

**Community Consultative Committee (CCC)
Meeting Minutes
Gullen Range Wind Farm (GRWF)**

Date:	Wednesday 30 th October 2024
Location:	Bannister Hall
Time:	4pm – 5:15pm
Attendance:	Peter Gordon (PG) – Chair Dimity Taylor (DT) – Community Representative Councillor Susan Reynolds (SR) – Upper Lachlan Shire Council (ULSC) Scott Martin (SM) – Goulburn Mulwaree Council Andrew Sinclair (AS) – BJCE, Site Manager Erin Fletcher (EF) – BJCE, Community Manager Diana Forrester (DF) BJCE, Community Liaison Officer
Apologies:	Lachlan Lamberton (LL) – BJCE, Asset Manager

Introductions and Welcome	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PG welcomed everyone to the CCC meeting. PG explained that Paul Culhane’s election to Mayor of ULSC had resulted in him leaving this CCC, replaced by Councillor Susan Reynolds. 	
Conflicting and Pecuniary Interests	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declaration of pecuniary or other interests: None 	
Minutes of Previous Meeting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Minutes for the last meeting in May 2024 were agreed out of session and are on the website. 	
Action Items from Previous Minutes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no outstanding action items. 	
Correspondence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was no correspondence. 	
Items Raised by Community Representatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DT said she had nothing specific that needed to be covered today. SM explained he was attending today for Mulwaree Shire Council (MSC) because he is the representative according to the last selection of the sub-committee responsible for CCC’s. However, the newly elected MSC will go through this process again soon so SM may not be their rep at the next GRWF CCC meeting. SR said she was keen to get across the CCC and its role. PG explained the purpose of the meeting as an opportunity to bring issues of concern to the table for discussion with the company which undertakes to be open and transparent in listening and responding accordingly. PG said he also chairs the Crookwell 2/3 Wind Farm CCC’s so there are some overlapping interests. 	

Company Reports and Overview of Activities

Operational update

- AS reported the wind farm is running as expected.
- He explained the turbines at both GRWF and Biala Wind Farm (BWF) will be switched off for HV (High Voltage) outage testing scheduled between 18th-21st of November. The turbines may be shut down for the four days, or for part of that time.
- PG asked what that would look like. AS explained that the turbines will all be still when maintenance is underway.
- SM asked if that would affect neighbours. AS explained that would not be the case.
- AS said two trucks were bringing replacement generators to site, one yesterday (29/10/24) and one tomorrow (31/10/24). The generators are stored at site for use when needed.
- AS said a generator change out would happen in February 2025 which will involve cranes being transported and crane works on site. These activities will also be noted on the website.
- AS explained how the blades are repaired during the summer months with fiberglass used to replace any divots or damage. This work is undertaken using cherry pickers.
- SM asked whether damage is a frequent thing. AS said it wasn't common, although sometimes lightning can affect them.
- SR asked whether hail damage was a problem – AS explained that it wasn't a concern.
- AS reported there had been 4 RFS groups visited recently (27/9/24) to familiarise themselves with access points and fire plans for each of the sites (Biala, Gullen Range Wind Farm and Solar Farm).
- AS said bushfire preparedness activities are now underway – making sure everything is clean and ready, water containers full etc.
- Bush fire preparedness inspections are carried out monthly throughout the bushfire season.
- AS also reminded the CCC about the arrangements in place during breeding season for the Powerful Owl from November 30th to March 31st when 4 turbines are turned off one hour before dusk and turned back on one hour after sunrise.
- AS also mentioned the Crookwell High School visit today (30/10/2024).

Monitoring and environmental performance

- AS explained that Narla Environmental will be doing a camera collection from the Property Vegetation Plan (PVP) area to see what native and feral animals are in the area. The cameras were distributed about two months ago to do their routine checks.
- AS reported that Narla will also be doing a weed management check at Gullen Solar Farm.
- AS said that feral pigs have been an issue in recent times so GRWF has actively been helping landowners to lower the number of the feral pigs in the area by contributing to grain for feeding stations to lure the pigs into traps or baits.
- AS said Goldwind is carrying out weed spraying throughout the whole farm on hardstands and roadsides, banks and drains.
- He explained Goldwind staff are now machinery hygiene trained, with all vehicles coming onto site routinely inspected for bio-security purposes.

Energy generation

- AS reported everything from an operational perspective is going well.
- He explained the Upper Lachlan area is apparently coming to the end of a 'wind drought' – so the expectation is for higher generation in the coming months.
- PG asked how many of the GRWF turbines are lit with aviation lighting at night – AS confirmed there were none.
- It was noted that BWF did have lights on originally and eventually were able to work with CASA to have them turned off following community feedback. Information on this is available on the BWF website.
- DT asked about the lights at the substation. AS agreed to find out about the lights at the substation to see if these could be turned off at night or shielded in some way. **ACTION ITEM**

Clean Energy Program Update

- EF reported just one Stage 2 application had been received so far this year, and one Stage 1 application.
- She said a message went out to those that have completed Stage 1 but not yet applied for Stage 2 and advertising for the program continues wherever this is possible.
- To date, 138 residents have completed Stage 1 and 92 residences have completed Stage 2.
- The Energy Committee will conduct a review at the end of this year to determine if the program will be opened up to start accepting multiple applications from people who have already completed the program. A number of factors will be taken into consideration, including the number of people who have not yet moved on to Stage 2 of the program, as well as the funds available at the end of the year (previous years to date have been oversubscribed and were overrun).
- EF explained the grant value is about \$8000 with the allocation linked to CPI so it gradually increases. However, GRWF appreciates the cost for paying the balance of a solar system is still high for the landowner which may be affecting the Round 2 applications.
- EF explained that applications for the final funding round for this year will close on 22 December. Following this, the updated grant value will be calculated and will be noted on the website and in the guidelines.
- EF said the audit and annual report for Year 9 of the program has been completed, with outcomes recorded on the GRWF website. EF agreed to circulate a link to the report. **ACTION ITEM**

Sponsorships

- EF said the company has been confirmed again as a Red Ribbon sponsor for the 2025 Crookwell Show. They will organise a face painter with gold coin donations going to a local charity.
- GRWF supported the Crookwell Women's Bowls for their annual Open 4's tournament in September.
- Crookwell Men's Bowls Gullen Range Triple Classics will be supported again for their competition next month (November).
- Goulburn Bowls Turbine Cup & Rose Tournament will again be supported early in 2025
- Biala Wind Farm will continue its support for the Crookwell Devils in 2025.

School Activities

- EF said she had enjoyed participating in the Crookwell High School tour this morning. The tour included a group of Year 8 students who visited both the wind and solar farm sites and got close to a turbine.
- Goulburn Mulwaree High – Keep Local and Build a Career in STEM Days were held on 20-21 August. EF explained that GRWF representatives were in attendance and hosted an information stand with career information as well as a hands-on activity for the students who had to build a wind turbine. Each school group aimed to produce the highest energy levels from their model, with Crookwell High coming out on top on both days.
- Crookwell High held a Careers Day on 13 September with representatives from GRWF in attendance. EF reported this was a successful day with both primary and secondary students taking part in the event.
- Goulburn Rotary and Newcastle University organised an annual Southern Tablelands STEM Challenge which took place at Veolia Arena on 2 August. EF explained, BWF was a proud supporter of this event which the team attended with an information stand for students and helped to judge the final bridge building challenge.

Public Tours

- EF reported that two public tours had taken place in 2024 to date and they are currently trying to source a new bus driver for future tours.
- She said unfortunately they had to cancel the tour planned for 9 October but they are working to organise an alternate date before the end of the year if possible.

Community Fund 2024/25

- EF explained that funding applications were reviewed by the S355 committee in June with more than \$60,000 provided in funding across the successful applications this year, which included:
 - Rotary Club of Crookwell: Defibrillators for Crookwell (\$4,900, plus a commitment of up to an additional \$5,000 to cover maintenance costs for five years)
 - Bannister District Hall Association: A Hall for All – Storage and Maintenance (\$2,164.80)
 - Anglican Church (Parish of Crookwell), St George’s Church, Kialla: Fencing works (\$7,222,60)
 - Goulburn Crookwell Heritage Railway: Procurement of a 40-foot shipping container (\$5,400)
 - Goulburn Crookwell Heritage Railway: Relocation of Pay Bus FP12 (\$1,320)
 - Crookwell Golf Course Maintenance Association Inc: New Machinery Shed (\$40,000)
- EF noted the 2025 funding round will open in early 2025.
- DT asked whether the workshops could be used to help the committees to organise themselves better – with a vision and a strategic plan and for guidance with respect to corporate governance. She believes this would help to make them stronger organisations, better able to manage the grant process (applications and reporting).
- SR explain there is only a part time assistant in the grants area at Council now – so there are no resources to help community groups. SR explained her experience through the Upper Lachlan Foundation and agreed with DT that too many organisations don’t think long term enough.
- DT suggested writing to applicants to gauge interest and PG suggested this should include Crookwell 2/3 too.

Community Information Plan 2024 – finalise

- EF explained that the Community Information Plan (CIP) was reviewed for 2024 with minor updates to some contacts.
- She explained the CIP was provided at previous CCC and circulated post meeting for comment and it still needs to be finalised so that it can be updated to the website. PG confirmed if committee members had reviewed. DT confirmed that she would be happy to endorse the updated CIP.
- EF advised that the revised CIP would now be updated to the GRWF website post meeting.
ACTION ITEM

Complaints

- EF reported that no complaints were received in 2024.

General Business

- SR asked about the fire season and how the wind farm responds to fires where they are in a wind turbines area. AS explained that there is always someone on call. The message goes to them and they will immediately close down the string of turbines in that area. If it's outside the turbine area SR wanted to know whether they can call on aerial support to be used. AS said if they need to do aerial bombing - helicopters could come in.
- SR asked whether GRWF contributes to grants that would encourage children to go into associated trades. EF said that is not happening formally at this stage but BJCE are looking at this from a company-wide perspective, with a wind farm in Victoria now having a scholarship program in place.
- DT raised a community meeting the previous evening in Crookwell in relation to another proposed wind farm from another proponent. Discussion continued around community perceptions, support and issues relating to wind farm developments in the Upper Lachlan Shire.
- SR raised that Upper Lachlan Shire is currently carrying 53% of renewables for NSW and that some opponents of further wind farm developments had raised concerns around decommissioning and rehabilitation of sites
- PG suggested that at the next CCC meeting there be a presentation around decommissioning plans and requirements for members to understand this issue further **ACTION ITEM**
- Casual discussion continued around the challenges being faced for all parties involved in renewable energy projects including proponents and community groups. The discussion was not related directly to GRWF, however, did touch on issues surrounding anti-renewable movements, lack of information from proponents and the need to deliver more renewable energy assets across the country to meet the nation's net zero and renewable energy targets.

Close and Next Meeting

- Meeting closed: 5.15pm
- Next meeting: Wednesday 9 April 2025 at 4pm at Bannister Hall.

Post Meeting Notes

- The CCC Terms of Reference were not discussed during the meeting, however PG said these could be circulated with these Minutes and agreed on post meeting via email.
- EF mentioned several documents which she agreed to circulate to the CCC – these will include:
 - a) CLEP year 9 [annual report](#) and [audit](#)
 - b) Latest [Environmental Management Report](#) (2023) - the 2024 report will be completed in the first half of next year
 - c) Compensatory Habitat Package [annual report](#) (2023) - this feeds into the Narla monitoring that Andrew spoke about at the meeting; the 2024 report should be finalised by the end of this year and we can circulate once it's complete if the committee would like to see the final version