Valley of the Winds

APPENDIX 5
SOCIAL IMPACT SCOPING REPORT (ELTON CONSULTING)

Valley of the Winds wind farm project

Social Impact Scoping Report

Client: Ramboll on behalf of UPC\AC Renewables
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1 Introduction

This Social Impact Scoping Report documents the social impacts of the Valley of the Winds wind farm project ('the project'). It forms part of the broader Scoping Report to support the project's Request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements ('Request for SEARs') in the current preliminary environmental assessment phase. It has been prepared by Elton Consulting for Ramboll Australia on behalf of UPC\AC Renewables, for the purpose of preliminarily identifying and scoping potential social impacts associated with the project.

Purpose of this report

The project is proposed by UPC\AC Renewables (UPC\AC or 'the applicant') and is classified a State Significant Development (SSD) under the provisions of the New South Wales (NSW) *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

This report has been prepared as part of the Scoping Report submission to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) for the project's Request for SEARs. The purpose of this report is to inform the social impact related content of the SEARs for the project. The SEARs will specify the social impact assessment requirements for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will be prepared to accompany the application for the project approval.

About UPC\AC Renewables

UPC\AC Renewables is a clean energy group with a global track record in developing, building and operating wind and solar farms in a socially and environmentally responsible way. The company combines project development and local market expertise with hands-on engineering, construction expertise, and operations and management to deliver world-class projects.

Project specifications

The project is situated in the Central West region of NSW, within the Warrumbungle Shire, between the township of Coolah and the Golden Highway. It is located within the Central West Renewable Energy Zone and approximately 4.5 kilometres from Coolah. The total energy generation capacity of the project would be approximately 800 MW or enough to supply 590,000 typical homes in NSW per year. Construction of the wind farm is estimated to take approximately two years and an investment of up to one billion Australian dollars. The main components of the project include:

- Approximately 175 wind turbines with a maximum turbine tip height of up to 250 metres, across three connected clusters:
    - Mount Hope with approximately 75 wind turbines;
    - Girragulang Road with approximately 73 wind turbines; and
    - Leadville with approximately 27 wind turbines.

Permanent operational infrastructure associated with the Project includes a central substation and small substations within each cluster, electrical reticulation between each wind turbine, access tracks and ancillary infrastructure, including fencing and gates, and an operation and maintenance facility. The indicative wind farm site would impact upon 22 associated properties.

Temporary infrastructure during the construction phase includes construction compounds, laydown areas, a workers' compound, and access tracks. Transportation routes for heavy vehicle equipment transfer and construction access would extend from Newcastle Port to the Golden Highway (approximately 280km in distance), and then local public road access would utilise Black Stump Way, Mt Hope Road, Moorefield Road, Neilrex Road, Garland Street and Wardens Road.

There are three options currently being considered for a transmission line corridor which would cross 55-70km. Transmission lines would likely be constructed as lattice towers that are suitable for 500kV transmission.

Approximately 400 jobs would be generated for the construction phase, with up to 50 full-time operations and maintenance employees post construction. It is anticipated that the majority of jobs would be sourced from the project local area (see Section 4).

Progress to date

Key activities completed during the preliminary environmental assessment phase has included a Scoping Meeting with DPIE for the applicant to present and to seek feedback on the project. Feedback received from DPIE focused on the community, their inclusion in the project's development and benefit sharing, and impacts such as transport and land use. The feedback was considered throughout subsequent planning activities and incorporated into the community consultation. The applicant has also held a preliminary meeting with Warrumbungle Shire Council to provide a project briefing and to seek initial feedback.

The project was announced to the public on 11 February 2020 with the launch of its website and a publication in a local newspaper. Stakeholder mapping and preliminary consultation with local communities and key stakeholders was undertaken during January and February 2020 to support the preliminary planning and Request for SEARs. This in particular included a Community Information and Feedback Session on 27 February 2020 in Coolah attended by approximately 50 members of the community.

2 Methodology

The methodology of this Social Impact Scoping Report has been proportionately tailored to suit the scale and nature of the project. This Social Impact Scoping Report has been developed to meet the DPIE planning requirements and approvals process for the current preliminary environmental assessment phase. It adopts an approach supported by both international and NSW guidance documents.

The key objectives of the social impact scoping phase are to gather a high-level understanding of the project's social environment to be able to:

- Determine the preliminary area of social influence;
- Identify key communities and potentially affected people, both direct and indirect; and
- Identify potential social impacts requiring further investigation.

This Social Impact Scoping Report undertook the following steps:

- Analyse activities of the project that are expected to cause or be linked to an impact (across the project lifecycle);
- Consider social impact matters in line with activities analysis;
- Consider cumulative matters;
- Consider social opportunities and benefits;
- Consider different stakeholder group's experiences, views or concerns;
- Consider materiality of identified impact; and
- Consider potential level of mitigation required for each.

The key components of the Social Impact Scoping Report are a description of the project's strategic context, an overview of the existing environment of the project site, the scoping of community views and feedback on the project to then make a determination of the area of social influence. These activities led to the identification of social impacts potentially caused by the project including understanding of cross-cutting or cumulative matters and opportunities for social and economic development. The report concludes by providing a description of the proposed approach for undertaking a comprehensive social impact assessment as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Lastly, the completed Social Impact Assessment Scoping Tool is found in Appendix A.

3 Strategic context

The strategic policy and planning setting of the project is described in brief below to demonstrate how the project ties into broader public policy and the growth of the renewable energy sector in Australia.

Renewable energy in Australia

Australia is endowed with extensive natural resources for a strong renewable energy sector, setting viable foundations particularly in rural environments. The Australian Government's renewable energy target (RET) to provide 20 per cent of Australia's electricity generation from renewable energy sources by 2020 was reached in September 2019; over a year ahead of schedule (Clean Energy Council, 2019). The RET extends until 2030, therefore further efforts to deliver renewable energy in Australia can be expected to continue.

The construction of wind farms in Australia form part of the wider transition toward renewable energy and a more sustainable future for the country. Wind farms have the ability to create significant social, economic and environmental benefits. There are currently 87 operational wind farms in Australia, which all make contribution to the enhancement of regional communities nearby the projects (AWA, 2019). The construction of wind farms in particular play a role in boosting local economies, through job creation and supply chain business opportunities. Longer-term, the employment and business opportunities that wind farms offer encourage local residents and skilled workers with their families to be based in rural towns. This stability and growth of regional populations helps investment and growth in local infrastructure and services, and overall contributes to sustainable communities.

Leading practice in the industry

The Clean Energy Council of Australia and the DPIE (DPIE, 2016), place substantial focus within their charters and guidelines on a project's ability to facilitate participatory community engagement and on creating positive localised social outcomes through a project, in order to deliver the best outcomes for all stakeholders involved. Emphasis is placed on early community and stakeholder consultation and its continuation throughout a project lifecycle (Clean Energy Council, 2018).

Additionally, wind farm projects often include community benefit-sharing programs, a collaboration between developers, local governments and local community groups. Such initiatives aim to incorporate local communities into the project's development, operations and contributes to broader social cohesion and cooperation, as well as the offering of financial assistance. In 2019, between $24.9 and $29.4 million has been paid to local host landholders and into Community Enhancement Funds through renewable energy developments in Australia. The characteristics and nature of the program would differ depending on the localised social context and the project specifications, meaning that local communities have the opportunity to tailor the design and delivery of such programs to meet their own needs, values and aspirations (AWA, 2019).

Renewable energy in New South Wales

The NSW Government has recently developed the Electricity Strategy which sets out plans for NSW's future energy supply that is reliable, affordable and sustainable (Energy NSW, 2019). There is growing recognition that NSW's current energy sector requires change toward more economically and environmentally sustainable solutions. The Strategy supports renewable energy technologies, through the delivery of the Renewable Energy Zones (REZ), located in NSW's Central-West, New England and South-West regions. The first pilot zone is the Central-West, with construction set to begin in 2022. Once complete, this REZ would power approximately 1.3 million homes (Energy NSW, 2019). Broadly, the REZ would provide more reliable power to regions, reduce wholesale costs, contribute to emissions reduction and engaging communities by helping them to actively participate in the development of energy infrastructure in the region (Energy NSW, 2019).

4 Existing environment

The project is located within the Warrumbungle Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA), with transmission route options traversing the Mid-Western Regional Council and the Upper Hunter Shire Council LGAs. For the purposes of gathering high-level information of the existing environmental and local communities of the wind farm development corridor, and understanding that certain project features are still under investigation, the following chapter focuses on the Warrumbungle LGA.

The Warrumbungle Shire

The Warrumbungle Shire (or 'the Shire') includes the towns of Coonabarabran, Baradine, Binnaway, Coolah, Dunedoo and Mendooran as well as several small villages such as Bugaldie, Cobbora, Goollhi, Kenebri, Leadville, Merrygoen, Neilrex, Purlewaugh, Rocky Glen, Uarbry, Ulamambri, Weetaliba and Yearinan. The largest town is Coonabarabran (Warrumbungle Shire Council, 2017).

The LGA of the Warrumbungle Shire is home to 9,384 people, where the median age is 49. The majority of residents (81 per cent) are Australian born. The Warrumbungle region also has a rich Aboriginal history, with the Shire home to the Gamilaraay people (also known as Kamilaroi), the Wailwan people and the Wiradjuri people. Aboriginal residents account for approximately 10 per cent of the Warrumbungle population (ABS, 2016).

Just over half (56 percent) of residents in the Warrumbungle LGA work full-time and 31 percent part-time, with the most common industry being beef cattle farming. When understanding the implications of the construction of a wind farm in the Warrumbungle Shire, particularly in regard to traffic and noise, it is worth considering that over half of local residents drive to work (55 per cent) while others (15 per cent) work from home (ABS, 2016).

The economy in the LGA relies on rural based industries, such as sheep and cattle farming and cropping. To a lesser extent, other economic drivers include tourism and coal mining in the south of the Shire. Within the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2017, the Council identifies climate change as one of the key challenges for the future of the Shire both now and into the future, stating that one of the Council's goals is to ensure 'the impacts of climate change on our region are well managed and minimised' (Warrumbungle Shire Council, 2017). The Warrumbungle Shire Council also commits to providing services which support the social and economic values and needs of the community, with a focus on the present and future generations. In turn, the development of a large-scale wind farm within the Shire is fitting in both aligning and helping Council to meet such goals.

Place-based communities

Coolah

Coolah is a small rural town within the Warrumbungle LGA of approximately 1,300 residents across the State Suburb (SSC) and an Aboriginal population of 5 percent (ABS, 2016). The township of Coolah is the closest to the project site and has a population of 795 residents. The Coolah community is largely dependent on land-based livelihoods, with a focus on livestock and farming and a history of the timber industry. The majority of residents (83 percent) are Australian born, highlighting their connection to and interest in the local area and its future. The primary livestock industry is indicative of the physical landscape of the area and is therefore important to consider when understanding the impacts of the project in relation to existing land uses and community values.

The main attractions within Coolah include the McMaster Park, the Coolah Valley Hotel and the Black Stump Inn (Aussie Towns, 2020). There is also the Coolah Tops National Park for bushwalking and other outdoor activities (Visit NSW, 2020). Community infrastructure within Coolah includes a primary school, sporting grounds with a new playground, a seasonal swimming pool, a visitor and recreational centre, a local town hall and a golf club.

Dunedoo

The Dunedoo SSC, only slightly smaller than Coolah with 1,221 residents of which Aboriginal residents make up approximately 8 percent of the population (ABS, 2016). Dunedoo township, with a population of 747, is located closest to the Leadville cluster of the project. Similar to Coolah, Dunedoo's primary industries are agriculture with mixed farming practices and significant cattle and sheep industries.

Dunedoo is located at the junction of the Golden and Castlereagh highways and is often a travel stopover location with a variety of accommodation offerings, local pubs and the Dunedoo Museum. The Dunedoo Show and bush poetry festival attract visitors from across the region each year (Visit NSW, 2020).

Leadville

Leadville SSC is a small rural town of 169 residents (ABS, 2016) of which the Leadville cluster of the project is named after. Almost half of Leadville's residents (42 percent) work in the livestock industry. While only a small town, the Aboriginal population is 5 percent. Within the town there is a recently upgraded community hall which is used for social gatherings and events as well as the Leadville church (Warrumbungle Shire Council, 2016).

Scoping the area of social influence

As social impacts are those that relate to people and their wellbeing, the social setting of a project is often not defined by an area with set geographic boundaries, as social impacts also consider the ways that people organise themselves, connect with one another and mobilise within a broader area associated with a project. This includes communities that live in populated areas within proximity to a project as well as communities and stakeholders who are connected along a project's transportation routes and supply chains, as well as communities or interest groups that have a relevant stake in a project. This broader and dynamic interlinked network of people, communities and stakeholders is referred to as a project's area of social influence (IAIA, 2015).

To determine the area of social influence for the project, the following factors have been considered:

- The immediate physical area of social influence where it is likely that interactions and impacts of the project would be felt, perceived and experienced, such as amenity impacts experienced by adjacent landholders to project infrastructure;
- The broader (indirect) area of social influence of communities that will be impacted by future incoming workforces, business opportunities, construction access and supply chain routes;
- Further-reaching connections based on public perceptions of the project and its sector, as well as people's socio-economic livelihoods linking across the regional or state-based economy in association with the project.

The area of social influence was scoped by conducting the following activities:

- Reviewing available background documentation on the project;
- Social context review and high-level community profiling;
- Stakeholder mapping and analysis;
- Preliminary social infrastructure and community asset scanning; and
- Outcomes from community and public consultation (see below).

The following features of the project's social context have been considered in understanding the area of social influence:

- Residents and occupants of associated dwellings and properties of the wind farm development footprint (including transmission lines);
- Residents and occupants of adjacent dwellings and properties of the wind farm footprint;
- Townships where property owners and residents of associated dwellings frequent for routine personal or economic activities, community activities and to access infrastructure and services;
- Residents, service providers and business owners of townships as per point above;

- Transportation routes along the Golden Highway to and from Newcastle Port, in particular local roads from the Golden Highway to and from each wind farm cluster;
- Locations of council administrations and government services;
- Places and areas of social or cultural importance to local residents and in particular of Aboriginal communities; and
- Places of residence of future construction and operational workforce and their primary dependents.

The figure below outlines the three local government areas that the project is situated within, as well as the proximate townships to the wind farm project site. This geographical representation outlines the scoped area of social influence and will be refined as part of the future social impact assessment.

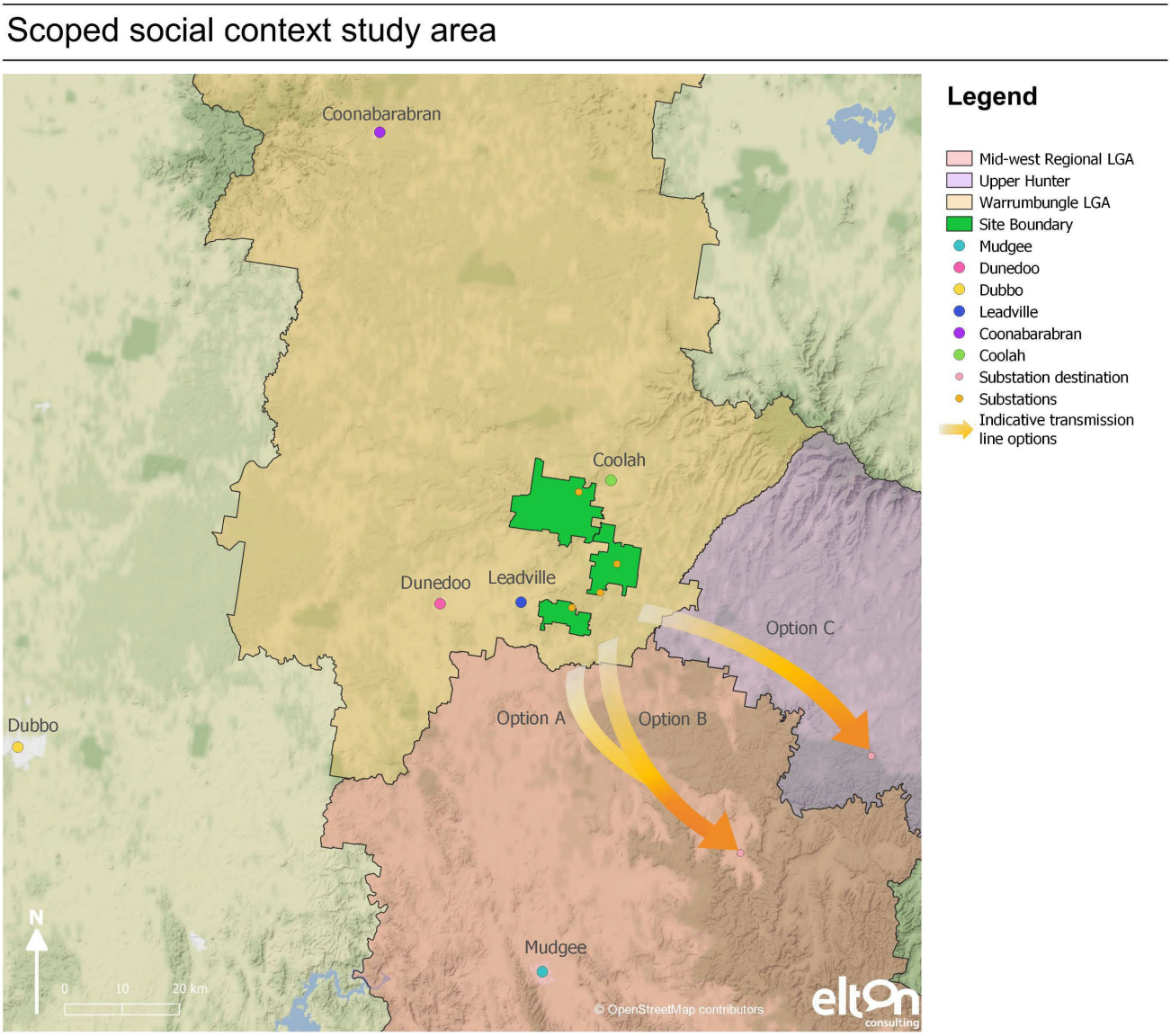

Figure 1 scoped social context study area

Summary of stakeholder mapping

The following table lists key stakeholders and their expected interests in the project, prepared as part of the Communications and Engagement Plan (Elton Consulting, 13 February 2020). A detailed stakeholder mapping and analysis will be undertaken for the comprehensive social impact assessment within the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) phase.

Table 1 key stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder	Areas of interest or concern
Local government	
Warrumbungle Shire Council	The wind farm site is located within the Warrumbungle LGA. Council is therefore an important stakeholder and would be engaged with early and frequently ongoing. Interest areas may focus on the implications of the project in the context of the Central-West Renewable Energy Zone. Concerns may centre around the impacts that construction and operational activities would have on their community. This may include matters of noise, visual amenity, road maintenance, increased heavily vehicle traffic, social and economic stimulus, biodiversity, conservation and waste management. These concerns would be balanced against the benefits that the project's investment can also bring; Council would likely be interested in understanding how the investment may support their localised needs and priorities. Of note, Warrumbungle Shire Council has recently entered into a Voluntary Planning Agreement with the Liverpool Range Wind Farm project. Council elections are planned to be held in September 2020, which may see Councillors mobilising around local issues in the months prior.
Mid-Western Regional Council	The transmission line investigation corridor will cross either the Mid-Western LGA (options A and B) and Upper Hunter LGA (option C), therefore opening up the opportunity to engage early and often with both Councils. Interest areas may focus on the implications of the project in the context of the Central-West Renewable Energy Zone. Concerns would likely centre around visual amenity, safety of transmission lines, repair and maintenance of roads and increased traffic, social and economic stimulus, biodiversity and waste management. These concerns would be balanced against the benefits that the project's investment can also bring; Council would likely be interested in understanding how the investment may support their localised needs and priorities. The Upper Hunter Shire Council has been critical of wind farms in the past, however, recently entered into a Voluntary Planning Agreement with the nearby Liverpool Range Wind Farm project, of which it is the host council.
Upper Hunter Shire Council	
Landowners	
Project host landowners (associated dwellings / properties)	Landowners affected by the wind farm site are key stakeholders, due to their location and investment in the land. There are an **estimated 22 associated landowners**; however, this number could change throughout the project planning process. Landowners potentially affected by the wind farm site are predominantly cattle farmers who have been recently experiencing adverse effects on their livelihoods due to periods of drought. Early engagement undertaken by UPC\AC has pointed to some landowners in this area welcoming the project as a secondary source of income. As the process continues, it may be likely that landowners would be concerned about the potential positive and negative impacts that the wind farm may have on their lifestyles and livelihoods.

Stakeholder	Areas of interest or concern
Project host landowners (associated dwellings / properties) to transmission line corridors	Landowners and commercial operators who are situated along the transmission line investigation corridor are key stakeholders due to their location and investment in the land. There are an **estimated 18 properties affected by Option A, 8-10 properties affected by Option B, and 25 affected by Option C.** These numbers are likely to change throughout the project planning process. There are three existing coal mining operations to the south of the project site, of which transmission line options A and B intersect with. Early discussions have been had with the operators of the mines; no engagement has been undertaken with landowners in this phase. It is expected that these commercial operators would have an interest in the project due to their close proximity and mutual operational requirements of the substation and power infrastructure. As well as this they may have commercial interests around competing land uses and changes in the energy sector. Landowners along the transmission line investigation corridor are largely crop farmers. It is likely that landowners affected by transmission lines would be concerned about the potential positive and negative impacts that the transmission towers may have on their livelihoods and existing land uses. They may also be interested in compensation options in determining their level of support for the project.
Adjacent landowners or non-associated dwellings / properties	Adjacent landowners to the project would largely be concerned with the potential impacts of project infrastructure on their lifestyles, especially visual amenity and noise. They may also be interested in benefits they would be able to access from the project and in particular, how the project plans to share such benefits across affected communities.
Traditional Owners	
Gilgandra Local Aboriginal Land Council Mudgee Local Aboriginal Land Council Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council	It is important to engage with local Aboriginal land councils and Aboriginal organisations not only to ensure participation of Traditional Owners in the project planning and development process, but also to better understand the history of the project area and in ensuring respect for the cultural and spiritual significance of the land. Additionally, engagement with local Traditional Owners would be important in understanding any current or past Native Title claims in the project area as well as to identify particular places, sites, or events that took place in the project area of cultural or historical importance and value. Aboriginal land councils may be concerned about the physical environment but also the spiritual connection that local communities may have with the land and how the wind farm infrastructure may affect certain places or areas of cultural significance. It is also of interest to the applicant to engage with and foster participation of local Traditional Owners for the purpose of ensuring opportunities for community investment are tailored to the needs of all community groups, and that socio-economic development needs for local Aboriginal people are fully considered in project planning. This is important to enable inclusivity and sustainability with the interests and priorities of the project's Traditional Owners integrated within project planning and development.
Broader Aboriginal communities	The Gamilaraay people (also known as Kamilaroi), Wailwan people and the Wiradjuri people may also be interested in the project in the context of land usage, environmental protection and biodiversity, Native Title claims, and access to opportunities and benefits of investments taking place on their land.
Local organisations	
Dunedoo Farmers Association	The Dunedoo local arm of the NSW Farmers Association represents the local farmers of the area. It would be imperative to consult with this group early and

Stakeholder	Areas of interest or concern
	often to ensure a positive relationship is built at the local level. This may mitigate any risk of this project being used in national-level debate. They would likely care about the impacts of the wind farm and potential transmission routes which may affect their agricultural businesses.
Coolah District Development Group Inc	The Coolah District Development Inc. work to foster a safe, healthy, cultural and heritage environment for the community; to preserve the town's services and character; and to continue to encourage growth and development of the district with productive and sustainable industries. Based on this, they would likely be interested in the impact of the project on existing community cohesion, changes or improvements to public infrastructure and services, as well as how to access (and be a part of developing) the community benefit program opportunities.
Broader community	
Rural-based residents across the three LGAs, and including, but not limited to, populations in townships of: Coolah Dunedoo Leadville Coonabarabran Mudgee	The broader community would be consulted about their interests, opinions and concerns about the project, as well as to provide opportunity to input into the project's planning and development. Concerns would likely be around investments or improvements to public infrastructure and services such as transport and roads, and implications of the project in the context of the Central-West Renewable Energy Zone. Communities may also be interested in economic benefits that will be offered through the project including both direct employment and supply chain business opportunities. In addition, access to the proposed community benefit program offerings may be of interest to the broader community. Issues around the distribution of benefits would be a likely point of concern and possible contention in the project's planning and development phases.

Key outcomes from the community consultation

UPC\AC, Ramboll and Elton Consulting jointly facilitated a community information feedback session (CIFS) on 27 February 2020 at Coolah Showground and Recreation Reserve, Coolah. The event was attended by approximately 50 local residents, of which approximately 10 were potential host landowners. There were also adjacent landowners, and representatives from nearby service providers, such as an employment agency. The purpose of the session was to introduce the Project to the community, to provide attendees the opportunity to ask questions of the project team and to share feedback and information.

Overall, community members expressed positive sentiment towards the proposed project. There was particular interest in what the wind farm would offer the town and the potential for positive community outcomes if developed collaboratively. Participants emphasised the importance of including local residents in the planning process and highlighted the importance of transparency and accountability of the project.

There was a focus on the employment opportunities associated with the Project and in particular, the number of jobs to be offered during construction and operation, and whether or not these positions would be targeted locally. There was concern that the project would not fully consider the interests of locals to secure work with the project and that this matter would be tied to the general community's support for the project. It was explained that of the 400 construction positions required, the project expects that approximately only 30 percent of these would require highly-skilled personnel potentially sourced from outside the area. UPC\AC shared its commitment to provide future training and skills development schemes to target local job seekers as well as local contractors who could service certain construction needs of the project. UPC\AC also shared its intention to locally source the majority of the operational workforce of approximately 50 personnel.

Attendees expressed a desire for the project to integrate with the surrounding communities; to accommodate and service the project workforce in nearby towns and for local residents to participate in the investment through business and employment opportunities. This will assist in maintaining social cohesion between existing communities and an incoming population, which will in turn contribute to setting strong foundations for long-term social acceptance of the project. For example, there is interest for the project to consider the use of unused or underutilised property in Coolah town to house workers and to utilise existing local spaces for project administration and logistical needs. Specifically, a disused hospital building in Coolah was raised as a possible existing facility to be refurbished.

Community members also noted that the community benefits program should be developed in coordination with existing community governance structures such as the Coolah District Development Group (CDDG). It was observed that the foundations for community organisation in the local area, such as the CDDG, are quite strong and stable.

Additionally, local residents raised their concern of the declining population of Coolah and surrounds in recent years, especially of young people who do not see desirable futures in the town, and hence would like to see the project as a means to retain local residents and possibly attract newcomers. Community members raised the low supply of accommodation in the area and the potential for cumulative impacts in light of high demand for workers accommodation during construction. The community suggested this is likely to be a particular if the project and the Liverpool Range Wind Farm construction periods overlap. The potential for construction camps and the location of these were questions community member raised.

Coolah residents spoke of the lack of community meeting space in town currently. The golf club and social club is currently viewed as the only practical venue to host community meetings and similar activities. Members of the community expressed the need for a public meeting space in Coolah which can accommodate community events and activities.

Community concerns related to how adjacent landowners could benefit from the project, and in particular which avenues existed for compensation for any perceived devaluation of land as a result of the project. This was raised in the context of landowners who may not host turbines but will be adjacent to them and may be exposed to possible visual and noise impact. These landowners are seeking opportunities to work with UPC\AC Renewables on siting options and to investigate options for how they may benefit from the project.

The UPC\AC team are arranging one-on-one meetings with host landowners (for both turbines and transmission lines) and adjacent landowners, to better understand their views and concerns to then integrate findings into the project's design, planning and development processes.

Community members raised the potential for transport to impact on stock movements, particularly where crossing public roads. Experiences with recent oversize vehicle movements on local roads had moderately disrupted timing of stock movements. Residents suggested communication of timing for oversize vehicle movements would help to alleviate this matter. Community members also raised the issue of local road traffic disruption, tourist traffic safety, cyclist safety, areas of narrow or tight bends and potential for damage to road surfaces, particularly during rain events, as issues of interest.

Feedback from the community members indicated that landscape and scenic values are not limited to certain locations, but related to wide views of the landscape, vegetation and valleys when viewed from public areas, dwellings and townships. Most attendees describe the visual impact as acceptable on the basis of flow on benefits to the community, but some community members voiced concerns regarding the visual impacts.

Concerns were raised regarding the potential impact on birdlife and the countryside generally. It was suggested that the low energy generation associated with wind energy compared to coal does not warrant the potential impact on birdlife. Questions were also raised as to whether the turbines would place restrictions on the use of land, in particular shooting of feral animals.

Community members spoke of their knowledge and experiences of the Liverpool Ranges wind farm development as well as the Bodangora Wind Farm near Wellington, NSW. This is relevant in considering the flow-on effects and precedence already set in community perceptions of the sector.

To conclude, the community members in attendance were pleased to be engaged on the project in its early planning stages, felt the CIFS was informative and that it was valuable to have the opportunity to meet the project developers in person.

5 Scoped social impacts

Potential social impacts were scoped through the following activities:

- Face-to-face meetings and discussion with the UPC\AC and Ramboll project team;
- Review of project-related technical documents, including:
- Brief scan of the public policy and renewable energy sector context, including comparable wind projects in NSW;
- High-level overview of the social baseline;
- Feedback and outcomes from the CIFS; and
- Observations and findings from the site visit.

A comprehensive social impact assessment will be prepared as part of the EIS in accordance with the NSW DPIE *Social impact assessment guideline* (2017). The table below outlines the social impacts scoped during this project phase and the associated social impact matter for which the impacts will be assessed under the NSW DPIE guideline.

Table 2 scoped social impacts

	Outline of impact	Social impact matter
Positive		
1	Large number of employment opportunities (both short and long-term) through the construction and operations targeting local communities to diversify industries and improve technical expertise, bringing about increased economic capital at the individual, household and community levels.	Economic
2	Vocational training and skills development through construction and operations targeting local communities can diversify skill sets bringing about increased human capital at the individual, household and community levels.	Economic
3	Vocational training schemes may build capacity of local tertiary training institutions through partnering and collaboration	Community
4	Business opportunities through the supply chain, goods and services provision and contractor opportunities through the construction and operations targeting local businesses and service providers will stimulate the local economies, diversify industries, and increase financial flow in the local area, bringing about enhanced economic capital at the individual, household and community levels. Opportunities may include earthworks, trades, machinery and vehicle hire, fuel supply, road works labour hire, accommodation and property rentals, administration, hospitality, food and beverage industry, transport services, recreation, mixed businesses for groceries, laundromats, storage facilities, office space etc.	Economic
5	Opportunities for community investment leading to improved and sustainable socio-economic outcomes in the local area through community benefit-sharing program. Opportunities are wide and varied, from sponsorship and grant assistance, to strategic community partnerships and co-ownership schemes. Programs should be developed collaboratively and based on locally identified values, needs, interests and priorities to realise success.	Community
6	Long-term improvements to and investment in infrastructure and services e.g. local road networks, electricity supply, education and health services, and their maintenance.	Access & Built Environment

7	Income generation and livelihood diversification for property owners hosting critical project infrastructure e.g. wind turbines or transmission lines, may improve household and community resilience through income diversity especially during times of drought and/or water scarcity.	Economic
8	Local Aboriginal targeted engagement in project's economic opportunities may advance socio-economic conditions and capabilities at individual, household and community levels.	Community
9	An increase in resourcing and supports to local councils may build capacity of administration and improve service provision over time.	Community
10	Opportunities for community and project to jointly set standards for renewables sector to act as a best case for others, bringing about community pride and social cohesion.	Community
Negative		
11	Construction activities may cause amenity disruptions to nearby residents to the project site, host property owners and residents along major transportation routes, e.g. noise, dust, light pollution, heavy vehicles, road damage and traffic.	Amenity
12	An increase in truck traffic during the construction phase may impact the community's regular use of the local road network and may cause issues of public safety.	Access
13	Operational noise caused from wind turbines may cause ongoing disturbance to proximate residents.	Amenity
14	Visual disturbance likely to be a grievance expressed by neighbouring property owners, and from local residents or regular visitors to points of public interest, public viewpoints or places of community value of which the wind farm is highly visible, may cause growing dissatisfaction over time if no benefit of the project is experienced.	Amenity
15	Construction and operational activities are perceived to cause potential harm to local wildlife and biodiversity.	Biodiversity
16	The incoming construction and operational workforce may have impact on the local housing supply, and on local infrastructure and services. The Coolah community would like to see the project workforce integrated within and across multiple townships, rather than focussing on only one town or the setting up of an accommodation facility. This will be increased if construction workers relocate with dependents.	Community
17	The incoming construction workforce may impact on community cohesion and alter the local demography in nearby towns. Community members want to ensure the humble way of life in the area is maintained.	Community
18	Project infrastructure may cause land use conflict if positioning of wind turbines, transmission lines and ancillary infrastructure is perceived to be competing directly with prime agricultural land.	Economic
19	The land required for construction of project infrastructure may impact upon Aboriginal cultural heritage sites or culturally significant places, which could cause flow-on effects on community cohesion and Aboriginal support for the project.	Heritage
20	Local income-generation from engagements with the project may lead to social disparities between community subgroups if certain community cohorts and demographics are excluded from employment and procurement planning, or if benefits are not distributed proportionately, as well as a result of any significant differences in wage-based incomes that the project causes.	Community
21	Public perception of other nearby wind farm project may bring about cumulative decreased support for the project if associations between the two compounds.	Built Environment

6 Approach to assessment in EIS

An assessment of the potential social impacts of the project will be undertaken to address the above identified matters, as part of the EIS. The assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the International Association for Impact Assessment's (IAIA) *Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for assessing and managing the social impacts of projects,* published in 2015, the DPIE *Social impact guideline* (2017), as well as leading practice approaches to social impact management and community benefit planning for wind developments worldwide.

The key objectives and components of the social impact assessment within the EIS would be to:

- understand how and where the project would be undertaken;
- understand the socio-demographic baseline of communities potentially affected by the project;
- prepare a community vulnerability and resilience analysis;
- engage with stakeholders and local communities to identify community values, aspirations, opportunities, issues and concerns associated with the project;
- predict and analyse the potential impacts of the project including impacts on access to, and demand for, local services, infrastructure and housing, against existing baseline conditions;
- prepare a social risk and opportunities analysis of the project;
- consider the outcomes and key findings of other technical investigations such as visual, economic, environmental and cultural heritage impact studies to identify potential intersections and crosscutting matters;
- develop and recommend appropriate mitigation measures and enhancement strategies;
- identify means for the project to enable positive and localised social and economic outcomes through the its planning, development and extended operations; and
- develop a monitoring and management framework as a mechanism to implement and measure recommended mitigation and enhancement strategies.

7 References

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A Social Impact Assessment Scoping Tool Worksheet

Social impact assessment (SIA) scoping worksheet for: Valley of the Winds wind farm project						Completion Date:		*10/03/2020*		
			Scoping results from EIS Worksheet			Is there a social impact?		What information will be required to assess the social impact?		
Social and environmental matters			Outline of impact	Is a material effect on the matter expected?	Is there community or other stakeholder concerns regarding the impact or activity?	With regard to the matter expected to be impacted, will there be a social impact?		Are impacts on the matter expected to require a non-SIA specialist study?	Will the non-SIA specialist study address the social impact?	Level of assessment for the social impact in the SIA
						Yes/No	If yes, outline the social impact			
What does the proposal mean for people?	AMENITY	acoustic	Construction activities may cause noise disruptions to nearby residents, host property owners and residents along major transportation routes from heavy vehicles and on-site construction mobilisation e.g. earth works	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A; [see outline of impact]	Noise study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		acoustic	Operational noise (hum) caused from wind turbines may cause ongoing disturbance to proximate residents	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Noise study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		visual	Wind turbines will be visible - visual disturbance likely to be a grievance expressed by neighbouring property owners, and from local residents or regular visitors to points of public interest, public viewpoints or places of community value	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Visual study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		odour								
		microclimate								
		other - please specify								
	ACCESS	access to property	Construction activities and ongoing operational maintenance of project infrastructure may cause access disruptions to host property owners	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Land access plans	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		access to property	Transmission line construction may impact on access to properties (including mines) during construction, requiring night time work	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Land access plans	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		access to property	Potential impacts to private property fencing and farm infrastructure (e.g. water tanks or troughs) may be impacted	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Land access plans	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		utilities	Long-term improvements to and investment in utilities infrastructure and associated services leading to improved access and quality of services	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Traffic and transport study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		road and rail network	Local road upgrades for construction access and their maintenance expected	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Traffic and transport study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		road and rail network	Transport of materials and equipment may disrupt travel on public roads which may require management of traffic	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Traffic and transport study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		offsite parking	Parking of transport vehicles and construction vehicles on sites and laydown areas. may be limited by terrain and need for new access tracks with aim to minimise clearing and land acquisition	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Traffic and transport study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		other - please specify								
	BUILT ENVIRONMENT	public domain	Opportunities for community investment may contribute to and will likely target social infrastructure and community facilities in nearby towns	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	No	No	Comprehensive SIA
		public infrastructure	See above and below (road network; services and facilities)	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Traffic and transport study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		public infrastructure	Vocational training schemes may build capacity of local tertiary training institutions through partnering and collaboration	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Employment study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		other built assets								
		other - please specify								
	HERITAGE	natural	Construction and operational activities may be perceived to cause harm to local wildlife and biodiversity	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Biodiversity study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		natural	Potential for transmission lines to traverse natural heritage (conservation areas/parks)	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Environmental impact study and biodiversity study	Yes - in part	
		cultural								
		Aboriginal cultural	The land may impose upon Aboriginal cultural heritage sites or otherwise culturally significant places, which could cause flow-on effects on community cohesion and Aboriginal support for the project, for persons residing locally and elsewhere	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA

		built								
		other - please specify								
	COMMUNITY	health								
		safety	An increase in heavy vehicle traffic during construction may impact the community's regular use of the local road network and may cause issues of public safety	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Traffic and transport study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		safety	Construction may involve activities that have ignition risks during bushfire season including along access tracks	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Hazard and risk study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		services and facilities	Opportunities for community investment leading to improved and sustainable socio-economic outcomes in the local area through community benefit-sharing program	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	No	No	Comprehensive SIA
		services and facilities	An increase in resourcing and supports to local council(s) through community investment program(s) and/or funding may build capacity of administration and improve service provision over time	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	No	No	Comprehensive SIA
		housing	The incoming construction workforce may affect the local housing supply and local infrastructure and services, esp. if relocating with dependents/families; temporary housing may be required for workers	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Employment study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		cohesion, capital and resilience	The incoming construction workforce may affect community cohesion by altering the local demography in nearby towns	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	No	No	Comprehensive SIA
		cohesion, capital and resilience	Local Aboriginal targeted engagement in project's economic opportunities may advance socio-economic conditions and capabilities at individual, household and community levels	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	No	No	Comprehensive SIA
		cohesion, capital and resilience	Opportunities for community to contribute to standard setting for renewables sector, bringing about community pride and social cohesion	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	No	No	Comprehensive SIA
		other - please specify								
	ECONOMIC	natural resource use	Project establishment may cause land use conflict if positioning of wind turbines, transmission lines and ancillary infrastructure is perceived to be competing with or replacing agricultural land (grazing and cropping)	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Land access plans	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		livelihood	Large number of employment opportunities through the construction and operations targeting local communities to diversify industries and improve technical expertise, bringing about increased economic capital at individual, household and community levels	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Employment study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		livelihood	Vocational training and skills development through construction and operations targeting local communities can diversify skill sets bringing about increased human capital at individual, household and community levels	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Employment study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		livelihood	Income generation and livelihood diversification for property owners hosting critical project infrastructure may improve resilience and income diversification	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Economic study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		business opportunity	Business opportunities through the supply chain, goods and services provision and contractor opportunities through the construction and operations targeting local businesses and service providers will stimulate the local economies, diversify industries, and increase financial flow in the local area, additional income streams, bringing about enhanced economic capital at the individual, household and community levels	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	Economic study	Yes - in part	Standard SIA
		business opportunity	Local income-generation from engagements with the project may lead to social disparities between community subgroups if excluded	Yes	Yes	Yes	As above	No	No	Comprehensive SIA
		other - please specify								

*Note that blue shaded cells are impacts identified as positive.

B Site visit image library

Image 1: Memorial School of Arts, Coolah

Image 2: Coolah Preschool and Kindergarten Inc

Image 3: Coolah Swimming Pool

Image 4: Coolah main street and Black Stump Inn

Image 5: Coolah main street and Coolah Valley Hotel

Image 6: Coolah Post Office

Image 7: Visitor's Centre, Coolah

Image 8: Warrumbungle Shire Council, Coolah

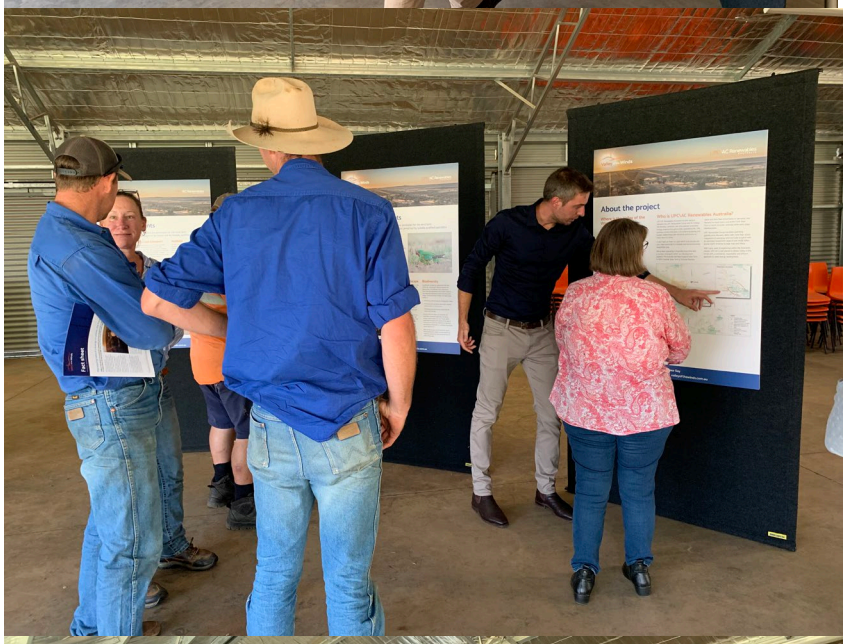
Image 9: Coolah Central School

Image 10: Coolah Sporting Club

Image 11: entrance to Coolah

Image 12: shopfront in Coolah

Images 13 - 20: Community Information and Feedback Session


About the project


MOUNTAIN CULTURE
BEER CO.


Have your say
We will engage with the community throughout the planning process.
UPC/AC's community focus
How to have your say

Images 21 – 23: project's surrounding landscape

elton consulting

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