



NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2023

WOOLSTHORPE WIND FARM



1 MESSAGE FROM THE PROJECT TEAM

On September 15th, the Department of Transport and Planning approved our application to amend the Woolsthorpe Wind Farm planning permit to allow taller but fewer turbines.

Our Project Team would like to extend our thanks to everyone who participated in the process and also for patiently waiting for the outcome - we know that this was not easy for everyone.

There is still much to do. In the last few weeks, our team has been busy reviewing the report by the Planning Panel as well as the amended permit conditions. We are committed to ongoing discussions with the community as we prepare plans and documents to satisfy the permit conditions, noting the number of conditions to be met and constraints to be balanced.

Moyne Shire Council is recommencing the CEC meetings so we look forward to visiting more regularly and structuring our communication with the community around these meetings, with additional one-on-one catch ups.

Anyone that has questions relating to the project, please reach out via email.

We are also pleased to report further about our community benefit programs and neighbour agreements.

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CONTACT US



www.woolsthorpewindfarm.com

contactus.woolsthorpe@elecnor.com

Don't forget to sign up to our mailing list (at the project's website) for updates and more!



2 WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

Evolution of the project and on-going workstreams

COMMUNITY

Since our newsletter in July last year our Project team has made many visits to Woolsthorpe. We had 4 formal Community Engagement Committee (CEC) meetings between July and December, many one-on-one meetings with near neighbours, and the Community Information Sessions that we held in September.

During each of our visits, we were able to engage in robust conversation about the project from which much useful feedback was received by the community. Our Project team was able to respond to concerns and seek additional information to provide greater peace of mind to the community. One such example was by conducting additional background noise monitoring at the Primary School and a Wickham Road residence.

During the public information sessions, our Project team met with interested members of the community and discussed the development plans and studies that we submitted as part of our application to amend the planning permit. Residents were primarily interested in the noise studies, the visual impact and community benefit scheme. Some residents noted concern in particular about the view of turbines from the township, of which our team has taken note. Within the limits of our 100 metre micro-siting allowance, from the approved turbine locations, we are endeavouring to move three turbines (WT-05, WT-07 and WT-01) to positions that will help obscure more of their view. We look forward to sharing further photomontages as this work progresses.

Pre-construction Community Benefit Fund

Woolsthorpe Wind Farm Project team was very pleased with the success of the pre-construction community benefit fund. Many great applications were received from which two initiatives/projects were awarded grant funding. Our Project team worked closely with our community representatives on the Community Engagement Committee to assess each of the projects, and we would like to thank each of the members who contributed. It was made clear, through our consultation, that the causes most important to the community were those that fostered and promoted social cohesion and community wellbeing. Whilst all submissions demonstrated strong merit, the winning projects excelled in this regard.

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

- **\$6,000 to Spring Creek Cricket Club for the purchase of a new ball machine.**



Stephen Mirtschin, Spring Creek Cricket Club Vice President, commented:

"The Spring Creek Cricket Club values our sponsors and those who have supported our club from our infant stages. We look forward to continuing to build upon these relationships, with community-minded groups like the Woolsthorpe Wind Farm long into the future. There are a number of projects that the Spring Creek Cricket Club committee has ambitiously set out to achieve for the betterment of our volunteer-run, and community-based club. The Woolsthorpe Wind Farms' ambition to support the local community is a perfect match for us. We're confident that through this support and partnership with the Woolsthorpe Wind Farm we're a step closer to ensuring our club is set up to flourish well into the future and achieve its full potential."

- **\$14,000 to the Woolsthorpe Recreation Reserve for upgrades to the kitchen facilities.**



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Operational Community Benefit Fund

The project team would like to re-affirm that the annual Community Benefit Fund (AUD\$60,000) will still be in place for the commercial life of the project, as previously discussed. It is intended to commence shortly after the Project begins construction. Grant applications will be received and advertised for the local community within 4 km of the Project to vote on. A Grants Committee (comprised of residents within 4 km of the project and WWF company members) will be set up to review applications, beneficiaries, and the community voting. Finally the Grants Committee will make recommendations to WWF who will determine the final project(s) and distribution of grant funds.

DEVELOPMENT

The amendment application went on public exhibition through September and received submissions from the community/public about the proposed change in the project's design. The technical merits of the application, and submitters concerns, were heard at a formal Planning Panel Hearing in February 2023.

On 15th of September, 2023, the Planning Department issued its approval for the project's amended design which was supported by the independent Planning Panel.

The Project team is now reviewing the newly issued permit conditions and planning panel report. Specifically, recommendations require the project to utilise its 100 metre micro-siting allowance (ability to make small changes in some turbine locations from the locations submitted in the application) to, where possible whilst considering other constraints, reduce impacts. Specifically, the team is investigating how it can move turbines WT-01, WT-05 and WT-07, to help obscure more of their view from the township (denoted as viewpoint 7). The team is also investigating how small changes in location can be made for turbines WT-03, WT-05, WT-07, WT-08, WT-12 and WT-13 to increase the distance of separation from potential treed habitat for avifauna.

As this review into the micro-siting occurs, coordination of various specialist inputs is being undertaken to ensure that documents / plans satisfy the permit conditions and are suitable for subsequent endorsement. At this stage, we do not have a specific timeframe to lodge documents, as we are working through the requirements.

Lastly, the model for the Neighbour Agreements has been determined. Financial compensation to near neighbours will take the form of a one-off payment and be determined by the number of turbines within 3.1 km of a near neighbour's dwelling. As communicated previously, final turbine locations will be confirmed following micrositing of the turbines (and subsequent endorsement of development plans by the Department of Planning). The exact amounts will be communicated to the landowner and the same model will apply to all.

CONNECTION

On the 30th of September 2022, the project obtained its letter of Offer to Connect from AEMO (Australian Electricity Market Operator). In January 2023, both Woolsthorpe Wind Farm and Powercor (the electricity distribution network service provider) executed the project's connection contract (concerning the electrical design and construction works required to physically connect the Woolsthorpe Wind Farm into the Powercor electricity grid). It should be noted that there is work to do to finalise the connection workstream, primarily related to the change to more modern wind turbines (which is process expected to take 6-9 months). However, importantly, the milestone now recognises Woolsthorpe Wind Farm as a "committed generator" and secures the Project's place in the network.

The Project team will continue to engage with Powercor and AEMO to finalise the remaining approvals in the months ahead.



THANK YOU FROM THE WOOLSTHORPE PROJECT TEAM