

## **1.2 Minutes of the Planning Focus Meeting, 15 August 2007**

23rd August 2007

Dear Sir / Madam

**RE: Planning Focus Meeting, Gullen Range Wind Farm, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2007**

Thank you for attending the Planning Focus Meeting for the proposed Gullen Range Wind Farm.

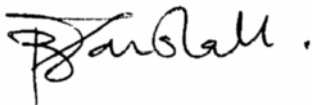
The attached final minutes have been sent to all participating agencies and amended as appropriate to ensure that the comments noted are accurate and in context; changes were made to the CMA and DPI comments only.

As discussed, these minutes are intended to 'kick-off' agency consultation. You will have further opportunity to provide comments to the Department of Planning after the Project Application for this proposal has been lodged.

If you would like to pass further comments on to the Department of Planning directly, please contact Neville Osborne [neville.osborne@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:neville.osborne@planning.nsw.gov.au) or Ricardo Prieto-Curiel [ricardo.prieto-curiel@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ricardo.prieto-curiel@planning.nsw.gov.au)

Thank you again for your participation which will assist in the thorough assessment of the proposal.

Yours sincerely



Brooke Marshall

Senior Project Officer, **ngh**environmental

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**Participants:**

Neville Osborne and Ricardo Prieto-Curiel, Department of Planning

Robert Mowle, John Bell, Brian McCormack, Gary Cosgrove and Bill Martin, Upper Lachlan Shire Council

Dianne James, Goulburn-Mulwaree Shire Council

Mathew Rizzuto and Craig Jones, Department of Environment and Climate Change

Col Hackney, Country Energy

Iain Paterson, Department of Primary Industries

Ian Kenerley, Rural Fire Service Crookwell

John Daunt, Department of Lands

Rob Adam, Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority

Nick Graham-Higgs, Brooke Marshall and Rodger Ubrihien, **ngh**environmental and Duo Designs

Andrew Durran and Simon Davey, Epuron

**Meeting format**

Participants met in Goulburn on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2007 and proceeded to each of the four sites in turn; named for nearby localities, Gurrundah, Pomeroy, Bannister and Kialla. At each site, Simon Davey and Andrew Durran gave an overview of likely infrastructure placement. The number of turbines and their placement will not be decided until after the results of specialist studies are known. Nick Graham-Higgs described the Part 3A assessment process, under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and the purpose of the Planning Focus Meeting. Questions and key concerns were then voiced by agency representatives. Questions were answered by Simon Davey (SD) or Andrew Durran (AD), as indicated below. Minutes were taken by Brooke Marshall (BM).

## Comments from participants:

Agency	Questions / comments (and responses)
Upper Lachlan Shire Council	<p>How many Goulburn – Mulwaree residents will be within 5km of a turbine?  SD: about 60 landowners from what we can determine at the moment.</p> <p>What type of community reaction have you had so far?  SD: Both for and against, many positive responses and interest in being involved in the project recently.</p> <p>Have you contacted local construction companies? Would you use these necessarily or go to tender?  SD: We have made inquiries about local construction capacity.</p> <p>AD: Our preference is to use local companies. The local area has concrete, steel and earthworks capabilities. There may be potential to manufacture the towers and potentially the nacelles locally but blades would need to be imported. If this and other approved wind farms in the area were able to be built in a similar time period, there is scope for real benefits for a local manufacturing industry.</p> <p>Will there be a community benefit? We now have a DCP that includes specifications for a community benefit. Council would administer it via a committee of affected community members.  AD: Yes this would be included in the proposal. We are looking into ways that it could be set up.</p> <p>Will road damage be considered?  AD: Yes, council require this. Any damage will be addressed.</p> <p>How big will the substation footprint be?  AD: The substation would be at the Pomeroy site, apx 100m x 50m.</p> <p>How many turbines will be at Pomeroy?  AD: We don't know yet, maybe up to 20. These will be constrained mostly by noise levels at the closest house at Pomeroy. Mitigating noise for this house will ensure that houses along Prices Lane are below the required noise thresholds. We will have noise loggers to detect background noise during winter. This gives the worst case scenario to base the modelling on. We will be liaising with DECC to get advice on the modelling approach.</p> <p>What about loud noises (sonic booms) that distort the noise loggers?  AD: Abnormal noises are removed before modelling. These are usually a result of birds close to the logger. Some owners are not allowing us to place noise loggers on their properties so we will have to rely on other data to model at these locations.</p> <p>Having a community representative at this meeting would have allowed greater transparency of this process.  AD: Yes but may have disrupted the intention of this meeting which is to get the input of agencies. We will be running extensive community consultation and potentially repeat a site visit for interested people, more aimed at the community input.</p> <p>Some additional councillors may also like to be involved in that meeting.</p> <p>Would Epuron just develop the site or also sell the electricity?  AD: Epuron would develop and construct. A sister company may operate the wind farm or . project finance involving debt (by way of loan) or equity from company such as Wind Energy Trust or other superannuation fund would fiancé construction.</p> <p>How close is the site to the aerodrome and to Crookwell?  SD: The flight path would not be over the development envelope. Crookwell is about 6km from the northern end of the site.</p> <p><b>Proximity to houses and compliance with our DCP (including the community benefit) are our main concerns.</b></p>

Agency	Questions / comments (and responses)
Department of Environment and Climate Change	<p>How many involved landowners would there be?  AD: At this stage around 11. The greatest number will be at Bannister. Pomeroy and Gurrundah sites involve one or two owners each.</p> <p>The EPA would like to be more involved in the noise assessment, before the final is lodged with the Dept. of Planning.  AD: Yes, Epuron would also like to liaise more directly with the EPA for the noise assessment component, particularly modelling.</p> <p>What are the results of the biodiversity investigations?  BM: Some vegetation of conservation significance is present and it appears this can be avoided. A number of threatened species were detected. Bird and bat strike monitoring will be required.</p> <p>Aboriginal site searches have shown few recorded sites but the area has high potential for burial sites on ridges, ceremonial borers, scar trees. This will need to be considered.  <b>Noise and aboriginal heritage are our main issues.</b></p>
Hawkesbury Nepean CMA	<p>Can we see the minutes and take time to provide more considered comments?  BM: I can send a draft of the minutes so everyone can amend or provide additional comments. This meeting and the minutes are intended to 'kick-off' the consultation process with agencies. The Department of Planning will be asking for more formal input once the Project Application for the project is lodged.</p> <p>Will the turbines be located on the ridges only?  AD: On ridges but also on slopes and spurs, dependant on wind speeds and other constraints.</p> <p>What about construction access; will roads need to be realigned?  AD: This is possible, we are unsure at this stage. We would prefer one access point for each site.  SD: This would be preferred on the west of each site as the eastern escarpment is steeper and poses more problems for transport of oversized loads.</p> <p>Will concrete batching be carried out onsite?  AD: Will likely use the existing plant at Crookwell as well as develop a temporary batching plant onsite at Pomeroy and possibly Gurrundah. The existing plant does not have the capacity to do the whole project.</p> <p>How will trees be avoided?  AD: We can concentrate the development in the cleared areas although the odd paddock tree will need to be removed.  SD: There are two reasons to avoid vegetation: ecological reasons and also their effect on wind speeds. Better wind speeds are generally obtained further from areas with dense trees.</p> <p><b>The CMA will be providing feedback to Department of Planning based on the same "improve or maintain environmental outcomes" standard and assessment methodology, including requiring offset areas for any impacts on native vegetation. Strategically, we strongly prefer that impacts on native vegetation be avoided, by a combination of location of works, and design of works and structures. It is noted that the generally cleared ridges and fragmented forest vegetation on lower slopes lends itself to this approach. Any clearing considered necessary should be mitigated by establishing offset areas and/or plantings, secured by legally binding agreements with landholders. HNCMA will also represent the Lachlan CMA and keep them in the loop until such time as they decide they want to represent themselves in the process.</b></p>
Department of Lands	<p>How many turbines would be put up at Gurrundah?  AD: We don't know yet. Early investigations indicated 40-80 for the whole project but this will change after the results of the specialist studies give a clearer idea of wind speeds and site constraints. It may be slightly more than 80 all up.</p> <p>How high will the turbines be?  AD: The largest turbines being considered for the site are 3MW. The tower hubs would be up to 85m high and the blades up to 47m long. They would stand up to 132m.</p>

Agency	Questions / comments (and responses)
	<p>We would prefer that crown roads not be developed unless they absolutely have to.  SD: There is an issue at Gurrundah with a paper road that does not line up with the existing road, so we need to resolve that issue.</p> <p>Will the railway at Breadalbane have to be crossed?  SD: Yes, probably if plant for Gurrundah is brought in via Breadalbane.</p> <p>We would prefer the underground cabling be removed after the decommissioning of the project, without disturbing the ground surface ie. laid in conduit and then extracted without excavation. This removes the potential for others to dig it up for the scrap value.</p> <p>Who will own the electricity lines?  Col Hackney: Country Energy is unlikely to be interested in owning the lines connecting turbines, they would remain the property of the proponent. Only where extensive electricity easements are required to be installed might CE want to own them.</p> <p><b>Use alternative access to undeveloped crown roads where this is possible. We have no issues with crown land (in this case only likely to involve trig points) as long as the Surveyor General's permission is sought. Perpetual leases, if relevant, may affect the ability of persons to enter into additional leases, so you need to check this.</b></p>
Goulburn-Mulwaree Shire Council	<p>Pedjar Dam is used for recreation and should be considered when doing the visual assessment.</p> <p>How will Goulburn residents be involved in consultation?  BM: Newsletters are being sent to those within 5km and outside this, broader public forums will be advertised and held to introduce the proposal and invite feedback.</p> <p><b>Traffic impacts, visual impact and community consultation (including outside the 5km radius from the site) are our main issues.</b></p>
Rural Fire Service	<p>How big and how heavy are the vehicles required for construction?  SD: Transporting the transformer will be the heaviest single load. Four to five meter road widths will be required.</p> <p>Will electrical cabling be overhead or underground?  AD: A combination of both, including connection to the high voltage line at Pomeroy.</p> <p>If approved, when would the first concrete pour occur?  AD: Based on submission in February, exhibition around March and a decision from Dept. Planning around June....construction may commence late 2009 or if held up in an appeal, maybe 12 months later. Turbine delivery times at the moment are 12-18 months. Connections would take around 3 years to organise.</p> <p>The local RFS uses the nearby airstrip for training activities and therefore would be concerned if there was any impact on this area.</p>
Department of Primary Industries (Minerals)	<p>Do you have a map which gives a clearer picture of the development envelope?  AD: Not at this stage. Investigations are still underway.</p> <p>The proposal is sited within a north-south trending zone of volcanic and sedimentary rocks with high potential for the discovery of base metal, gold and barite deposits. The southern indicative development envelope is covered by current Exploration Licences. There are a number of known mineral occurrences within and adjacent to the two indicative envelopes including a significant barite resource (the Gurrunda prospect). Exploration lease holders will have to be contacted and liaised with. The footprint of the development is critical to this issue. DPI would like more accurate information on the footprint as soon as it comes to hand.</p> <p><b>The impact of the proposal on mineral exploration and mining is our major concern.</b></p>
Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries)	<p><b>Fisheries will be concerned about road construction near waterways. Refer to their guidelines.</b></p>

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Country Energy	<p>Country Energy is unlikely to be interested in owning the lines connecting turbines, they would remain the property of the proponent. Only where extensive electricity easements are required to be installed might CE want to own them.</p> <p>It is not unusual for major electricity line works to take 3-5 years to occur from commencement. It would be lucky to get it through the process in less than 3 years.</p>
Department of Planning	<p>Would the turbines be located in linear rows or clusters?</p> <p>AD: The turbines would follow ridges and where wind speeds are high, also midslopes. They would not be in uniform rows but would follow contours.</p> <p>Could there be different sized turbines on the one site?</p> <p>AD: This would be unlikely. The choice of turbine is a trade off between efficiency and machine suitability. We have no intention of looking at the 5MW turbines for this site. We do not think they would be appropriate for this project from a visual impact perspective.</p> <p>Is the site in the Sydney water catchment?</p> <p>BM: Yes, we will also need to involve the Sydney Water Catchment Authority in the consultation process.</p>

**Comments from agencies unable to attend the PFM:**

Agency	Comments
Defence	<p>Flight Safety - will the site of the wind farm have any affect on the safety of military flying operations?</p> <p>Communications - are there any Defence line-of-sight communications such as microwave link paths passing through the wind farm site?</p> <p>Defence radars - is the proposed wind farm site in proximity to a Defence radar?</p> <p>Please keep Defence informed of the proposal. When do you expect that Defence would be requested to formally provide comment?</p>
Department of Primary Industries (Agriculture)	<p>A wind farm can comfortably coexist with existing agricultural pursuits. You will, however, need to address the following aspects in the EIS to minimise the impacts on agriculture.</p> <p>Mitigation measures for managing weeds will be required to be detailed particularly as they will most likely be introduced from trucks and any imported soils. Weeds will also take hold on disturbed soil areas, particularly on access roads and disturbed sites for cabling and other associated development. Those areas will need particular attention.</p> <p>Adequate mitigation measures for the control of soil erosion and dust generated, particularly from the internal access roads will need to be implemented.</p> <p>Impacts on the existing farming operations will need to be minimised. In particular, you will need to ensure that livestock are not able to escape from the property as a result of opening gates for trucks.</p> <p>Containment of any substances from any proposed substation is required to ensure that the contamination of pasture and dams does not occur.</p> <p>It will be important also to consult with landholders in the vicinity of the wind farm to assess community issues and concerns.</p>
CASA	<p>I wish to draw to your attention CASA's interest in tall structures which could be hazardous to aircraft. Under existing legislation, a person who proposes to construct a building or structure, the top of which will be 110 metres or more above ground level, is required to notify CASA of such development. Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR) Part 139, Subpart 139E Obstacles and hazards, is available on our Web Site at <a href="http://www.casa.gov.au/rules/1998casr/139/139casr.pdf">http://www.casa.gov.au/rules/1998casr/139/139casr.pdf</a> . I note from your Proposal outline that the Gullen Range turbines are to be 132 metres in height.</p> <p>Recently we have published an Advisory Circular AC 139-18(0) titled Obstacle Marking And Lighting of Wind Farms. The purpose of the advisory circular is to provide general information and advice to proponents of wind farms and planning authorities with jurisdiction over the approval of such developments. It explains the possible hazardous nature of wind farms to aviation activity, indicates the regulations that are applicable, and provides advice on how the hazard to aviation can be reduced.</p> <p>AC 139-18(0) is available on our Web Site at: <a href="http://www.casa.gov.au/rules/1998casr/139/139c18.pdf">http://www.casa.gov.au/rules/1998casr/139/139c18.pdf</a> . I recommend that you familiarise yourself with the contents of the advisory circular.</p>