

Minutes: Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the Glanmire Solar Farm Community Consultative Committee (CCC) **Tuesday 17 May 2022**
held at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre, Bathurst.

Members Present: Tim Averill (TA, Elgin Energy), Shane Melotte (SM, Elgin Energy), Ben Smith (BS, NGH Consulting), Jack Fry (JF, Bathurst Climate Change Action Group), Rebecca Welsh (RW), Jan Page (JP, Napoleon Reef, Walang & Glanmire Residents Association), Andrew Young (AY), Neil Southorn (NS, Bathurst Regional Council).

Apologies: Dr Jim Blackwood (Bathurst Climate Change Action Group)

Independent Chair: David Ross

Independent Secretary: Jeannine Bryant

Guests: Nicole Brewer (NB Director Energy Assessment, DPE), Karl Okom (KO Team Leader Energy Assessments, DPE), Suzie Rawlinson (SR, Iris – Visual Impact Assessment), Lisa Hamilton (LH, NGH Consulting), Brooke Marshall (BM, NGH Consulting)

Agenda Items	Who to Present
1. Introductions and apologies	David Ross
2. Declaration of pecuniary or other interests	David Ross and all
3. Previous Minutes	David Ross
4. Business Arising from Minutes	All
5. Correspondence	David Ross
6. The NSW Planning & Assessment Process	Nicole Brewer, DPE
7. The Social Impact Assessment Update on visual impact assessment	Ben Smith, Suzie Rawlinson, Brooke Marshall and Lisa Hamilton
8. General Business	All
9. Next meeting: 14 June 2022	All

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/ By Whom
1	<p>Introductions and apologies (Agenda Item 1)</p> <p>DR welcomed members and alternates and guests (some via video and SR in person) to the third CCC meeting.</p> <p>DR asked if agenda items could be moved up the order of proceedings to allow guest speakers to present. CCC members were all in agreeance.</p> <p>Dr Jim Blackwood (JB, Bathurst Climate Action Group) submitted his apology.</p>	
2	<p>NSW Planning & Assessment Process (Agenda Item 6)</p> <p>NB commenced with an overview of the EIS process. The State Significant Development Assessment Process was explained (see attached for presentation). NB reported that Elgin Energy has not submitted a development application as this time. The applicant undertakes all the necessary studies according to the EIS, prepares the Development Application and then lodges it with the Department, who in turns places it on exhibition. The exhibition period is 28 days. All documents are available on the website for reviewing. Surrounding neighbours are notified and a notice concerning the exhibition period will be placed in the regional newspaper.</p> <p>Exhibition is where the community can interact with the Department and communicate what they think about the project. Submission is via the online portal: https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/glanmire-sola-farm</p> <p>This helps the Department to understand what the community may be objecting to.</p> <p>Once the exhibition period has closed the Department prepares a report to the applicant. The applicant can make changes, undertake site visits, and consult with agencies. This information goes into the Assessment Report which then goes to the Minister or the Minister’s delegate where a determination is made. Technical details are dealt with by the Department who coordinate the assessment on behalf of other government organisations.</p> <p>Alternatively, the proposal and Assessment Report may be referred to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC). The IPC may get involved if one or more of the following are triggered: (i) the Department receives 50 unique objections, (ii) there is a Council objection) or (iii) a political contribution is made.</p>	<p>DR to provide a copy of NB’s presentation to members.</p>

This IPC is a totally independent body. This process also provides an opportunity for the local community to have a meeting and make submissions. If the project has been approved, the applicant must adhere to the conditions. At any point during the process the applicant can modify the project.

Committee members were satisfied with the information presented to them.

RW asked 'where does the CCC fit in?' NB observed that the key point to make is DPE does not have CCC's for every project and we haven't had CCC's for solar farms. A request for this CCC came from within the Department.

NB also stated that if the outcome of the development assessment is that we do not think the proposal is acceptable, then the Department would recommend refusal to the project.

DR provided a recap on what the CCC has been discussing over the last couple of months. The CCC will pause in the next couple of months, and DR asked NB to confirm what the roles are for the community members pre-determination. NB noted that community members can provide submissions on the EIS during exhibition and potentially, provide input to any hearings should the IPC get involved.

NB confirmed that the proposal will be assessed using the December 2018 Large-Scale Solar Energy Guidelines.

DR thanked NB and KO for their time and comprehensive presentation. Both left the meeting.

3 Social Impact Statement (Agenda Item 7)

DR introduced BM who joined the meeting via video call. BM is a Principal Planner and specialist in renewable energy impact statements.

DR to provide copy of BM's presentation to members

BM commenced her presentation by observing that it is hoped that the EIS will be ready to go on exhibition by the end of July 2022. BM presented a slide addressing all the components of an EIS, namely: Visual Impact, Biodiversity, Heritage, Land, Noise, Transport, Water, Hazard and Risk, Socio-economic, Waste and Agricultural impact.

BM spoke in detail concerning the EIS process. CCC members can inform their local community when the EIS is on exhibition. CCC members had no further questions.

NS advised that Council would not be in a position to make a submission as the timeframe of 28 days is not feasible. Council only meets once a month and reports have to be prepared three weeks prior to the Council meeting. He also advised that Council can call an urgent meeting to discuss its submission. DR observed that he believed that DPE would see councils as important stakeholders in regards to any proposed development.

DR thanked BM for her attendance and presentation to the meeting.

4 Visual Impact Assessment (Agenda Item 7)

DR introduced SR. A copy of SR's Glanmire Solar Farm Visual Impact Assessment document had been distributed to CCC members, prior to the meeting (attached).

SR began her presentation stating she has worked on a lot of solar farm proposals and that there are no national assessment guidelines. She will be going to the proposed site along with a surveyor to undertake specific technical assessments and take more photos. Aim to identify approximately five locations and create 3D model of terrain, following by creating a photomontage of the project to scale.

There were numerous questions from members. Topics covered included: landscape characteristics, different vegetation, changes in land use, community values, screening, and glare. Members raised concerns about the glare and wanted to know if a glare assessment had been undertaken. SR advised that a solar glare analysis tool would be called on that notifies them if glare is present.

TA advised meeting that the tracker rows will line up from north to south and the panels will track the sun from east to west as the sun moves from the East in the morning to the West in the afternoon.

In response to a question from SR, members believed that the key sensitive site is Brewongle Lane. People travelling along Brewongle Lane will see the panels from the road as will anyone at PB's property.

SR asked members their views on the characteristics of Glanmire that come to mind? Members responded that open spaces, early settlement – several generations of people live here and farm in area, significant trees on land and ridge line, rolling landscape, peace and quiet, native wildlife and established corridors, agricultural plains, bush land were the key observations. Other members noted it was highly modified from its natural condition with much of the original vegetation cleared for farming. The roots of the area are agricultural and farming.

Other issues raised by members: increased traffic on Brewongle Lane from highway, entrance to Bathurst is not to be compromised, type of trees to be planted is important, mature or tube stock - to allow for better survival rate, water run-off from contour and how to mitigate this, soil types and impact on sediment layers, Buffer zone enhancing water courses, screening of solar panels and how long it will take for screening to grow. SR noted that it best to use tube stock for screening as this enhances the survival rate, compared to mature plants.

DR thanked SR for her attendance at the meeting.

5 Social Impact Assessment (Agenda Item 7)

DR introduced LH who joined the meeting via video call.

LH presented on what are social impacts as well as describing the SIA process. The process follows a standard model incorporating background, impacting scoping, communication and stakeholder engagement, baseline, impact assessment and social impact enhancement and mitigation.

DR to provide a copy of LH's presentation to members.

Based on the desktop study, LH shared draft findings with members for discussion (which have not been ranked). The draft social impacts were:

- Communication cohesion,
- Health and wellbeing stress
- Decision-making systems
- Economic
- Housing and accommodation
- Community
- Way of life
- Roads and traffic
- Visual impacts and landscape character
- Amenity
- Livelihoods
- Safety

SR added that people are stressed but once the process has commenced they will see it is not as bad as they feared and the photomontage will give people a better sense of scale.

DR asked members if they saw any further gaps in the draft social impacts that LH had identified in hr presentation? Members said there was nothing else before JF responded that a positive task would be to hold a tree planting day for screening, vegetation and birds, perhaps educating schools through school visits to site.

AY asked if there would be electricity for people in the immediate vicinity. TA replied it is very difficult to put into place, but would look into this.

DR thanked LH for her very informative presentation.

6 Declaration of pecuniary or other interests (Agenda Item 2)
DR reminded members that he is paid a fee to chair these meetings and JB is also paid a fee to take minutes of the meetings.

7 Previous Minutes (Agenda Item 3)
Members were comfortable that the minutes were an appropriate reflection of what was discussed at the second CCC meeting.

8 Business Arising from the Minutes (Agenda Item 4)
DR advised there were five actions from the previous meeting and all have been completed.

9 Correspondence (Agenda Item 5)

- EC's email dated 27 April 2022.
- NB's response to EC dated 3 May 2022.
- EC's note to DR.
- DR acknowledged the resignation of Polly Bonanno (PB Glanmire Action Group) from the CCC.

DR sincerely thanked PB for her interest in the CCC.

10 General Business (Agenda Item 8)

- Solar Farm Footprint and site map
TA and BS stated that the footprint and site map is a draft, presently, pending the studies to be undertaken by SR and her team. Diagram was shown to CCC members and members were satisfied with progress. TA advised he will give an update to the next meeting but the final layout will not be ready by then due to the ongoing studies.
- Takeaways from this meeting
DR asked members about what have been the key takeaways for them since the committee commenced. Members believed that: the presentations were excellent, the level of detail provided was appreciated also providing confidence about the project, the site visit was excellent to get a sense of what was proposed.

TA to provide update to the next meeting.

11 Next Meeting date (Agenda Item 9)

DR confirmed the next meeting of the CCC will take place on 14 June 2022 at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre commencing at 6.00 pm. DR then reminded members of what studies made up the environmental impact statement before opening a discussion with members with respect to what did they wish to discuss at the June meeting.

Members agreed that they wished to discuss the following specialist studies at the next meeting: Hazard and Risk Analysis, Heritage, Water, Biodiversity and Waste. All members agreed to this.

BM to address issues at the next meeting

Meeting closed at 9.26 pm

Appendix 1: Actions

Page No.	Action No.	Description	Date Raised
2	1	DR to provide a copy of NB's presentation to CCC members	17 May 2022
3	2	DR to provide a copy of BM's presentation to CCC members	17 May 2022
5	3	DR to provide a copy of LH's presentation to CCC members	17 May 2022
6	4	TA to provide an update on the site plan to the next meeting	17 May 2022
7	5	BM to speak at next meeting concerning specialist studies	17 May 2022