
Woolsthorpe Wind Farm Community Engagement Committee

Meeting date Friday 30 September 2022
Meeting time and location 10 am, Woolsthorpe Hotel

1. Welcome

2. Attendees

Cr Damian Gleeson (Chair)
Terri Barnes, Community Representative
Simon Poynton, Community Representative
John Murphy, Community Representative
Glenn Britnell, Community Representative
James Taylor - Development Manager, Enerfin
Katelyn Nash – Planner, KLM Spatial

Vicki Askew-Thornton, Senior Energy Projects Liaison Officer, Moyne Shire (non-member)

3. Apologies

Nil.

4. Declarations of interest

Nil.

5. Minutes of previous meeting

Moved by Terri Barnes, seconded by James Taylor that the minutes of the CEC meeting held on 26 August 2022 be accepted, with the following correction:
Section 9.2: Change *'Offsite landscaping is required by the current permit and will be offered to residents within 5km of the site'* to:
'Offsite landscaping is required by the current permit and will be offered to residents within 4km of the site'. **CARRIED**

6. Business arising from previous Minutes

- 6.1 E/ICA confirmed that the two additional background noise testing locations will be included in the post-construction noise monitoring program.

E/ICA will provide the CEC with an updated map showing the five noise monitoring locations and the distance between each location and the nearest turbine.

7. Correspondence Incoming

Date received	Item
28 September	Questions on notice from Neil Blain (Refer to General Business)
29 September	Update from E/ICA re the amendment application, and an FAQ document (Attachment 1)

8. Correspondence Outgoing

Nil.

9. Reports

9.1 Project Update (Enerfin/ICA):

Community Information Sessions:

- Attendance at the recent Community Information Sessions was disappointing with around 15 people attending, 8 of which were local people. The community representatives noted there has been some shock in the community regarding the photo montage of the predicted view of turbines from the General Store. Simon noted there are still people saying they don't know much about the project. The long planning timeline for wind farms may have contributed to this.

Amendment Application statutory notification process:

- The notice that E/ICA mailed out went to owners and occupiers within 5km of the project site. Duplicates cannot be removed from a mailing list for a planning notification, so some people would have received multiple copies. The Committee members noted their frustration that the link to the DELWP website listed in the newspaper notice and the letters initially did not take people to the applications documents. E/ICA noted that DELWP has now corrected this problem and has extended the closing date for submissions to 26 October. E/ICA has also placed the application documents on its project website under the Useful Links tab:

<https://www.woolsthorpewindfarm.com/about-the-windfarm>

9.2 Community Representatives

- Terri asked about the status of the Pre-construction Community Fund. E/ICA reported that it has received four applications which can be discussed with the Community Representatives after the meeting.

Questions from Terri on behalf of the community:

- What is the difference between a submission and an objection?
E/ICA responded that a submission can object to the amendment application, or be in support of the amendment application.

- Who is the responsible authority for the permit?
E/ICA responded that the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority. E/ICA noted that the draft amended permit deletes the original noise conditions, as the EPA is now the regulator for wind farm noise. When the wind farm is operational, if a member of the public has a noise complaint they should submit it to the wind farm operator and the EPA. The project website will contain instructions on how to do this.

- What is the 'secondary consent' mechanism?
E/ICA responded that the secondary consent approval mechanism is used for minor changes that the Minister considers. There is no notification for secondary consent.

- Is 30 hours per annum the shadow flicker limit?
E/ICA responded that this is the limit as per the Permit. The theoretical assessment considers the maximum possible shadow flicker, then the predictive assessment includes wind direction, seasonal conditions and other factors. The shadow flicker report is available on the project website at: https://www.woolsthorpewindfarm.com/files/ugd/6a122b_0922d4e7a59d4cae7ccc208b1b4982.pdf

- What consultation has been done with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and the Warrnambool Airport?
E/ICA responded that consultation with CASA and Warrnambool Airport is ongoing and CASA is still reviewing the relevant amendment documents. E/ICA took on notice a question about whether there would be flashing red lights on the turbines and if this would create flicker/spill. E/ICA noted that turbine lighting might have a trigger mechanism for approaching aircraft, and be baffled to reduce visibility from the ground.

- When was the most recent flora and fauna study done, especially in relation to the nature reserve to the south west of the wind farm site?
E/ICA responded that the initial survey data was updated for this amendment application.

- The Southern Bent-wing Bat (SBWB) is critically endangered?
E/ICA responded that it is, and noted that the surveys indicate the SBWB might fly through the area but does not roost or nest in the area. Studies on SBWB show that it has a low flight path. The amendment proposes to increase the lowest swept path of the blades to 66 metres from the ground.

- E/ICA took on notice a question about infrasound and vibration from turbines.

E/ICA noted that this is not required to be assessed for a wind farm permit application.

- Have the transport routes in the Traffic Management Plan (TMP) changed? E/ICA responded that the TMP still requires that heavy construction traffic for the wind farm's construction will not travel past the school. The TMP submitted with amendment application can be found at: https://www.woolsthorpewindfarm.com/files/ugd/6a122b_31c30331efdc4281a6bbb27577d6ee71.pdf
- A driver distraction complaint could be made to the Department of Transport or Regional Roads Victoria. The contact details are in the TMP.
- Terri noted that a lot of local Woolsthorpe residents are having their own background and operational noise monitoring done by an independent acoustician.

9.3 Council

- 9.3.1 Clarification of Council's major projects consultation process for the amendment application:
Council intends to post letters to all landholders within 5km of the site next Monday, 3 October. The letter will explain Council's consultation process for major projects, contain instructions on how people can make a submission to Council if they wish, and the closing date. Council is scheduled to consider its submission to the Minister for Planning at the Council meeting to be held on 8 November. As this will be after the advertised closing date, Council will advise the Minister for Planning that its submission will be lodged after 8 November. Reports for Council meetings are generally uploaded to the Council website on the Friday prior to the meeting.
- 9.3.2 Cr Doukas asked that if E/ICA is considering 2 types of turbines, which type are the noise predictions based on.
E/ICA responded that the report includes a scenario for each turbine model, and the predictions are based on the louder of the 2 types.

10. General business

- 10.1 Questions from Neil Blain:
- 1) *whether moyné shire will write to Woolsthorpe WF neighbours advising them of the planing permit amendment and by which date these letters will be received;*
 - 2) *Whether Moyné Shire will now be asking for written community submissions on the Woolsthorpe WF permit amendment;*
 - 3) *the closing date for submissions to DELWP and also Moyné Shire;*
 - 4) *whether Councillors will publicly discuss/ be asked to endorse Council's written submission on the permit amendment in a ordinary council meeting before it is sent to DELWP?*

5) *how and when will Council's written submission to DELWP be made public and whether this will occur prior to the closing date for submissions?*

Response: Refer to the Council update at Section 9.3.

10.2 John asked Council how its new position on turbine setbacks from townships relates to this amendment application.

Cr Gleeson noted that the Woolsthorpe Wind Farm has a current permit, and the intent of Council's new position is that the Minister for Planning pause issuing any new wind farm permits until strategic planning is undertaken including increasing turbine buffers to 5km from towns.

Cr Gleeson noted that Council will be making a submission on this amendment application.

Council took on notice John's question of whether Council would adhere to its new position regarding this amendment application.

10.3 Simon noted that Council is a significant stakeholder in this process and asked Council for consistency and detailed debate about this amendment application.

10.4 Simon asked E/ICA to consider the town and what more it could offer to it in the event that the amendment is granted by the Minister for Planning. An example might be a long term power bill subsidy.

11. Date of next CEC meeting:

Friday 2 December 2022, 10am at the Woolsthorpe Hotel

Confirmed this / /

Chair

Minutes are to be registered in Moyne Shire's electronic document management system by the committee reporting officer immediately following the Minutes' confirmation and signing

Attachment 1: From E/ICA - Frequently Asked Questions



WOOLSTHORPE WIND FARM PERMIT AMENDMENT - FAQs

1. What has previously been proposed?

The current planning permit allows for 20 turbines to be constructed with a maximum height of 168 metres. The minimum clearance of the turbine blades from ground level is 35 metres. The permit was issued by the Minister for Planning.

2. Why is an amendment to the planning permit required?

An amendment to the planning permit is required due to the change in turbines. The previously approved turbines are no longer available by the supplier.

As such, the project has been reviewed to find new turbines which would be suitable for the land.

Through advances in technology, current available turbines are larger than what was previously approved. Larger turbines are however more efficient at producing power hence less turbines are required to generate the same amount of energy overall.

3. What is now proposed?

It is proposed to construct 13 turbines with a maximum height of 230 metres. The minimum clearance of the turbine blades from ground level is 66 metres. The Minister for Planning will be considering and assessing the application.



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4. What is being considered and assessed in the amendment planning application?

As a permit has already been granted, it has already been deemed reasonable for the land to be developed as a wind farm.

What is now being considered and assessed, is the difference in impact as a result of changes proposed.

5. If the turbines are bigger, won't they generate more noise?

Pre-construction acoustic modelling has been undertaken based on the proposed turbines. Although the turbines are larger, there are less turbines proposed overall and they include improved insulation to minimise noise impacts. The modelling provided confirms that the noise generated complies with the specified standards.

6. How close is the nearest turbine to the Woolsthorpe township?

The closest turbine to the township is approximately 3.5 kilometres, as the crow-flies.

7. Why are there turbines within 5km of the township?

The Victorian planning framework does not specify a minimum distance for a turbine to be setback from a township. There are however, mandatory setbacks of a turbine from a dwelling – being 1 kilometre.

Moyne Shire Council has formed its own position for all new wind farms which stipulates a requirement for turbines to be setback 5 kilometres. We note that this is for new wind farm proposals as distinct from amendments to existing permitted proposals.

8. How has bushfire risk been addressed?

The risk of bushfire has been mitigated through the following measures;

- Dedicated 45,000 litres of static water supply available at the site entry solely for fire fighting purposes.
- All internal access tracks are a minimum 5 metres in width and are graded for use by emergency vehicles.
- Clearing of grass from the base of turbines to minimise the risk of grass fire.
- Wind turbines are also required to be located no less than 300 metres apart. This ensures adequate distance for aircraft to operate around a wind energy facility.



9. What Is the Impact on any vegetation?

No vegetation within the site boundaries is proposed to be removed to accommodate the proposed works.

Some native vegetation is required to be removed within the road reserve adjacent to the main site entry. This vegetation removal is unavoidable as the access is required to be widened to cater for vehicle movements into the site.

10. Are the changes better or worse for wildlife in the area?

Critically, the proposal provides less turbines than what already has approval. This in itself will reduce any impacts on wildlife from what has already been approved.

More specifically, the increase in the ground level clearance from the bottom of the blade are considered to be a positive outcome. This clearance will minimise potential conflict with avifauna.

11. Will the project impact my property values?

Property values are speculative and there has been no clear evidence supporting the notion that wind farms devalue property.

Relevant background reports and studies into this matter can be found below;

- <https://www.woolsthorpewindfarm.com/about-the-windfarm>
- Look under *Useful Links* Section

Property values are not a planning matter given they do not relate to the merits of an application. This is confirmed through various decisions of the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).



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12. What does the community get out of the project?

A community benefit fund (for \$60,000 p.a.) will be established upon commencement of the construction and be in place throughout operation of the wind farm.

It will benefit the community and residents by funding programs, projects and initiatives that contribute to economic, environmental and social sustainability, and education advancement.

13. Where can I get more information?


Further information regarding the specifics of the proposal can be sourced from;


- Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (Victorian Government)
 - <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/permits-and-applications/ministerial-permits/browse-ministerial-permits>
 - Search application number 20060220-3
- Woolsthorpe Wind Farm website
 - <https://www.woolsthorpewindfarm.com>

Any email enquiries can also be sent directly to the proponent team at:
contactus.woolsthorpe@elecnor.com.



CONTACT US

 www.woolsthorpewindfarm.com

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