

THUNDERBOLT ENERGY HUB
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING 6

MONDAY 31 OCTOBER 2022
5:00PM – 6:30PM

LOCATION
Uralla Neighbourhood Centre

Chair:	Dr W.E.J. Paradise AM
Members	
Community:	Angus Carter; James Croft; Chris Page; Phillip Roberts
Apologies:	Wayne Ames, Sam Lobsey (Tamworth Regional Council), Clr Eric Noakes (Walcha Council)
Councils:	Clr Sarah Burrows (Uralla Shire Council)
Neoen:	Joanna Murphy; Arkar
Guest Speaker:	-
Minute taker:	Anne-Marie Ward

Agenda item	Responsibility	Time
1 Welcome and Introductions	Chair	5mins

The Chair welcomed all Committee members and Arkar who is visiting from Neoen's Western Australian development team.

2 Apologies	Chair	1min
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Wayne Ames, Sam Lobsey and Eric Noakes were apologies.

3 Declaration of pecuniary interest	Chair	1min
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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 and Environment (DPE), 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.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting	Chair	5mins
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The Minutes of the previous meeting were circulated and declared final via email as discussed at the first meeting. The minutes were officially accepted.

5 Business arising	Neoen	30mins
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All minutes and presentations from previous meetings are on the Thunderbolt Energy Hub website.

Joanna Murphy went through the business arising from the previous minutes, provided in the presentation document attached.

Following feedback from the last meeting, the Community Benefit Fund was reviewed and Neoen have agreed for it to be CPI indexed.

A question was asked about the number of turbines in each local government areas for stage 1 of the project. Joanna Murphy noted that there are 29 turbines proposed in the Tamworth Regional Council area and 3 turbines proposed in the Uralla Shire Council area as part of stage 1.

Action 1: Neoen to provide information as to whether discount electricity for the community is an option of the Community Benefit Fund.

Action 2: Neoen to provide clarification regarding what happens if there are funds left over in the Community Benefit Fund and whether they will be rolled over from one year to the next.

Action 3: Neoen to provide a list of the ideas that have been suggested by community members for the Community Benefit Fund so far.

A question was asked about how long Neoen would own the project as other projects in the area have been sold on in the past. Joanna Murphy confirmed that Neoen is a long-time owner and operator of its wind, solar and battery storage projects. Neoen's intention is to own and operate Thunderbolt Energy Hub throughout its lifetime.

Members asked what happens if the project is sold to another company. Joanna Murphy explained that if the project development application is approved, there are conditions of consent received as part this development approval. These apply to the project throughout its lifetime. This means that if a proponent decides to sell the project, the new owner must abide by the conditions of consent as well.

CCC members have been asked questions around decommissioning and rehabilitation by the community. Who is responsible for decommissioning? Who is the enforcer if the project owner does not decommission the project?

Joanna Murphy responded that the owner of the project is responsible for decommissioning at the end of the project's life.

A question was raised about the project's connection to the transmission lines.

Neoen will commence connection studies in 2023 and seek connection approval with the Transmission Network Service Provider (TNSP) to connect the project to the existing 330kV transmission line traversing stage 1 of the project. The TNSP is TransGrid. Neoen is not intending to connect the project to EnergyCo's new transmission infrastructure.

CCC members discussed the manufacturing of turbines. They would like to clarify where wind turbines are manufactured.

Joanna Murphy explained that the wind turbines are manufactured overseas and delivered to Australia. Neoen's traffic and transport assessment, submitted as part of the EIS, shows that wind turbine components are planned to be delivered to the Port of Newcastle, from where they will be transported to the project site. Other materials, such as gravel for roads, will be sourced from Australia. Neoen has commenced investigating where such materials may be sourced from. Further information about wind turbine materials and manufacturing may also be found on the turbine manufacturers' websites, for example Vestas, Siemens, GE, etc.

Sarah Burrows re-iterated that if CASA recommends lighting then radar activated lighting would be more amenable to neighbours.

Action 4: If community members have any further questions regarding de-commissioning and rehabilitation, please email these to Joanna Murphy so she can provide further details at the next CCC meeting.

Action 5: The Chair to write to State Planning regarding decommissioning and rehabilitation practices and processes.

Action 6: Joanna Murphy to email members a link to the *Strategic Benefit Payment Scheme* published by EnergyCo.

Action 7: Neoen will provide more detail around the connection process at a future meeting.

Action 8: Joanna Murphy will send links to the wind turbine manufacturer websites for members information.

6	Project Update	Neoen	15mins
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A project update was provided and is in the attached presentation.

Several members stated that they have had some people in the community complaining to them and would like to be able to tell them where they can go to make their complaints official. Joanna Murphy explained that the complaints process is outlined on the Thunderbolt Energy Hub website.

Action 9: Neoen will provide information on what options are available to make official complaints.

7	Questions and clarification	Chair	10mins
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Once approval is given how long does it take for the construction to begin? Does it need to start straight away or can Neoen wait and build it later?

A Development Application is usually valid for 5 years. Neoen would begin constructions as soon as possible after approval; however in order to start construction Neoen needs to complete the following steps:

- Grid connections agreement with the Transmission Network Service Provider (TransGrid);
- Secure a Power Purchase Agreement to sell a portion of the energy to be generated by the wind farm;
- Select an engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contractor; and
- Complete project financing and reach financial close.

A question was asked about what happens if the State Government changes at the next election. Could this put the project on hold?

The Development Application for Stage 1 has been lodged in March 2022. It is unlikely that the project development application assessment will be paused.

8	Issues for future meetings	Chair	10mins
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CCC members discussed organizing their own site visit to Sapphire. The Chair will investigate the possibility of visiting the site and email members directly regarding the outcome. This would not include Neoen.

9	General Business	Chair	10mins
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The Chair had previously circulated a review of the CCC guidelines. Members were reminded that if they have any feedback, it should be sent to the Chair promptly as the response is due on 4 November 2022. Members need to be aware of the process changes that are being proposed, especially those relating to timelines of CCCs, Code of Conduct for CCC members and the Terms of Reference.

10	Next Meeting (s)	Chair	3mins
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February 13, 2023. 5:00-6:30 at the Uralla Neighbourhood Centre

11	Meeting close	Chair	
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The meeting was closed at 6:55pm.