



BUSINESS URALLA

Uralla Shire Business Chamber Inc.

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8th January 2026

Attn: Project Manager
Thunderbolt Wind Farm
Penelope Williams

Dear Ms Williams,

Uralla Shire Business Chamber T/A Business Uralla wishes to express a significant interest in several aspects of **Thunderbolts Wind Farm Modification 1** (Report No. 24068/R01, prepared by Umwelt (Australia) P/L on behalf of Neon Australia P/L, November 2025).

Our organisation has a vested interest in supporting a strong and active business community which in turn supports our community at many levels, from our youth to our elderly residents. There is an intrinsic link between business and community – one cannot succeed without the other.

For our community, our major interests lie in employment opportunities, procurement and communication issues in regional areas.

We are area of low employment opportunities, and often our youth must leave our community to undertake further studies and trade qualifications. The construction phase of this project is a massive opportunity for our young people to be retained within our community while gaining trade-based skills in an emerging employment sector. Options including Apprenticeships and Traineeships should be given serious consideration as part of your employment program. Further consideration should also be given to School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT) as an opportunity to show meaningful interest in contributing to socio-economic growth.

Our community is very interested in understanding more about your procurement needs. Currently, Uralla's strengths are highly focused on hospitality, however our business owners are resourceful and adaptive to meet other service requirements.

Housing workers close to Uralla would provide an important economic boost for the town, which a number of venues have already started working towards. Our business community understand capacity to deliver necessary services will be essential in encouraging workers to town, however timely access to information is important.

Business Uralla is currently advocating heavily around rural and regional communication isolation issues. Several recent weather events have highlighted how fragile communication infrastructure is, and how a lack of ability to communicate creates significant vulnerability for our residents.

Having read the information around the installation of a high-speed microwave radio link telecommunications tower and the assessment of potential electro-magnetic interference of various modes of communication, which also touched on potential interference from the WTG themselves, Business Uralla will most definitely be taking an interest in any telecommunications disruptions around the installation of this infrastructure.

For you to require additional telecommunication infrastructure is a reflection of the very poor telecommunication reception in your project area. Is there any capacity for Neoen to work with telecommunication service providers to provide more effective communication infrastructure which would provide greater community benefit as a legacy project?

A further consideration for legacy projects during your construction phase would involve the retention of the two 80ML dams you plan to construct for your concreting and road construction operations. Water is an invaluable resource to our community, and to collapse this infrastructure would seem short-sighted.

As we watch the state of Victoria burn, and remember the devastating impacts of the 2019/20 bushfires which still scar our environment and our people, access to a Static Water Source (SWS) for the purposes of bushfire fighting should be consideration. While the bulk of the potentially hazardous industrial work will take place during construction there will undoubtedly still be repair work carried out during the general operations lifespan of the project. Work causing sparks, for example, can create a potential fire hazard, as can any form of battery storage system or even potential increased lightning activity on site.

There are many potential ignition sources from industrial activity which can so easily have devastating effects on the surrounding environment, which is an additional pressure our community should have the best chance of protection from. Assuming you would be relying on fire fighting and mitigation from volunteer organisations such as the Rural Fire Service, there should be significant consultation with these services to achieve the best possible outcome for all stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration of these points in your planning process.

Kind regards

Beth Platford
President
Business Uralla