

THUNDERBOLT ENERGY HUB WIND FARM CCC

AGENDA - COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE INSPECTION AND MEETING MEETING 4

FRIDAY 1 ST APRIL 2022

8:45AM – 3:10PM

INSPECTION MEETING LOCATION

Kentucky Shop, Noalimba Ave. Kentucky (Inspection)

SITE INSPECTION: 8:45am - Meet at Kentucky Shop, Noalimba Avenue, Kentucky

- Carpool in 3 4wd to drive to Kentucky property to meet property manager

- Site tour with stops for Q&A.

MEETING: 1pm

Memorial Hall, Salisbury Street, Uralla

Chair:	Dr W.E.J. Paradice AM
Members	
Community:	Angus Carter; James Croft; Chris Page; Phillip Roberts
Councils:	Clr Sarah Burrows; Sam Lobsey
Neoen:	Joanna Murphy
Minute taker:	Anne-Marie Ward
Guest:	Bill Wallach (Umwelt)
Apologies:	Clr Eric Noakes, Wayne Ames, Lisa Stiebel

Agenda item	Responsibility	Time
1 Welcome and Introductions	Chair	

The Chair welcomed all Committee members and Bill Wallach from Umwelt. All members thanked Bill and Joanna for the site tour.

Joanna and Bill introduced the project prior to the site tour commencing and discussed safety items for the group to be aware of to make the tour safe and enjoyable.

The site tour involved driving across one of the host landholder properties and viewing some of the proposed locations for wind turbine generators, access roads and the substation as part of Stage 1 of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub. CCC members had the opportunity to ask project related questions and questions specific to biodiversity to Joanna and Bill respectively.

The tour concluded at approximately 12pm and was followed by a CCC meeting.

2	Apologies	Chair
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Lisa Stiebel, Wayne Ames and Eric Noakes were apologies.

3	Declaration of pecuniary interest	Chair
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The Chair made it clear to the committee that he is an independent chair appointed by the NSW Department of Planning, but the proponent pays expenses related to the role.

Anne-Marie Ward (Thunderbolt Energy Hub Community Engagement Officer) is the paid minute taker of this group as arranged between the Chair and Proponent.

Angus Carter let the members know that he is the new president of the Kentucky Hall Committee just in case the Kentucky Hall would benefit from the Community Benefits Fund in the future.

4	Minutes of the previous meeting	Chair
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The Minutes of the previous meeting were circulated and declared final via email as discussed at the first meeting.

5	Business arising	Neoen
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Joanna Murphy went through the business arising from the previous minutes, which included four questions. These questions and answers are listed below and are also provided in the presentation document.

Question 1: Mike Young to provide contact details to the group if there are any further questions.

Mike Young
 Executive Director - Planning & Communities
mike.young@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Question 2: Neoen will provide some modelling on what the community benefits would look like in the future, including analysis of the indexed versus non-indexed neighbour payments.

Neoen's Neighbour Benefit Program is a voluntary program to benefit neighbours who own a dwelling within 3.5km of the Project. The payments are considered in the operating costs of the Project, meaning they do not vary based on whether the project is profitable; neighbours get paid before Neoen in this scheme.

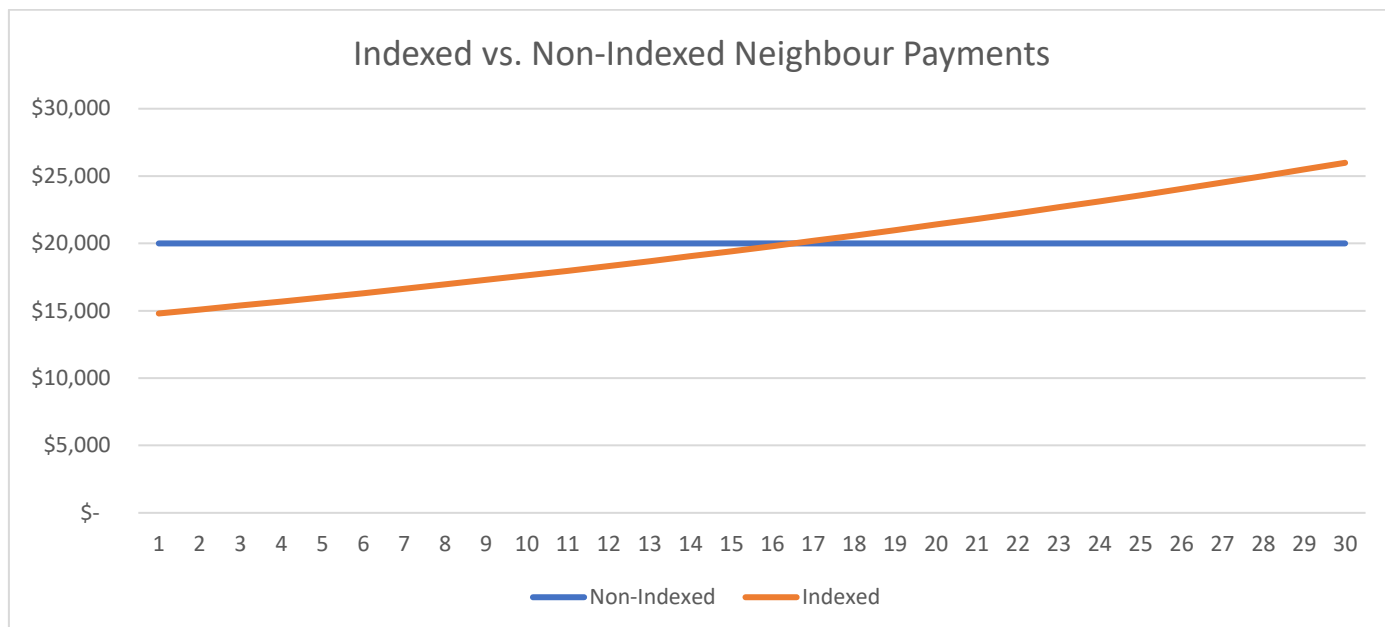
Neoen analysed the options of providing either a higher annual fixed payment versus an indexed payment throughout the operations phase starting at a lower amount. The indexed payment would start at a lower figure and increase with CPI over time. The sum received throughout 30 years would be equal in both models. Neoen chose the fixed payment option because it is more transparent and provides neighbours with certainty of payment. The indexed model can be more complex in that a new figure must be calculated each year.

Example: There are:

- 1 wind turbine generators (WTGs) within 2km,
- 2 WTGs within 2-2.5km,
- 4 WTGs within 2.5-3km and
- 1 WTG within 3-3.5km of a neighbour's dwelling.

The total payments received under the current neighbour benefits program would be \$20,000 per year for 30 years under the fixed payment option, or \$600,000 in total over the project lifetime (shown by the blue line). The indexed payment would start at \$15,000 in year 1 and increase over time. The total payment would still equal approximately \$600,000 in total over the project lifetime (shown by the orange line).

As stated, Neoen thinks paying the 'blue line' without indexing but starting at a higher level, is more transparent.



ACTION: Neoen will circulate to the CCC members the methodology behind neighbour payments.

Question 3: Neoen will seek further information about upkeep of Council roads.

The primary access point for the Project is the New England Highway; therefore no impact to local roads surrounding the project area is anticipated due to transport of wind turbine components. Delivery of products to the project area for construction purposes from any local or regional quarries will be done so under the approval requirements of the development consent relevant to the quarry.

There was some discussion in response to this question around current projects in the area and the damage to roads that they are causing. Quarries have road use built into their development applications, however some CCC members believed that the number of vehicles movements from the local quarries is greater than initially planned for, thus creating some damage to local roads. Clr Burrows mentioned that her understanding was that the Uralla Council has an agreement with UPC for their current project, which includes repair of local roads.

ACTION: Clr Burrows will investigate what the Uralla Council currently requires of UPC with regard to repair or maintenance of Council roads.

Further discussion was held regarding water usage – where will it come from for the batching plants and roads. The EIS will have estimated quantities needed for construction. Where it will be sourced is part of the planning process.

Question 4: Neoen will provide further information on lighting – requirements and the sorts of lighting that can be used, other projects that don't have lighting in NSW and associated conditions for consent.

The aviation impact assessment undertaken for the Project indicates that turbine lighting is not required.

The majority of approved wind farm projects have resulted in CASA recommending that turbines have lighting applied regardless of the outcome of the aviation assessment. The commitments by the proponent have then been updated to undertake further consultation with CASA in relation to lighting during the detailed design phase. The conditions of consent are unlikely to require that lighting be installed, rather further consultation be undertaken with CASA once the detailed design is confirmed and the lighting requirements are then determined (if any).

There is potential that CASA will recommend lighting so this would be something that would be investigated during the detailed design phase in consultation with CASA. Neoen's strong position, in alignment with the risk assessment, is that lighting should not be installed at this project. If required,

Neoen commit to appropriately managing it (such as actively managing lighting so it's only used during times of reduced visibility). This will need to be discussed and confirmed with CASA post approval and the requirements are really established on a case-by-case basis.

A comment was made in response by a CCC member, explaining that CASA's concerns would likely be for the safety of small local planes flying in the area, not commercial planes.

6	Project Overview and Update	Neoen
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The Development Application has now been submitted. It will be on public exhibition within the next week or two. Hard copies of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be delivered to Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council and Walcha Council Councils for display as soon as this happens. Copies of the EIS will also be made available to Councils on USBs, which may be shared with the community. Anne-Marie Ward will also have copies of the USBs for any community member who wishes to receive one.

ACTION: Neoen to send a USB directly to each CCC member when they are available.

7	Questions and clarification	Chair
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1. Angus Carter asked Bill Wallach if there is a way to differentiate the land use for the public. e.g. there is a difference between land clearance and land disturbance.

Bill explained that the total disturbance footprint of the Project is 215 hectares (ha). He noted that he did not think it was suitable to try and break up the varying degrees of impacts as it was not deemed suitable for this Project. Instead he suggested it was important to understand that while there is a disturbance footprint of 215 ha, this occurs across a range of vegetation quality, from exotic grassland, derived native grassland, low condition forests and moderate to good condition forest i.e. the Project is primarily impacting disturbed and fragmented vegetation. 'Land disturbance' is the terminology used in the biodiversity reports. The area of each species that may be impacted has been outlined in the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR). Neoen has prioritised utilising previously disturbed areas within the wider development corridor to reduce as far as practical the impacts on biodiversity. The property on which the Project is proposed is largely modified due to historical disturbance associated with agricultural practices and comprises primarily of grazing land with scattered paddock trees and strands of remnant vegetation on hills and hillslopes.

Bill explained that many seasonal biodiversity surveys had been undertaken throughout all seasons of the year over the last two years. Surveys were targeted at different flora and fauna species and determining the likely impact that the Project may have on these species. Neoen utilised the results of the surveys, and in consultation with Umwelt, refined the wind turbine layout, to minimize the impact on biodiversity. Bill explained that a larger development corridor (approximately 558 ha) was surveyed for threatened and vulnerable species habitat. This means that a development corridor that is wider than the final project footprint was surveyed. This method of surveying a larger assessment corridor provides Neoen with some flexibility in design to refine the wind turbine and road layouts, which may provide for a further reduction of impacts.

Furthermore, Neoen is required to offset impacts of the Project by retiring biodiversity credits generated through this disturbance. The number and types of credits were determined by Bill by inputting the results of the seasonal biodiversity surveys into the Biodiversity Assessment Method Calculator (BAM Calculator). This provides information of the types and number of credits that Neoen must retire and is outlined in the BDAR. Credits must be retired prior to the commencement of construction in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BOS).

2. Angus Carter referred to a recent Uralla Council Renewable Energy Zone Policy Forum – there seems to be some concerns locally that the number of local jobs for these projects is being over-played. How many local jobs are there?

Joanna explained that during construction the number of jobs expected is approximately 190 and during the operations phase approximately 5-10 jobs. The number of local jobs depends on the skills available locally. Neoen has created an Expression of Interest on its Project website and invites any interested

contractor or supplier to register their interest to work on the Project. The types of jobs and suppliers required throughout construction and operations is also listed on the website. Contractor and supplier information is saved in a database and interested parties will be kept informed about the project. A jobs and supplier information session will be conducted closer to construction for interested local contractors and suppliers to learn more about the exact types of skills required. The number of direct and indirect jobs created as a result of the Project in the local region has also been assessed and will be available in the Economic Impact Assessment report, submitted as part of the Development Application. This assessment determined that the Project would likely support a total of:

- 495 FTE jobs (both direct and indirect) throughout the construction phase of 18-24 months; and
- 20 FTE jobs (both direct and indirect) throughout operations phase.

Of these, the number of jobs that could be sourced from the Study Area (defined as the Armidale, Tamworth, Uralla and Walcha LGAs) is expected to be:

- 135 FTE direct jobs (construction phase)
- 75 FTE indirect jobs (construction phase)
- 5 FTE direct jobs (operations phase)
- 4 FTE indirect jobs (operations phase)

Direct jobs are defined as jobs created to support the on-site construction and operation of the Project. Indirect jobs are those that are supported through the industrial and consumption/induced impacts of each Project stage (for example accommodation, restaurants, cafes, etc).

A CCC member suggested that Neoen could contact local schools' careers advisors so that our kids know what career paths will be available through Projects such as Thunderbolt Energy Hub.

3. Sam Lobsey asked about potential tourism, education or a viewing platform for the project. The CCC members suggested that they would like to see a viewing platform being built for the Project with information such that the general public has an opportunity to stop and learn about the Project while travelling through the area. Neoen noted the suggestions.

4. Angus Carter asked if the Project was proposing to include batteries. Stage 1 of the Project is proposing a wind farm only.

5. There was some discussion regarding the recent court case in Victoria regarding the Bald Hills Wind Farm. What will this mean in future?

ACTION: Neoen will provide a summary of issues in relation to the Bald Hills Wind Farm Court Case to the next meeting, including some information about the noise issue experienced by this project for CCC members' information.

8	Issues for future meetings	Chair
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There was some discussion relating to when the next CCC meeting should be. It was decided to hold it after the exhibition period, possibly in July 2022.

The CCC recommended having another community drop-in session once the public exhibition phase has begun with copies of the EIS available and Joanna Murphy and CCC members in attendance to answer any questions and gather feedback.

Clr Sarah Burrows advised that there is a small local newsletter for Balala residents. Sarah is able to put information into it when updates are available.

9	General business	Chair
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Covered under other agenda items.

10	Next meeting(s)	Chair
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The meeting date of Friday 22 July was suggested.

Actions from this meeting:

1. Neoen will circulate to the CCC members the methodology behind neighbour payments.
2. Clr Sarah Burrows will investigate what the Uralla Council currently requires of UPC with regard to Council roads.
3. Send a USB containing the EIS directly to each CCC member when they are available.
4. Neoen will provide a summary of issues in relation to the Bald Hills Wind Farm Court Case to the next meeting.