



Project:	Coopers Gap Wind Farm
Meeting No:	18
Date:	Thursday, 30 June 2016
Venue and Time:	Bell Bunya Community Hall, 71 Maxwell St, Bell
Document:	Meeting minutes and actions
Chair:	Kath Elliott (KE)
Minutes:	Liz Todd (independent consultant)
AGL representatives:	Helena Orel (HO), Community Stakeholder Engagement Manager Neil Cooke (NC), Project Manager, Power Development Stuart Galway (SG), Land & Approvals Manager
Committee Members:	Alison Lister, Western Downs Regional Council Tony Brame, Jandowae Business Group Chris Du Plessis, South Burnett Regional Council Cyril Stewart Judy Schafferius, alternative for Ian Schafferius Mick Cosgrove Russell Glode, alternative for Bill Sparkes Jim Scutt Kelly Taffe, alternative for Greg Taffe
Guests	Mayor Keith Campbell, South Burnett Regional Council Peter O'May, General Manager Corporate Services, South Burnett Regional Council
Apologies	Neville & Jade Wenham Greg Taffe Bill Sparkes Ian Schafferius
Community observers in attendance:	Approximately 50, including two media representatives

Meeting Minutes

Item	Action
<p>1. Welcome</p> <p>Meeting opened at 1:00pm</p> <p>Kath Elliott (KE) welcomed the CCC members and observers.</p> <p>KE outlined the meeting protocol for the CCC, and reminded the community that the formal meeting was undertaken first with the opportunity for community discussion at some points during and at the end of the meeting, as determined by the Chair. KE advised that there would be ample time at the end for questions from the floor and AGL will stay to have discussions with the community after the meeting.</p> <p>ABC television requested to film the audience with no audio.</p> <p><i>Unanimous agreement for ABC television to film without audio.</i></p> <p>Overview of the meeting agenda.</p> <p><i>The minutes from the 17 March 2016 meeting were reviewed and adopted unanimously.</i></p> <p>Update details that Tony Brame is no longer representative for Western Downs Regional Council, and now representing the Jandowae Business Group.</p> <p>HO outlined the actions from the previous meeting which were all completed.</p>	<p>Note</p>
<p>2. Coopers Gap Wind Farm (Coordinated Project)</p> <p>Neil Cooke (NC), AGL Project Manager</p> <p>The path of community infrastructure designation for the Coopers Gap Wind Farm (CGW), due to size of the project, will now go through the Office of the Coordinator-General. The project was considered by the Coordinator-General and on 7 June 2016 was declared a 'coordinated project'. (Department of State Development - Coopers Gap Wind Farm)</p> <p>Terms of Reference and EIS process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Coordinator-General has prepared draft terms of reference (TOR) for an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Coopers Gap Wind Farm. The draft TOR sets out the matters AGL must address when preparing the EIS. Agency and public comments are open 10 June to 11 July 2016. Comments go to the Coordinator-General and evaluated prior to going on exhibition. <p>NC said the process is rigorous and involves going through all the appropriate agencies and requirements, and is independent of Ministerial decisions. The Coordinator-General is in the Department of State Development.</p> <p>The draft TOR for the EIS are on exhibition until 11 July. By 29 July the Coordinator-General will have determined the final TOR for the EIS. The draft EIS will be on exhibition in August and AGL will address submissions as they come through, in order to prepare a final EIS for the Department of State Development.</p> <p>Q1. What does 'coordinated project' mean?</p> <p>A1. The Office of the Coordinator-General has deemed that the project is of significant importance to Queensland. The Office of the Coordinator-General will work closely with all agencies, across environment, health, and noise issues and with the South Burnett Regional Council, Western Downs</p>	<p>Reference</p>

<p>Regional Council, and community to ensure it moves through the process in a rigorous and timely way.</p> <p>Q2. An extension of time is needed as this is the first time (I) have heard of it and it's the end of the month, to be fair to everyone.</p> <p>A2. (KE) The Office of the Coordinator-General has determined the timeframe.</p> <p>(KE) To clarify, the consultation is for developing the TOR, which means that they will determine the sorts of things that need to be assessed by AGL in the EIS, such as noise, environment, health, species impacts etc. As a community or individual, we can look at the TOR (available on the State Development website) and see what the government is going to ask AGL to cover. We can submit comments to the TOR, prior to AGL developing the EIS. So the rules of the game are being established now. You are encouraged to identify issues now and write to the Coordinator-General within the timeframe to have them included for AGL to address. AGL also wants to know what these gaps are. AGL is not determining the process or the timeframe, it is the government. It will be difficult outside of this process to have input into the terms.</p> <p>(HO) Emails were previously sent out to the group with the TOR link and the same information was posted to those who don't have email addresses, all correspondence also included the submission form.</p>	<p><u>Action</u>: HO to send the information link to anyone who requests it. TOR Process website link</p>
<p>3. Project Status Update</p> <p>Neil Cooke, AGL Project Manager</p> <p>AGL set up the Powering Australian Renewables Fund, investing up to \$3 billion to produce around 1,000 plus megawatts of large-scale renewable energy into Australia.</p> <p>Silverton update – AGL has been receiving tenders and had meetings with tenderers in July.</p> <p>Coopers Gap Wind Farm - it is confirmed that the 275kV transmission line will connect at the junction of Niagara Road and Bunya Highway. AGL is now working on the next stage which is the connection application.</p> <p>AGL is starting to prepare the tender documents for Coopers Gap Wind Farm. This is a big step for the project, however an exact date has not been set for when the tender documents will be released, we are aiming for late August.</p> <p>(HO) In response to comments from some members of the community, we wanted to explain today the requirements AGL Energy has in relation to wind turbines on turbine host properties.</p> <p>(HO) To clarify, AGL Energy is responsible for the disposal of the turbines and any other wind farm related paraphernalia at the end of the wind farm's life. There is no liability on the turbine host to do this.</p> <p>(NC) There are two keys parts which say that when the wind farm comes to the end of its life the wind turbines and generators must be removed. Path one is through the Queensland government. For any prospective development approval, the requirement will be that the turbines must be removed at the end of their life. If AGL does not do that and does not comply, the Queensland government would enforce this through fines and court cases to ensure compliance. That applies to all conditions. The other path is through agreements with the individuals, which also says that at the end of the wind farm life, AGL must remove the turbines.</p> <p>Q3. What if AGL goes broke, they may not honour this?</p>	

<p>A3. (NC) The turbine tower, generator and blades contain lots of copper and iron. The cost of removing a wind farm is cost neutral as the value of the assets covers the cost of removing it.</p> <p>Q4. If a wind farm is sold to another supplier do the same conditions apply?</p> <p>A4. (NC) Yes.</p> <p>It is useful to note that windfarms installed 20 years ago are coming to end of their life, and they are being updated to the newest generation of wind farms and repowered for another 20 years. Sometimes the towers are replaced.</p> <p>Q5. Aspects of the development pertains to the size of the turbine, the bigger turbines emit more noise, are they replaced with the same size turbine or a bigger one?</p> <p>A5. Like for like, the same rules apply. If a different size turbine goes in it must go through an approval process.</p> <p>Q6. What if AGL develops the project then sells to another company and when it comes to the end of life the company declares bankruptcy?</p> <p>A6. The value of the tower and generators is equal to the cost to remove it.</p> <p>Q7. It doesn't help if the company doesn't actually remove it, then they must go through litigation and court processes.</p> <p>A7. The companies through the Powering Renewables Australia Fund are large companies with resources and are likely to remove them.</p>	
<p>4. Wind Farms and noise</p> <p>Neil Cooke, AGL Project Manager</p> <p>Background noise monitoring was done seven years ago. The requirements of testing the background noise has changed. Some of the changes are about the rules on how the testing is carried out. AGL will carry out background noise tests again on 12 properties over the next few months in order to meet the guidelines.</p> <p>Q8. (KE) What is noise monitoring?</p> <p>A8. (SG) AGL has commissioned a noise consultant. They will set up six logger sites with the microphone set up off the ground recording noise every 10 minutes for four weeks, then moved to another six sites. The same sites will be done as in 2010. The requirements have gone from class B to class A, where the microphone now needs to be 1.5m off the ground. After continuously logging the background sounds, consultants analyse the information and work out what the background noise is at day time and at night time. The tests are being conducted in winter and will also be compared with the summer testing done previously. We are just measuring the background noise. The guide requires testing done around the whole site and moved around every four weeks.</p> <p>Q9. 75% of the wind comes from the north-east and south-west at certain times of year.</p> <p>Q10. How do take into account the differences in wind direction throughout the year?</p> <p>A10. <u>Action</u>: SG to talk to Jim Scutt about recording on his property.</p> <p>(KE) Allow Neil to finish the noise section and then open up to questions. Will take questions on notice if necessary.</p> <p>(NC) Façade noise testing. Environmental noise policy 2008, objective for inside noise is 30dB. The draft Queensland wind farm guidelines have noise requirements outside of a property at 35dB(A). Regarding concern about the noise reduction across a façade; there was a test done that AGL are aware of that wasn't in accordance with standards.</p>	<p><u>Action</u>: Stuart (AGL) to talk to Jim Scutt about recording on his property.</p>



Members of the community have requested that façade testing be carried out to back up formal research that has been done for decibel reduction of 7-15dB across a property.

AGL will carry out façade testing at residential properties across 5-7 houses, looking at different construction materials to get representative samples. Which properties are done is up to the community. If convenient for the community, AGL would like to do the testing in the week of 11-15 July.

AGL will engage a consultant to carry out façade testing, using the national standards. AGL suggests that there are a couple of community representatives at the testing, that as it isn't a media event, and AGL will work with the community to identify the places.

(HO) The windfarm site map was reviewed by the meeting including all community members, to identify properties for façade testing covering housing of different types of building materials:

- Crowles road
- Jim Scutt, Cooranga North road (concrete house)
- Russell Glode (weatherboard house)
- Bunya Highway (tin house), plus next door (log cabin house)
- Bill Sparkes (brick house)
- Ian Schafferius
- Bev McQuaker

Q11. Down in the valleys people get noise in their home more than those on higher ground.

A11. Any project approvals or prospective approvals will have a regular noise level at A weighted and C weighted at noise frequencies.

Q12. We have heard that infrasound is a problem, even when the company insulates houses people still have a problem with the noise. Living near the beach is not the same as living with turbine noise.

A12. There was a presentation given by an acoustician previously to explain the noise.

(HO) As a result of the 2014 - 2015 Senate Inquiry Into Wind Turbines, \$3.3 million was committed to further research into low frequency noise and infrasound, which will go through the process from a medical and health point of view looking at what the research is showing around infrasound and frequency noise. AGL supports this research.

Q13. It would be interesting to see the research guidelines. Haven't seen a peer review that say they turbines don't emit infrasound. Can't prove the infrasound noise is not there.

A13. (HO) There has been 25 peer reviewed reports that found infrasound isn't emitted that isn't already in place.

Q14. It has been proven by an ENT specialist that there is infraound.

A14. (HO) Professor Alec Salt carried out research on guinea pigs which found a possible mechanism behind some people's sensitivity to infrasound. This research could be part of science's long term process of learning more about physiological responses to low frequency sound. We aren't saying that infrasound doesn't exist, rather wind turbines do not create high levels of harmful infrasound as claimed and that infrasound is occurring all around us all the time, for example wave motion at the beach creates infrasound. Infrasound is naturally happening everywhere already, including being generated by our bodies.

Façade testing looks at the difference inside the home and outside the home and sees the difference across different types of houses. This testing will also provide AGL with information on the wind farm noise impacts inside and outside the homes.

Q15. The recommendation is 30dB, why is AGL 36dB?

[Draft Wind Farm State Code Planning Guidelines link](#)

Action: HO to confirm properties for testing.

Action: HO will pass on and maybe get back the acoustician to provide detailed information.

Link to review summaries

https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/10559/7/WindHealthReviews_3.pdf

A15. (NC) The objective stated in the Environmental Noise Policy 2008 is 30dB inside residences.

Q16. The requirement for industrial areas is 28dB. Why does AGL have a different noise objective?

(KE) If you have concerns about the noise level guidelines you need to put it to the Coordinator-General.

The rule maker is the Queensland Government. You can tell us your concerns in this area, but you need to take them to the government to address your concerns. They are open to it if there is community support for something changing or being included. They will consult with the community, especially if there is lots of interest on an issue.

AGL does not influence or take part in the TOR development. AGL develops and submits an EIS that complies with the TOR. You need to contact the government about the rules. Talk to HO about the process if you have issues to be addressed. It is an important stage right now and you have the opportunity to change things if demanded, and to address where you think there are gaps.

Q17. What does the map colours mean?

A17. (NC) Yellow is the landowners with whom AGL has agreements. Red and Grey are prospective turbines (not finalised). Residents area the black squares. Purple line is the council boundary. Maps not yet finalised.

Latest maps were presented to the OCF when it was declared a coordinated project, the initial advice statement is online and that has the latest maps available or HO can send it.

Q18. Guidelines say turbines must be 1.5km from residences.

A18. (SG) confirmed no turbines with 1.5 km of non-financial landowners.

Q19. I believe all residences should have 1.5km, including those who are hosting the turbines.

A19. There is provision for financial landholders to agree to have turbines within 1.5km if a signed agreement is in place.

Q20. There are two sets of rules if the 1.5km rule doesn't apply to those hosting, what happens when the farm is sold? The draft wind farm guidelines says absolutely it must be 1.5km.

A20 (SG) The guidelines say that the code doesn't apply if the landholder signs an agreement.

Q21. Why is it a concern to others, other than the financial landholder?

There were comments from the floor suggesting it is the landholder's business if they have a turbine closer to their residence under an agreement, it shouldn't concern anyone else.

There was an understanding from a member that the wind farm code stipulates that turbines must be 1.5km from a residence if financial or not, but that is not what the code says.

(KE) The codes says 1.5km, however the guidelines say that landholders can negotiate to have turbines where they choose, as long as they are 1.5km from anyone else. Acknowledgement that Jim Scutt does not agree with that.

Q22. If a neighbouring landholder was getting building approvals then it will be affected.

A22. (KE) No opinion given on that. If someone is seeking a building approval on a neighbouring property, the approval would be up to the Local Council. What is the experience in SA?

Action: HO to send out latest map of the wind farm site.

(HO) There is a gentleman in SA who has a number of turbines on his property. During the design stage he asked for more turbines, which meant they would need to be closer to his residence. When he asked for even more turbines, it was declined. He then became upset generally about many things.

Q23. Need to understand that there are others who are also impacted.

A23. (HO) AGL acknowledges that some people do have issues with the turbines, whether it's the look of them or their sound.

Anyone is welcome to come to AGL if they feel they are experiencing health impacts from the turbines. AGL asks their hosts if they feel comfortable in speaking with AGL if they feel they are experiencing health impacts because of wind turbines. The hosts indicate they would be comfortable coming to AGL if they did feel they had any issues, but said they hadn't had health impacts at all. There have been no wind farm workers who believe they feel affected by wind turbines.

Q24. Some neighbours are the ones affected and seem to have lots of problems. What if the host gets 70%, neighbour gets 20%, downwind gets 10% of the hosting incentives?

Comment - don't agree, if people say they are going to get sick they will.

Comment - the media shows that those not paid are the ones that get sick. Overseas examples show where female minks aborted, prairie chickens moved 8km away from turbines, and cows took two years to get used to sound of the turbines. There are upsides and downsides. There are noise problems and no one is going to investigate it properly.

(HO) There is another \$3.3 million investment recently allocated by the National Health and Medical Research Committee to research into wind turbines and health impact claims. This came about as a result of the latest Senate Inquiry Into Wind Turbines. The research is to determine either way if there are issues. If the outcomes show there are genuine health impacts, then AGL will work with the relevant parties to address these.

Q25. How long have plans been going for?

A25. Five years in planning for Coopers Gap Wind Farm with AGL.

Comments from an aggravated observer, that when they bought their farm four years ago they were not informed that the wind farm was going ahead. The previous landholder or agent did not tell them about the proposal.

Comments: that it would have been hard for the owner/buyer to not be aware of the wind farm.

Q26. If a turbine is found to be in breach of conditions or there are impacts, what will happen?

A26. (NC) If the noise exceeds 35dBa at a non-financial landowner property, AGL needs to fix it. If it can't be fixed and AGL allows the turbines to operate with the noise permit levels being exceeded, AGL will have breached the project approval conditions. If we do that, the government will instruct the turbine to be fixed, if not, then we will be fined. We are required to turn it off until the problem is fixed.

(HO) We have experienced audible sound coming from some turbines that shouldn't have been occurring at Hallett in SA and at Oaklands Hill in VIC. AGL turned off those turbines in consideration of the community and to enable a fix for the problem.

Q27. Will AGL automatically test all houses neighbouring the wind farm, even beyond the 1.5km threshold, testing the noise level when it is running to ensure they are not in breach of the noise threshold?

A27. (NC) Under approval conditions, AGL is required to test locations around the surrounding farms.

<p>(HO) Planning permit sets required locations and AGL has gone above the requirements at our other wind farms. In Victoria 23 sites were tested, although we only needed to test six. If you have concerns with wind farm sound, then we would be likely to do sound testing.</p> <p>Q28. What implications are there for the project if AGL will go above 28dB within inside the home, or will it make the project unviable?</p> <p>A28. (NC) AGL will operate under the requirements in the TOR. If, as was suggested, a member of the public wishes to have a different requirement, now is the time to put that in.</p> <p>(KE) So no, not unless they have to. AGL complies with the government, and voluntarily they wouldn't meet the lower 28dB(A). Would it make it unviable outside?</p> <p>(NC) Neil highlighted that anywhere he has been, he has not experienced noise levels in bedrooms under 35dB. Or anywhere.</p> <p>Q29. What is the allowable limit for background noise?</p> <p>A29. Will take the <u>question on notice</u>. Neil will check the allowable limit for turbines above background noise?</p>	<p><u>Action</u>: Neil will check the allowable limit for turbines above background noise?</p>
<p>5. Community groups visit to AGL Victoria Wind Farms</p> <p>Helena Orel, AGL Community Stakeholder Engagement Manager</p> <p>There have been a lot of discussions around wind farms and sound. Previously AGL has taken people to visit AGL wind farms in Southern Australia, and it is timely to offer this to the community again for 1-4 August 2016. Invitees include CCC members, council representatives, and direct neighbours. The group will visit AGL's Victorian wind farms at Macarthur and Oaklands Hill. Macarthur is Australia's and the Southern Hemisphere's largest wind farm with 140 wind turbines. The design layout is different to Coopers Gap. Oaklands Hill has a similar wind turbine layout and the area is similar in to the agricultural area of Coopers Gap. Oaklands Hill has 32 turbines.</p> <p>Q30. What are the size of the towers? Are they the same as what is proposed for Coopers Gap?</p> <p>A30. (HO) At Macarthur Wind Farm the turbine hub height is around 85m. With the new technology changes for turbines, turbines are becoming taller and the blades longer to collect more wind energy. So the Macarthur Wind Farm turbines are a slightly different height as to what is expected to be installed at Coopers Gap Wind Farm. The Coopers Gap turbines are likely to be taller than the Oaklands Hill ones.</p> <p>AGL will pay for the trip. Macarthur Wind Farm is one hour drive north of Warrnambool and the Oaklands Hill Wind Farm is another hour north of Macarthur Wind Farm. Up to 30 people can participate, with currently room available to take a few more. A bus will go to either Toowoomba or Brisbane airport.</p> <p>The trip will involve going close to the turbines, and inside a turbine base as well as listening to sound from the wind farms at different points around the wind farm, both inside and outside the wind farm area. We will arrange to meet community members, direct neighbours, hosts, and community members in towns nearby. The turbine hosts are keen to meet, as well as the technicians who work five days a week on wind farms to share experiences. There is a similar arrangement for the Oaklands Hill Wind Farm.</p> <p>Helena will need feedback to make travel arrangements. The community requested that the Bell Community Centre be the place for meeting the bus to take people to the airport.</p>	<p><u>Action</u>: People wanting to attend the Victorian wind farm trip 1-4 August need to inform HO asap.</p>

<p><u>Action</u>: People wanting to attend the Victorian wind farm trip 1-4 August need to inform HO asap.</p> <p>Post meeting note: Some community members also suggested a pick up and drop off at Dalby. AGL to confirm this with those going on the trip to Victoria.</p> <p>Q31. How many turbines are proposed for Coopers Gap?</p> <p>A31. (NC) About 100 turbines.</p> <p>(SG) AGL is seeking approval for 115 sites, not turbines. Mainly because of redundancy, so if a site ends up as being inappropriate, we have others already approved for use.</p>	<p><u>Action</u>: HO to inform the group of the Dalby pick up / drop off point.</p>
<p>6. Other Business</p> <p>Q32. With the towers situated on higher ground to the east, will the flicker be over the prescribed amount over summer and winter?</p> <p>A32. Will take the <u>question on notice</u> and present findings at the next CCC.</p> <p><u>Action</u>: AGL will have presentations on flicker and acoustician experts scheduled for the next meeting, and make available previous presentations at CCC on flicker and acoustics.</p> <p>Q33. Is there a problem with starting fires?</p> <p>A34. <u>Action</u>: Include fire presentation also at the next meeting.</p> <p>(KE) It is a good idea to do the suite of presentations again to address gaps in knowledge as interest increases.</p> <p>Q35. How will AGL contribute to the degradation of road condition with the increased traffic, particularly during construction?</p> <p>A35. (HO) From the Macarthur farm experience, ALG will have an agreement with council/s. A pre-construction audit will be taken with visual and recorded information about the condition of roads. There will naturally be some damage during construction, which is made good during the project and followed up with post construction assessments and made good through council. AGL's traffic management plan specifies where equipment can be taken, roads must be approved and drivers must stick to the plans. This way councils and AGL will know what roads are susceptible.</p> <p>(NC) Regarding traffic, if a kilometre doesn't have to be driven in a vehicle then it is fundamentally safer. AGL aim to bus in the construction workers to reduce the amount of vehicles on the roads. We try to use materials for construction sourced locally, so we are not bringing large amounts of equipment and supplies in if we don't have to. This helps protect the roads to avoid unnecessary traffic and damage.</p> <p>The EIS manages the use of roads. The government will require that the road is brought to a standard to carry equipment. Local roads will be improved as a result of the project.</p> <p>Q36. Where will the substation connection be located?</p> <p>A36. (NC) The physical location of the connection will be 1km along Niagara road which won't be seen from the Bunya Highway.</p>	<p><u>Action</u>: AGL will have presentations on flicker and acoustician experts scheduled for the next meeting, and make available previous presentations at CCC on flicker and acoustics.</p> <p><u>Action</u>: Include fire presentation also at the next meeting.</p>
<p>7. Next meeting and close</p> <p>After some general discussion it was agreed to hold the next meeting after the group's visit to the wind farms. It was agreed that the next meeting date would be:</p> <p>1-3pm Thursday 25 August, Cooranga North Memorial Hall, Cooranga North.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 2:45pm.</p>	



Action Item	CCC meeting	Status	Who
AGL to provide links and information about the TOR process for anyone interested.	June 2016	Open	HO
AGL to talk to Jim Scutt about recording on his property.	June 2016	Open	SG
AGL to confirm surrounding residences for noise testing with different building materials.	June 2016	Open	HO
Question 29 on notice. AGL to check the allowable limit for turbines above background noise?	June 2016	Open	NC
People wanting to attend the Victorian wind farm trip 1-4 August need to inform HO asap.	June 2016	Open	HO
Question 32 on notice. AGL to check the flicker impacts through summer and winter based on location of the turbines.	June 2016	Open	NC
AGL to schedule presentations on flicker, noise and fire by appropriate experts for the next meeting, and make available previous presentations at CCC on flicker, noise and fire.	June 2016	Open	HO