particular areas or landscape features of the study you regard to be of very high to high scenic quality?*
3. *Are there any areas of the study area you regard to be of low to very low scenic quality?*
4. *Are there any significant viewpoint and views that you believe are scenically important to the community or to you?*
5. *What are the elements your group agrees are key features to be protected, key viewpoints and views of importance for the community?*

6. *Are there any community issues or impacts that are not included in the list of issues (provided by DIPNR from submissions received) that in your view DIPNR should consider as part of the application/assessment process?*
7. *Provide information on any issues that have been overlooked in the submissions and provide feedback on these to DIPNR.*

Feedback from the working groups was provided to the full workshop audience and there was the opportunity for all participants to seek clarification and to expand on comments. Participants recorded their individual feedback on workshop feedback sheets. This information is presented in summary form later in this report.

A workshop evaluation was also completed by the majority of attendees. Results of this evaluation are reported in this document.

Following the workshop the facilitator received by electronic mail a list of issues from one of the workshop participants. The correspondence provided more detail on issues raised during the workshop.

3: Key Issues raised

The workshop participants that were invited to the forum had provided a submission on the proposal as part of the EIS process. Based on the information that was presented at the workshop on the issues that were contained in the submissions the workshop discussion and feedback appeared to confirm and reinforce the matters that have been communicated to DIPNR through the submission process.

However, the workshop had as its primary focus feedback from the participants on the visual impacts of the proposed Crookwell II Wind Farm. Both in general discussion and in the workshop working groups common themes and issues emerged. These include:

Concerns regarding identity of applicant and transparency of the EIS processes:

- Concerns about the identify of the applicant and the transparency of the processes followed
- Concerns that the applicant may 'walk away from the leases within a few years'- and that the process for application is being managed through a 'special vehicle company'
- Concern regarding the security of the applicant and the overseas nature of the business
- Sentiment that 'deals' are done in secrecy with landowners
- EIS competency – several issues raised concerning perceived "flaws in the EIS process", these were described as being evident by:
 - o Poor communication and flawed processes in the circulation of the newsletter to the community
 - o Community meetings did not achieve consultation objectives in view of the meeting participants
 - o Errors in maps used throughout EIS process – for instance Rosslyn mapping; residences missing from some maps

Economic Impacts:

- Negative impacts on land and property values
- No evidence that a economic cost benefit analysis has been undertaken
- Negative impact on developing tourism market

Social impacts:

- Division in the small rural community and impacts on relationships

Environmental impacts:

- Noise from turbines

- Visual impacts
- Impacts to bats and bird populations
- Impacts on horses

Loss of Rural Landscape:

- Loss of rural character

State Wide Planning perspective:

- Concern regarding the absence of a State wide policy on the development and locations of wind farms

Property Impacts:

- Negative impacts on adjacent and surrounding properties
- Perceived loss of property value

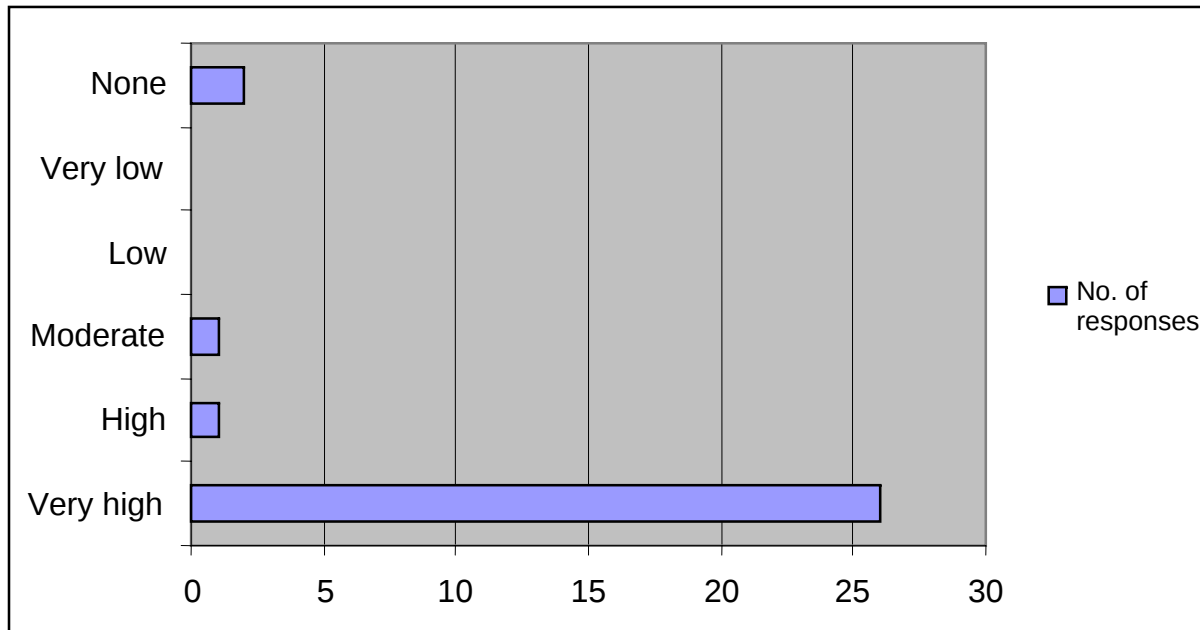
4. Individual Responses Provided to Working Group Questions

32 workshop participants completed individual responses to the Visual Assessment questionnaire. Not every question was answered by each participant so scores and sample sizes vary. However, details on individual responses are provided in the following table.

Item 1a:

How do you regard the scenic quality of the study area in general as compared to other places you have seen in Australia?

The chart below details their responses.



Item 1b:

Are there any particular areas or landscape features of the study you regard to be of very high to high scenic quality?

[Note: some responses to this question were recorded in space on the form under question 1 a).]

The comments below from participants identifying areas and features they considered to be of very high to high scenic quality:

Area / Location considered to be of very high to high scenic quality	Rating
• Ranges and hills • Big Sky Country aspects of country views • Tablelands and rural landscape in general	45%
• Pejar Dam and surrounds	21%
• Views from the Goulburn to Crookwell road, especially from the top of the hill before Pejar Road	10%
• Rolling hills as seen from the Rosslyn homestead	7%
• Airstrip with views to the Snowy Mountains	3%
• View from the rear of Normaroo homestead	3%
• Areas around Elmgrove	3%

No response given	7%
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Item 1c:

Are there any areas of the study area you regard to be low to very low scenic quality?

Comments from participants below. Note that some participants chose not to respond, or to make comments that fall into 2 categories below:

Area / Location considered to be of low to very low scenic quality	Rating
Existing wind farm	13%
High tension wires near Pejar Dam	10%
Rural land in general due to barren terrain	3%
No response given	73%

Item 1d:

Are there any significant viewpoints and views that you believe are scenically important to the community or to you?

Note that some participants chose not to respond, or to make comments that fall into 2 categories below:

Significant viewpoints & views that are of scenic importance	Rating
Pejar Dam and surrounds, including Pigman's Hill	27%
Views driving into and out of Crookwell from all directions – Goulburn, Binda, Gunning, Rosslyn, Taralga	12%
Viewpoints from high points on the Goulburn to Crookwell Road	12%
High points on ridges and ranges	6%
Rolling green hills adorned with trees	6%
Unobstructed views of sunrise and sunset from the Rosslyn homestead	3%
Elmgrove	3%
Trig Station	3%
Glen Aben, Kialla	3%
Red Hill	3%

Significant viewpoints & views that are of scenic importance	Rating
• Pejar Hill	3%
• Whites Hill	3%
• St Stephen's Church	3%
• Merv Plumb Memorial and Memorial Drive at the junction of woodhouse Road and Middle Arm Road	3%
• Area between Third Creek Road through to Pejar Road	3%
• View from Andy Vandertak's grave to the south	3%
• No response given	3%

6. Recommendations:

Recommendation specific to the Crookwell II process is:

1. Consideration is given to providing a copy of this workshop report to attending participants on request. This recommendation is based on the requests made by attendees at the workshop.

Recommendation for future community consultation initiatives:

1. Consideration is given to convening a meeting earlier in the planning process for individuals who have made a submission. The purpose of such a meeting would be to gain a detailed understanding of issues, concerns, priorities and or preferences earlier to inform planning outcomes.
2. With the intention of ensuring effective communication to community groups, provide training in 'working with community groups' and 'presentation skills' for all presenters. Provide training before consultation meetings as necessary with less experienced presenters.

Attachment A:

Working Group Feedback

The information below is feedback from the workshop working groups. Participants responded to questions prepared by DIPNR to assist with the visual assessment process. A copy of the working group questionnaire is provided in Attachment C.

WORKING GROUP QUESTIONS Workshop Participants Feedback

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

1. In order to assist in the **visual assessment** could you please answer the following questions?

(a) How do you regard the scenic quality of the study area in general as compared to other places you have seen in Australia: (Very High, High, Moderate, Low, Very Low)?;

- **Whole area is of very high scenic quality**

(b) Are there any particular areas or landscape features of the study you regard to be of very high to high scenic quality? (Please describe these locations using place names or geographic features);

- **Views are of importance to this community**
- **All ridges and hills – Whites Hill**
- **All approaches to Crookwell from Goulburn, Binda, Gunning, Laggan, Goldspie, Kiala and so forth**
- **Entire integrated landscape has an important cultural meaning to us**
- **Pejar Dam is a key landscape feature**
- **Pejar Dam (1870) famous garden**

(c) Are there any areas of the study area you regard to be of low to very low scenic quality? (Please describe these locations using places names or geographic features)

- **None noted**

(d) Are there any significant viewpoints and views that you believe are scenically important to the community or to you (list; describe location and direction/span of view)

- **Horizons on all views is important to retain**
- **Views of the Ranges against the horizon – “Big Sky Country”**
- **Visual cartilage**
- **Pejar Dam – picnic area**
- **St Stephens Church of historical significance**
- **Positive cultural landscape of the whole area needs to be retained**

2. Please discuss these issues and determine shared areas and locations which the group agrees are the key features to be protected, key viewpoints and view of importance for the community.

Feedback on areas, locations and key features to be protected, key viewpoints and views of importance for the community are:

- **Access to site**
- **Lease arrangements need to be protected over 20 to 30 years**
- **Maintenance of roads and bond**
- **Turbines too close to the road could be distracting to drivers – safety hazard**
- **Noise factors and impacts**

- **Land devaluation concerns**
- **Sparkling issues can cause grass fires – especially significant in drought periods**
- **Council not being the consenting authority for development is of concern**
- **Potential that there could be increased land values resulting in a multiplier effect on Council rates and Land Tax.**
- **Pejar Dam approach ruined by overbearing towers on Pigeons Hill**
- **Tranquility of the Woolloondilly Valley is valuable**
- **View of the valley from St Stephen's Church over the area is important to protect**

3. Review the list of issues / concerns from the submissions

(a) Are there community issues or impacts that are not included in this list that in your view DIPNR should consider as part of the application / assessment process?

- **EIS for wombats on the river and subsequent impacts**
- **Impacts on Elmgrove property – Dooley family**
- **Charles Woll**
- **Mike Mayoh**
- **Railway Crown land access**
- **Aboriginal Land Claim**
- **Impact has only been assessed on the present situation with no view of looking to the impacts for the future**
- **Lack of contact with the community regarding visual and noise impacts**
- **Workshop feedback considered the EIS was a flawed community consultation process**
- **Issues with EIS documentation – false maps and the reliance on them in the EIS (e.g.: Rosslyn, location of roads)**

- Information provided on impacts on neighboring land values being unaffected by the proposal proven false by statistics for South Gippsland experience in Victoria
- Social impacts resulting in the social division in the community
 - One individual benefits to the detriment of many
- Concerns regarding the secrecy of the process followed – landholders signed up in confidence
- Need to assess and understand the cumulative effects of all the proposed Wind Farms in the area
 - Taralga, Gunning, Roslyn, Lake George
- Assess impact of the absence of a relevant LEP which is in contravention of the zoning controls
- Council's calling for a Commission of Inquiry demonstrates Council's recognition that there is a need for a moratorium on Wind Farm development – needs further assessment
- Lack of proper planning guidelines, councils that do not have skills to deal with these issues
- Concerns that Council has approved a Wind Farm at Walwa – and impact that this may be seen as a precedent thereby encouraging other Wind Farm development.
- Noise impacts for neighbors

- Planning controls on “Quiet Mode” for Wind Farms – noise impacts from cut out valve needs examination
- Need to DIPNR to “work out” standards for tower heights (Wingecarribee Shire has a maximum 20 metre tower height).
- Wind Farm proposal must be full evaluated on:
 - Economies
 - Noise impacts
 - Effect and impacts of birds and bats

- o **Its electromagnetic field**
- **Impacts of turbines on views for individual landowners**
 - o **50% of skyline impacted by turbines on several properties**
 - o **50% impacts of turbines from St Stephen's Church**
 - o **180% from land on Chilly Hill**
 - o **360% encirclement from Elmgrove property**

Attachment B:

Meeting Evaluation

Workshop participants were invited and encouraged to complete a meeting evaluation form to provide feedback to presenters and DIPNR on the presentations, discussions, and value of the forum to this audience.

The evaluation was scored on a scale of 1(low) to 5 (high).
Responses were received from 23 of the attendees.

1. Presentations:

• Content of presentations	2.0
• Quality of presentations	2.2
• Timing of presentations	2.6
• Relevance of presentations	2.1

2. Facilitated discussions:

• Quality of group discussions	3.0
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• How beneficial was this meeting to you?	2.2

COMMENTS:

For the purposes of this report participant's general comments are loosely grouped. There is no formal ranking of the feedback in terms of priority of issue or concern.

- **Community Consultation:**

"It depends on what happens to the information – if nothing is done it wont be beneficial at all"

"Depressing to think that the issue is high jacked by vested interests"

- **Process Feedback:**

"This forum was unacceptable as a full and transparent process for DIPNR to assess the project"

"More question time was necessary....."

"Not enough time for proper discussion"

"I felt that people's concerns were not heard enough"

"No microphone was available and some speakers could not be heard"

"...the meeting is a meaningless sop – to induce a false community involvement"

"Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this problem – the meeting was good"

- **Workshop Presentations:**

"Photos are poor. Does not show images from Elmgrove"

"The quality of information in the presentations was too stereotyped and the audience was able to challenge technical data....."

Someone should have been present to answer the questions accordingly"

- **Are there any other issues that should have been presented during the meeting?**

• Yes	14 respondents
• No	1 respondent
• Undecided / no response	10 respondents

COMMENTS:

For the purposes of this report participant's general comments are loosely grouped. There is no formal ranking of the feedback in terms of priority of issue or concern.

Social Impacts:

"Community division has already happened – profits for a few versus loss of amenity and asset values for many"

"This project is turning this little community against each other – hundreds are suffering to make a few rich"

Scope of Presentations:

"More information about the effect of turbines from varying distances and locations to homesteads and other points of interest such as recreational and viewing locations"

"More on building of the towers"

"A speaker to discuss the negative issues re wind turbines – Madeline from DEUS was hardly unbiased"

"Should have been more focus on visual impact, social division, noise and property values"

"DIPNR should have discussed whether any of these developments will get country energy contracts"

"Noise studies....."

"More factual information on visual impacts, noise, disruptions during construction, efficiency of turbines"

"Better presentation of DIPNR's guidelines for due diligence to build confidence amongst the participants"

"Exaggerated benefits from a greenhouse perspective not fully discussed. The EIS document is flawed and more time needed to explore"

DIPNR Application Process:

"This process needs to be extended to a full and open due diligence of all the issues"

Construction Impacts:

"Disruptions to the neighbouring properties during and after the completions of the wind farms"

Community view of Impacts:

"Future impacts on landowners such as property values and impacts on animals"

"The impact that will be made on people in close proximity to the turbine noise, wind movement and visual impacts"

Do you think the materials available are informative and valuable?

• Yes	5 respondents
• No	8 respondent
• Undecided / no response	12 respondents

COMMENTS:

For the purposes of this report participant's general comments are loosely grouped. There is no formal ranking of the feedback in terms of priority of issue or concern.

Workshop presentations:

" The SEDA/DEUS presentation in particular was valuable – it demonstrated that SEDA/DEUS is completely incompetent technically to assess the value of wind generation in relation to other forms of electricity generation. As an electrical engineer

with 30 years experience in the power and energy area, I can show that these SEDA/DEUS people are not qualified to create policy in the important areas of endeavouring to reduce carbon dioxide in electricity generation”

”Poorly marked and labelled maps”

”It confirmed my fears”

”There was too much reliance on technical data which was not understood by many participants. The meeting needed more examples and formulas”

”The presentation was very biased and favoured the windmills”

”Yes, but I would have preferred to entrust the process to public servants and not paid consultants and foreign corporations”

Additional feedback:

The following feedback was provided by participants across a variety of issues.

Impacts and Performance of Wind Farms:

”The performance of the Wharekorari Wind Farm must be evaluated before any logical conclusions on Wind Farm II can be made”

Community Consultation Process:

”There needs to be more consideration of heritage and cultural landscape impacts. There has not been enough community consultation. For example no interviewing of neighbouring land owners and no properly conducted focus groups. There should be an independent commission of enquiry and a moratorium on applications until this occurs.

”The community consultation is a sham. Overseas corporations have made secret agreements with a few who will financially benefit whilst the rest suffer”

Visual Impacts:

"The property owners may own the land where the turbines are sited but the views and tranquillity of the land belongs to everyone"

"We have not had our property evaluated for noise even though the EP&A said it had. The visual impact on our property would be gross. Our property value will be at least halved if these wind farms proceed"

Environmental Impact Statement:

"The content, claims and facts presented in the EIS are both fake and misleading"

"The wind farms are a speculative development. There are errors in the EIS. The area's growing tourism will be impacted and the community and rural outlook will be changed forever. We want to view the report prior to it going to the minister"

Non participating landholders are counted only if there is a dwelling already built. My vineyard is my workplace and I am not considered in the EIS.

Commission of Inquiry:

"There should be a commission of enquiry as there is confusion between DIPNR and the Council, not all residents were notified about the DA, wind farms are old technology and there is too much focus on short term solutions"

Social & Environmental Impacts:

"If Crookwell II were to be established it would industrialise and destroy a unique rural landscape and have an adverse impact on public amenities/social change in a rural community. It would cause the interruption of more appropriate developments in the

area....i.e. tourism. The area is rich in bird life. Such a development would cause serious disruptions and death to many species, especially birds of prey. We want to view the report of the meeting”

Removal of turbines:

”Idea – the constructing company put up a bond to remove the turbines at the end of their life”

Community Workshop Facilitators Report:

”I would like to see a copy of the report that is given DIPNR”

”The secretive process and lack of real community consultation are reasons supporting the disclosure of the facilitator’s report to all residents before it goes to the minister”

We want feedback on this before the Minister makes a decision

Reports of the meeting should be provided to participants”

Role of Council in Approval Processes:

”If the local council does not have any say in the outcome, say so. As people have the impression that the council should have the final decision because pressure can easily be brought to bear on councillors to try and weaken their position on the issue at hand. Before the meeting, allocate specific time intervals for speakers and keep to schedule. This could prevent the same persons wanting to push the points of view forward, whether positive or negative”

”Council is not capable of making an informed evaluation. A commission of enquiry will give community groups an avenue to put arguments against development without the current disadvantage to the developers who have unlimited resources to press their case.

Fire and safety management issues:

"Need more consideration of risks to fire fighters without aerial support, aerial spraying of weeds, aerial spreading of superphosphate and cost of removal of turbines at the end of their life"

International Trends in Wind Farming:

"The issues go well beyond the matters discussed in the meeting. World opinion is turning against wind farm technology, but this is not adequately considered in this case"

Economic impacts:

"It's easy to see benefits flowing to a few people in the area and to the corporations, but what will be the benefits to the people of Crookwell in general?"

Impacts on Agribusiness:

"We need more information concerning the impact on animals. What is the impact on mares foaling, cows calving? Will valuable breeding and racing stock be affected?"

Attachment C:

Attachment C provides copies of the following workshop materials.

1. Workshop agenda
2. DIPNR Fact Sheet on Crookwell II Wind Farm
3. Wind Farm Joint Venture (WFJV) Fact Sheet on Crookwell II Wind Farm
4. Working Group Questions
5. Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire