

Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee Committee Member Application Form

PROJECT NAME:

CANDIDATE NAME:

A Community Consultative Committee is required to be established for all NSW Wind Farms classified as State Significant Development prior to the determination of the project.

Committee Member Selection

In selecting the community representatives for the Community Consultative Committee, preference will be given to candidates who can represent the concerns of a variety of interest groups. Persons wishing to apply for one of the positions must complete each of the 3 selection criteria contained in the table below. Additional information up to two A4 pages may be attached.

Send your nomination to:

The Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment
 Attn: Director, Infrastructure Projects
 GPO Box 39
 Sydney NSW 2001

OR

information@planning.nsw.gov.au

Selection Criteria	Candidate Response
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.	

WINDFARM COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE CHARTER

Purposes of Committee

A community consultative committee is required to be established for all new wind farm proposals in NSW that are classified as State Significant Development.

The purpose of a community consultative committee is to provide a forum for open discussion between representatives of the applicant, the community, the council and other stakeholders on issues directly relating to the assessment of the wind farm, the wind farm's environmental performance and operation (should the wind farm be approved) and community relations, and keep the community informed on these matters.

The committee provides a forum to:

- establish good working relationships between the applicant, community and other stakeholders in relation to the wind farm;
- discuss community concerns and review the resolution of community complaints;
- discuss strategies for dissemination of information to the broader community;
- provide ongoing communication on the assessment, environmental performance and operation of the wind farm including:
 - the key issues for assessment;
 - the implementation of conditions of consent;
 - the results of environmental monitoring;
 - presentation of annual environmental management reports;
 - outcomes of audit reports;
 - details of rehabilitation and decommissioning plans; and
- work towards outcomes that benefit the wind farm, neighbours and the community.

The committee may:

- provide feedback on matters relating to environmental management and community outcomes relating to the wind farm;
- review the wind farm's complaints-handling procedures;
- provide advice on how to improve community relationships including the provision of information to the community and the identification of community initiatives to which the applicant 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 sharing information; and
- undertake regular visits of the wind farm's operations, as necessary

The responsibility for oversight of the wind farm's compliance with the approval and all other government approvals remains with relevant government agencies.

Membership of Committee

The membership of the committee shall comprise:

- an independent chairperson;
- 5 to 7 representatives of the local community and other stakeholders including at least 2 representatives of any non-associated landowners that own residences within 2km of a proposed wind turbine;
- 1 representative from each local council within which the wind farm is located; and
- 2 or 3 representatives of the applicant, including the person with direct managerial responsibility for environmental management of the wind farm.

State Government agencies are not represented but can attend meetings at the committees request and at agency's discretion.

Independent Chairperson

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.

The chairperson will be appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment, following such consultation as the Secretary 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. The selection criteria includes:

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

The chairperson will report bi-annually to the Secretary on the operation of the committee and will make this report publically available. The Secretary may review the appointment of the chairperson.

Local community and other stakeholder representatives

The local community and other stakeholder representatives will be appointed by the Secretary. Representatives will be selected to represent neighbours; the local community; and other affected or interested stakeholders. Preference will be given to candidates who can represent the concerns of a variety of interest groups. The selection criteria include:

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

Employees of the applicant are not eligible to be appointed as community representatives. The Secretary may review the appointment of community and other stakeholder representatives.

Membership of Committee

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Applicant and Council representatives

Applicant and council representatives are to be appointed to the committee by the company/applicant and the council.

Alternate representatives and observers

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

Committee Meetings

Timing and location of meetings

The committee shall determine the frequency of its meetings. It is suggested that the committee meet at least every 2 or 3 months during the assessment period (between when the Environmental Assessment Requirements are issued and the committee is established and when the application is determined). If the wind farm proposal is refused then the committee will be abandoned. If the wind farm proposal is approved, then it is suggested that the committee meet:

- every 3 months during the wind farm construction and during the first 2 years following commencement of operations; and
- 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 applicant should provide facilities for committee meetings.

Meeting Proceedings

The chairperson shall convene and chair meetings of the committee. Meetings of the committee should follow standard meeting practice, as agreed to by the committee. As the committee is not a decision-making body, it is not a requirement that consensus be reached on issues discussed.

The chairperson shall determine the agenda items. Any member may propose an agenda item, 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 minutes of the previous meeting;
- business arising from previous minutes, response to issues raised or provision of additional information requested;
- correspondence;
- company reports and overview of activities:
 - progress at the wind farm, assessment and operational issues;
 - issues arising from site inspections;
 - monitoring and performance;
 - community complaints and response;
 - information provided to the community and any feedback;
- general business; and
- 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 shall record that the member's dissenting views on any matter. The Minutes are to be recorded by the applicant and distributed to all members

The applicant shall ensure that the Minutes are available on the wind farm's website and in another public place agreed to by the committee within 28 days of each meeting. The Minutes must be endorsed by the chairperson at its following meeting. If the Minutes are amended by the committee, the amended version must be distributed and placed on the wind farm's website. Meetings can only be tape recorded with the agreement of the chairperson and the committee.

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; and
- refrain from any form of conduct which may cause any reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment.

Committee Meetings

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The chairperson should bring any breach of these requirements to the attention of the persons concerned. Following 3 such breaches, the chairperson may request the Secretary (for a community or other stakeholder member), organisation which appointed them (for the applicant or council representative) or community member (for an alternative community representative) replace the member or alternative representative. The chairperson may similarly request the replacement of any member who fails to attend any committee meetings for more than 3 consecutive 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 applicant or holding voluntary acquisition rights. There is no requirement in respect of personal interests other than declaration. The committee may decide 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 applicant to develop the skills necessary to achieve the purpose of the committee. Examples may include training or skills development in environmental management of wind farms. The applicant is to make every endeavour to support reasonable requests for necessary training or skills development.

Committee Funding and Remuneration

The committee may seek annual or one-off funding from the applicant for activities related to its purposes. It is within the applicant'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 requests. If such fees or expenses are paid, then the applicant should indicate that this is occurring on the wind farm's 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 applicant.

If a dispute between the committee and the applicant cannot be resolved by the chairperson, the chairperson should seek the advice of the Secretary. Where 3 or more members are concerned about the manner in which the chairperson is fulfilling the role (eg if there is an ongoing perception of bias, inappropriate control or refusing to share information), they may request that the Secretary review the chairperson's appointment, with a view to making a new appointment.

Responsibility of the company/applicant

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

If the proposal is approved, the applicant is to regularly provide the committee with timely, accurate and comprehensive reports on the wind farm's operations, performance, environmental management and community relations. The applicant is to 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 management reports;
- audit reports;
- reports on community concerns or complaints and applicant responses; and
- any other information specified by the Secretary.

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 applicant must consult with the committee if it intends to seek amendments to conditions of consent, to change operational requirements, or to expand the operations of the wind farm.

The applicant should respond to any questions or advice the chairperson and/or the committee may give it concerning the wind farm within 28 days of the question being asked.

The applicant is to organise inspections of the wind farm for the committee. The frequency of the inspections is to be determined by the committee, but the inspections should be undertaken in conjunction with committee meetings. The applicant is to 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 applicant by the chairperson.

Communication with the broader community

Committee members are encouraged to discuss issues and disseminate information with the wider community. If appropriate, the chairperson of the committee may also give briefings to community organisations. The committee may agree to release statements or other information to the media or to adopt other approaches to public dissemination of information. Only the chairperson may speak publically on behalf of the committee. Individual 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.

All information considered by the committee is to be available to the community. Any member may request that information (eg a declaration of a personal interest, or information which the company 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.