

Minutes: Minutes of the 10th Meeting of the Hills of Gold Windfarm Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

Thursday, 28 April 2022

Meeting Venue: Held at the Nundle Memorial Hall

Members Present: Ian Worley; Jamie Chivers (Wind Energy Partners); Jacqueline Niemand (Engie); John Krsulja (Hills of Gold Preservation Inc Representative); Megan Trousdale (Nundle Business Tourism & Marketing Group Representative); Meredith Anderson (Engie); Michael Chamberlain; Peter Schofield

Apologies: Bruce Moore; Kay Burns (Tamworth Regional Council); Margaret Schofield; Nathan Skelley (Liverpool Plains Shire Council); Paul Smith (Upper Hunter Shire Council)

Independent Chair: David Ross

Secretary: Debbie Corlet

Agenda Items	Who to Present
1. Introductions and Apologies	David Ross
2. Declaration of Pecuniary or Other Interests	David Ross and All
3. Previous Minutes	David Ross
4. Business Arising from Previous Meeting	David Ross
5. Correspondence	All
6. Update on responses to Request for Further Information	WEP / Engie
a. Questions and Answers	
7. General Business	All
a. Where to from here re: assessment process?	
8. Next Meeting	All

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/By Whom
1.	<p>Introduction and Apologies</p> <p>Meeting commenced at 6:36 pm. David welcomed everyone to the meeting and described the apologies for the night. David also apologised that the last meeting had to be cancelled at the last minute a few weeks ago due to the bad wet weather.</p> <p>David explained how the Department had requested more information in February which was lodged in March and again they have asked for more information which Jamie and the team are working through which will be lodged shortly.</p> <p>David reminded members that we have all signed a Code of Conduct and generally, most meetings go well. However, in the February meeting there were several ways where members hadn't played a part in maintaining a welcoming atmosphere for all people to constructively participate. He asked for all members to keep this in mind for the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Declaration of Pecuniary or Other Interests</p> <p>David advised that he was paid a fee to chair the meeting as is Debbie for taking the meeting minutes.</p> <p>Member mentioned that another member who is on the CCC who is gaining an income and believes it should be declared as a pecuniary interest. David did not wish to discuss the topic until the other member involved was present. David would discuss with this member, so they are aware and prepared for the discussion at the next meeting.</p>	ACTION 1 – David to discuss possible pecuniary interest
3.	<p>Previous Minutes</p> <p>It was agreed by all in attendance that the Previous Minutes were true and correct.</p>	
4.	<p>Business Arising from Previous Meeting</p> <p>Member asked about the Devil's Elbow private road width, shoulders and steepest road gradient as it wasn't very clear where this was written. Jamie advised to see Amendment Report Appendix P.1 Devil's Elbow Engineering, which provides a preliminary design with scale. The drawing includes sealed road, sealed shoulder, areas of fill and area of cut descriptions. The gradient of the road will be refined in detailed design but has been confirmed feasible by two transport contractors including RJA. Jamie described that the gradient was still subject to final design but was expected to have some short section above 20% but below 30%.</p>	
5.	<p>Correspondence – Questions received in regard to the transmission line / switching station with responses from Jamie.</p> <p>1. <i>Crawney Road Transmission Line ACCESS SITE. Where on Crawney Road is the access site to Transmission Line to be located and what infrastructure will be required at the access site? (A depot, laydown area, parking and turning area, equipment and materials storage facility?)</i> Jamie commented that the access tracks to the Transmission line off Crawney Road are assessed in the BDAR. There are 55km in total of access tracks assessed for potential impact however not all tracks will be used. Tracks assessed are via private land directly off Crawney Road and Back Creek Road. The BDAR provides more details on where these routes are. Assessment of the intersections has been</p>	

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	<p>undertaken. No public road intersection upgrades have been identified to date by the construction contractors in order to access the transmission line. Any upgrades to the roads would be relatively minor.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="315 276 1776 485">2. <u>Crawney Road Transmission Line Transport Route.</u> <i>Can Engie’s construction traffic reach the Crawney Road site approaching from the North, by any other roads except via Crosby, Oakenville, Herring Innes, Jenkins on to Crawney Road, and are not most of the streets / roads involved, “residential” streets?</i> Broader non-OSOM construction traffic may use these roads. However, there will be no Oversized - Overmass vehicles using these with the exception of Oakenville St which is assessed in the Traffic Assessment. Otherwise, all intersection analysis includes construction traffic where significant volumes compared to existing traffic. <li data-bbox="315 528 1776 703">3. <u>Basin Creek Road Switching Station Route.</u> <i>Why has there not been a Traffic and Transport assessment of the Basin Creek route, assessing in particular any road upgrades, causeways, road surface suitability, numerous cattle grids and ascertain whether the existing road passes through any private property?</i> It has been assessed by our transport consultant and construction contractors. No road upgrades or road surface issues have been identified as an issue. Private land required has been secured. Any impact to roads impacted has been assessed in the relevant assessments. <li data-bbox="315 746 1776 842">4. <u>Vehicle Types.</u> <i>What vehicle types, apart from some OSOM vehicles, will use Basin Creek Road to deliver construction machinery, materials and equipment to the Switching station site?</i> Jamie commented that broad vehicles will be used: trucks, water carts, concrete trucks and gravel tippers and light vehicles. <li data-bbox="315 885 1776 981">5. <u>Traffic Numbers.</u> <i>Are the Crawney Road traffic figures (Transmission line construction and aggregate transportation) included in the 311 Daily Project movements through Nundle Village?</i> Jamie noted that yes, these are included in the daily project movements through Nundle. <li data-bbox="315 1024 1776 1168">6. <u>Noise Assessment.</u> <i>What is the noise impact for residents / businesses on the Crawney Road route which passes through residential areas of Nundle?</i> This will only be a small portion of the overall traffic and that this overall traffic has been assessed on the route through Nundle and remains compliant, it is expected to be well within Road Noise Policy and significantly lower than the primary route. <li data-bbox="315 1211 1776 1386">7. <u>Intersection Assessments.</u> <i>Why has Engie not assessed the Herring Street North / Oakenville Street Junction and the New England Highway / Wallabadah Creek Road intersection where heavy vehicles will transport Switching Station and Transmission Line components and construction machinery?</i> Jamie noted that our consultants did not deem the volumes to be progressing through this route to require it given the conditions of the road and DPE have not required this. It is not a key intersection for other traffic other than for OSOM. 	

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	<p>8. Site and Route Confusion. How can Engie reconcile statements (a) and (b) with (c) when the Transmission Line and Switching Station access sites are integral parts of the Project and are included in the Project Area? Jamie stated that these statements are all correct. The Transmission Line and Switching Station access were always to be different access points to the rest of the project infrastructure due to its location. This is in the context of removing HOPR as a wind farm access. There is a missing sentence in what has been summarised here “Southern Route”. What the Amendment Report is referencing is the change from Project Traffic to access the site from both Head of Peel Road and Morrisons Gap Road, to Morrisons Gap Road only for OSOM.</p> <p>9. Nundle’s Residential Streets. Does Engie stand by their categorical statements, given that Oakenville Street is a residential street and the Crawney Road route to the Transmission Line access, and the transporting of Aggregate from the Crawney Road Quarry would need to pass through residential streets? These statements are made in the context of OSOM. Construction traffic that is not OSOM may use residential streets around Nundle. There is no OSOM expected to be using Oakenville, Crawney Road, Herring, Innes or Jenkins.</p> <p>10. Biodiversity Assessments and Transmission Line / Switching Station Haulage Routes. Why do the BIOSIS biodiversity maps only show the Newcastle Port to Morrison’s Gap haulage route, ignoring the impacts on the 12 km Basin Creek route to the Switching Station, (an unsealed ‘isolated’ road through wooded areas) and Crawney road Haulage route from the Pearly Gates Bridge, Head of Peel Intersection, to Crawney National Park? The transport on Basin Creek Road and the “Crawney Road Haulage Route” are not expected to incur disturbance footprint impacts outside the existing corridor and no road widening has been identified. No significant traffic volumes are expected to be using these routes.</p> <p>11. Basin Creek Road and Aboriginal Culture and History. Why has the AHIMS site 29-5-0008 not been the subject of field assessment and what other sites / locations may there be in this area seeing it is listed as an Aboriginal trading and ceremonial area of significance to First Nationals people? The Switching Station and Transmission Line were assessed as part of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment, prepared by Kelleher Nightingale Consulting. A field assessment was completed at the AHIM site 29-5-008 as well as the transmission line route and proposed switching station area. The site found is also mentioned to be 800m south of the proposed power line. Evidence that this section of the project was assessed in a field assessment is Hills of Gold IF 3 on page 28 of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report was an isolated artefact located approximately 45m southeast of a proposed tower location. All heritage impacts on the project will be managed by the aboriginal cultural management plan which is a secondary consent requiring consultation with the DPE and sign-off by the secretary prior to any construction.</p> <p>Community member asked where will the transmission line be accessed from and if entering farms not public roads? Jamie advised that it will be from Crawney Road and that there is about 55 kms of road and that there is 2 metres either</p>	<p>ACTION 2 – Jamie to provide visual of the access roads</p>

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	<p>side of the existing tracks that have been assessed to have potential impact. There are a number of places, mostly private access. Back Creek Road may be used.</p> <p>Community member mentioned that the visuals show the turbines on the hills and the transmission lines on the hill, but they'll be installed from the access road on Crawney Road, is that right? Is it just past the Dag? Jamie – it's not the road past the Dag. Access to construct the transmission line will be from a number of proposed places off Crawney Rd. Jamie said he was happy to provide more clarity to community members on these options.</p> <p>With regard to proposed project area access, a community member asked what would happen about subsidence damage to Barry Rd, Hanging Rock. Jamie Chivers stated it is TRC's responsibility to fix the road.</p> <p>Community member said an email was sent re the transmission lines from Crawney Road and that the footings will all go via Morrisons Gap Road. The way it was worded means it will also go through Morrisons Gap Road and 2% through Crawney Road? Jamie – I will need to get back to you on the summary of light and heavy vehicles proposed along this route.</p> <p>Community member talked about the school route and trucks. The bus company runs from 6:30 am to 9:00 am and then from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm in the evenings. Member then asked if they have an estimate of the heavy vehicles and which intersection will they use. Jamie advised that he believed it is 10 as per the EIS. Five movements each way. The heavy vehicles, we don't know which routes they'll use. David clarified with Jamie that if the proposal gets approved, will there be a detailed Transport Management Plan that will have to define movements and timings? Jamie advised that, yes, the Transport Management Plan is to be produced by the contractors and will update the latest information regarding school bus route.</p> <p>Community member said that they have asked over and over at these CCC meetings about the road data assessment on Crawney Road and that traffic movements will only be 2% which is misleading. Jamie advised that their traffic consultants didn't deem the additional traffic movements to be significant to be assessed and that it was unlikely to be a concern given the level of impact on other parts of the road network from the significant majority of traffic.</p> <p>Community member – Can we have a commitment that you will identify and provide a summary of light vehicles and heavy vehicles on Crawney Road and the village. Jamie committed to providing more information on expected vehicle types and volumes on Crawney Road.</p>	<p>ACTION 3 – Jamie to provide a summary of light and heavy vehicles on Crawney Road and the village</p>

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	<p>Another community member reflected what are the traffic movements currently on those roads? What is the actual increase going to be?</p> <p>A community member tabled more information titled “Engie’s Missing Link: The Switching Station / Basic Creek Traffic and Transport Route which included photos as well as a page from the EIS “Page 236, Table 12-5 Basin Creek Route to Switching Station, Oversize and Over Mass Vehicles” that she’d like tabled in these minutes.</p> <p>Community member asked if there is any project infrastructure including turbines located on / or around the Wombramurra Mountain land clearing? You have reduced the impact area by 200 ha? Is that 23 ha included? The member had asked where this turbine sits within the layout; can a project map be provided circling the location of the turbine.</p> <p>Jamie – There is Turbine 21 in that area. The project is not proposing to require the entire area to be used for project infrastructure. Where we have assumed impact we have not reduced our impact as a result of the clearing and the impact is still assessed as if the clearing never occurred when calculating the reduction in impact from the layout changes provided following public exhibition.</p> <p>David advised that he had been sent a letter about the Go for Gold Festival from a community member. She wrote this after it was discussed at the CCC’s February meeting. She disputed what was stated then that there was division within the committee regarding the wind farm. The community member observed that there was absolutely no involvement by the wind farm and also no mention of the wind farm during meetings because the chair refused to allow such discussion as it had nothing to do with the running of the festival.</p> <p>This issue and the difficulty in filling committee roles – not related to the division around the wind farm – are minuted.</p> <p>Community member responded to this statement to say she had been involved since 2019. The wind farm proposal has definitely affected this as three people have resigned from this committee. The Chair and the Deputy Chair are vocal supporters of the proposal, and this should be recognised as the problem.</p>	

6.

Update on Responses to Request for Further Information (see attached)

Questions from the community re Transport Route

Members asked questions about the preferred transport route and the alternative. Meredith observed that the preferred route is the focus at the moment because it has less of an impact, overall. However, it is acknowledged that there are impacts and, for example, discussions are continuing with the Land Council.

Community member asked how long do you have to come up with your transport route? Can you provide us with a timeline? Is there a set time for a determination?

Jamie advised that in preparing the latest RFI submitted in March other options including reintroducing Head of the Peel Road were again considered on request by the DPE. The analysis undertaken by ERM and supported by Biosis clarified that the lowest impact route environmentally and socially was for use of Barry Road and Morrisons Gap Road. Jamie clarified that the route proposed has been determined and is proposed to be the Barry Road and Morrisons Gap Road route.

A community member observed that there is no permission in place to use Devil's Elbow.

Jamie – We understand that this is crown land and have been consulting the Department of Crown Land and registered parties with an interest.

Questions from the community re Construction Summary

Community member asked if there has been consultation regarding the New England Highway and Nundle Road and Jamie advised that they have consulted with Transport NSW who requested the intersection analysis which was carried out at this intersection for construction traffic as part of the Response to Submissions Report. Community member then asked about Lindsay Gap Road. He thought it was the main road for all vehicles, but this is a different route and 35 kms away? This is the school bus route as well.

Jamie advised that this is for oversize and over mass vehicles and that other construction related traffic such as trucks and light vehicles were assumed to use other roads to access Nundle. The impact of the additional traffic was assessed against the existing traffic on the road network. There is a lot of traffic on that road, and we will contribute to that traffic.

Questions from the community re Devil's Elbow Recreational Opportunities

Community member observed that, from a Google Earth search, he estimated that the private road is 550 metres long and the altitude is 870 at the beginning and 995 up to the top. How are heavy vehicles going to get up there?

Jamie advised that two national transport companies have said that they are able to do it. We've had WGA actually do the design on that data with that transport contractor – it is steep and will require multiple prime movers hooked up to move it up there. It will then be rehabilitated at the end of the project life.

Community member asked if the vehicles will all be coming back down that road again? You will have to put something in, in case brakes fail?

Jamie advised that blade transport units could pack up but not sure about the hairpin but that putting something in for failed brakes hadn't been proposed.

There was a discussion about a specialist's proposal to paint the turbines with artwork. Jamie advised that they are not committing to paint the towers with artwork. It could be looked at in the future maybe with local Aboriginal groups.

A lengthy discussion was then held about the viability of the proposal. A community member noted that the \$826m CIV (with 33 exclusions) from November 2020 has not been updated despite materials and construction cost increases. Meredith responded that Engie has firm pricing from turbine suppliers and that the project is viable for us.

Questions from the community re Biodiversity

David asked about the Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan and if this will include seasonal issues. Jamie confirmed that yes, they may have to stop the turbines during a certain season. There are strategies that are available for this. There is also a commitment that if we haven't assessed we will offset with biodiversity credits.

He advised that if anything is effectively not going to be met (with respect to managing bird and bat populations), then an offset and further adaptive management will be needed to be undertaken.

Questions from the community re NPWS Aerial Operations

There was further discussion regarding the NPWS' previous concerns about the proposed location of some turbines. Jamie advised that the RFS have advised that it's at the pilot's discretion as to whether they will fly and will make a call depending on the conditions at the time. Turbines can be turned off and placed in a "y-shape" to aid firefighters.

He confirmed that NPWS are now satisfied except for the spacing of some turbines near Ben Halls Gap Nature Reserve; more consultation is required by us. Helicopters will still be able to operate around the turbines.

Community member said further investigation with the local RFS is required who had a meeting recently in Tamworth. If they have any other concerns, they will contact you.

Jamie advised that there has been extensive consultation with RFS as part of the formal assessment. If they have concerns, they can reach out.

Questions from the community re Dwelling Entitlement Assessment

Community member has concerns about the desktop study that was done. They haven't considered the actual limitations of the land. Member believes that it's been a cursory look.

	<p>Jamie advised that they have provided a photo montage where there is no dwelling. We have actually done that. This is an assessment at that location.</p> <p>Questions from the community re Use of Visual Screening</p> <p>Jamie explained that in the response to submission expected to be submitted from the DPE’s latest RFI you’ll see the location of tree planting to provide effective visual screening. The tree heights required for screening are from 2 to 7 metres depending on the dwelling. This is expected to take between 2 and 10 years to achieve that growth. Use of native trees that are in the existing environment to maintain consistency. Turbines can be screened with this tool and considerably reduce the impact as assessed by Moir Landscape and Visual consultants.</p> <p>Community member observed that the turbines completely change the environment and that the impact is massive. It needs to be acknowledged. It’s very emotional for people on that road. I need to express that for these people. Jamie said that the Department is conscious of this.</p> <p>Another community member noted that you say 2 to 10 years for the trees to grow but we go through a lot of years of drought. It may take longer. Jamie advised that tree planting is something that is recommended in the guidelines.</p> <p>Questions from the community re Community Funding Opportunities</p> <p>Jacqueline discussed the points in this slide and that the community groups within 20 kms can receive grants up to \$3,000. Some members were concerned that this money should be offered before a determination was made.</p> <p>Community member asked Engie what the local retail energy offer is and if it’s a percentage of the wholesale price. It is really important to qualify this please. Engie advised that this is still in the development stage.</p> <p>Community member expressed concern how they only found out about sponsorship two days before CCC meeting. They thought this was inappropriate. Jacqui responded that Engie didn’t see there needed to be approval from the CCC for this.</p> <p>Statement re What’s Next</p> <p>Meredith noted that Engie are hoping to provide more information (to DPE) over the next week or so. Want to ensure no further questions are asked. We are aiming for Q1 2023 to commence construction.</p>	<p>ACTION 4 – Jamie to provide a summary of what Engie is offering the community as part of its electricity offer</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>General Business</p> <p>Community member said he wants to have a Town Hall type event where the proposal team could answer all the questions. He would also like to have a second visit to the western end of the site. I think it’s only fair that we can all see it.</p>	

<p>DPE should be invited to see the areas you want to remove and see the transverse track and where crane pads will be located. Jacqui advised that in February we did morning sessions and evening sessions.</p> <p>Another community member asked about the switching station and the proximity to the heritage site - Reference 29-955008. The road will be close to the switching station. I think that warrants further investigation. It is significant but I couldn't see it in the Heritage Report. Jamie advised that an assessment was completed on that site and there isn't a direct impact.</p> <p>Community member discussed how they went up to Glen Innes to see the 200-candela lighting. It is a massive impact to this community. I understand the shielding proposed would lesson the impact but there is no where in Australia that is using this shielding and it is an experiment. The lighting will have a visual impact, and I don't think it is recognised in the EIS.</p> <p>A member asked about the AEMO (Australia Energy Market Operator) network capacity that is available. TransGrid are estimating 100 megawatts are available with all the proposed projects committed. Tell us the application process to apply for the grid. Jamie said that there was capacity available for the project, and that is without the upgrades that are proposed and the electricity roadmap. A lot of those projects may or may not progress. TransGrid assess the application. We've engaged a technical consultant for a year now. It's a long complex process and very technical but the application can be made at any stage. We are well advanced on the application and have had significant engagement with Transgrid.</p> <p>Community member said they have also been asked from alternate CCC members about a site visit and that they be included in the distribution of minutes and information as well. Member also observed that there was an email that was sent out on about 22 February. 56 dwellings and 35 had entered as had not opposed but this did not mean that they approved of the project. They have since notified the Department that they object to that being used to demonstrate support of the project. Several notified that they opposed or were neutral.</p> <p>The member continued that while they understand the visual impacts of the roads and that there has been the public montage from Lindsay Gap Road, we still don't have a visual of what the site is going to look like. We don't have an accurate depiction of what the project will look like – the whole project. Requested in the SEARS. Jamie advised there was a video produced to demonstrate how the project would look from the air which provides greater visibility to the impacts. You can't see most the roads on top of the ridge from the valley as they are flat and on top of the ridge. Jamie also informed the CCC that an onsite quarry was not part of this project proposal.</p> <p>Community member asked the land width and depth for the crane pad footings for each turbine and how do you get a crane up not just on the ridgeline, but on the slope as well? In the cut and fill for each turbine of the ridge.</p>	<p>ACTION 5 – Jamie to provide more information re the switching station and the heritage site</p>
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	<p>Jamie advised that this has been discussed before and this was subject to detailed design and the specific geotechnical conditions at each location. Jamie provided indicative sizing of 20x 30m for the crane hardstand areas but that greater area around each turbine was required for laydown areas.</p> <p>Member asked for a visual on what the site on the ridgeline will look like including crane pads as turbines won't be located on the existing cleared area currently used for roads?</p> <p>Jamie noted that he will have to take on notice. There was a video produced from the air. You can't see it from the valley.</p> <p>Community member asked about the local jobs' interpretation. There was a slide that was displayed that listed all the jobs. There has been a perception that those construction jobs will be for Nundle and Hanging Rock, and I think that's a misrepresentation.</p> <p>David then reminded members of what to expect in the rest of 2022. Once the information required from Jamie, Meredith and Jacqui is to the Department's satisfaction, there is still the assessment report that the Department needs to develop that is still a few months away. This report then is provided to the independent planning commission (IPC). The IPC then reviews this report and all of the other material available; the commissioners then hold a public hearing before having to make an assessment within three months of commencing.</p>	<p>ACTION 6 – Jamie to find video that was produced from the air</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Next Meeting – David discussed that once all the material is submitted to DPE, he'll have another chat with the Department. He advised that he'll probably be in touch with the CCC near the middle of May.</p>	

Meeting closed 9.14 pm.

Page No	Action No	Description	Date Raised
2	1	David to discuss possible pecuniary interest	28 May 2022
5	2	Jamie to provide visual of the access roads	28 May 2022
5	3	Jamie to provide a summary of light and heavy vehicles on Crawney Road and the village	28 May 2022
9	4	Jamie to provide a summary of what Engie is offering the community as part of its electricity offer	28 May 2022
9	5	Jamie to provide more information re the switching station and the heritage site	28 May 2022
10	6	Jamie to find video that was produced from the air	28 May 2022