

Minutes: Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Glanmire Solar Farm Community Consultative Committee (CCC) **Tuesday 14 June 2022**
held at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre, Bathurst.

Members Present: Tim Averill (TA, Elgin Energy), Shane Melotte (SM, Elgin Energy), Dr Jim Blackwood (JB, Bathurst Climate Change Action Group), Jan Page (JP, Napoleon Reef, Walang & Glanmire Residents Association), Neil Southorn (NS, Bathurst Regional Council).

Apologies: Rebecca Walsh, Ben Fry (alternate community member), Andrew Young, Ben Smith (NGH Consulting)

Independent Chair: David Ross

Independent Secretary: Jeannine Bryant

Guest: 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. Biodiversity, heritage, waste, water, and hazard and risk impact assessment studies	Brooke Marshall, NGH
7. General Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Where to from here?”	All
8. Next meeting	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/ By Whom
1	<p>Introductions and apologies (Agenda Item 1)</p> <p>DR welcomed members and guests (BM via video call) to the fourth CCC meeting. Several members submitted their apologies.</p>	
2	<p>Declaration of pecuniary or other interests (Agenda Item 2)</p> <p>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.</p>	
3	<p>Previous Minutes (Agenda Item 3)</p> <p>Members were comfortable that the minutes were an appropriate reflection of what was discussed at the third CCC meeting.</p>	
4	<p>Business Arising from the Minutes (Agenda Item 4)</p> <p>DR advised all actions have been completed.</p>	
5	<p>TA will provide an update on the Site Plan in General Business.</p> <p>Correspondence (Agenda Item 5)</p> <p>Nil</p>	
6	<p>Biodiversity, heritage, waste, water, and hazard and risk impact assessment studies (see attachment) (Agenda Item 6)</p> <p>DR introduced BM, who joined the meeting via video call at 6.20 pm. BM informed members that they can view the progress of the EIS via the link https://majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au.</p> <p>Before talking about the various specialist studies, BM reminded members of what the construction, operation and decommissioning phases entail.</p>	<p>DR to provide copy of BM's presentation to members.</p>
	<p>Biodiversity</p> <p>BM observed that the NSW Biodiversity Assessment Method, established by the State government provides a very prescriptive expectation of how environmental practitioners are to undertake flora and fauna surveys for such assessments. She noted that there is the presence of remnant critically endangered box gum woodland present onsite. This is recognised under State and Commonwealth legislation. There are specific guidelines on the removal of trees. However, Elgin Energy has not determined whether it will remove or retain the trees.</p>	
	<p>A discussion was then held on what the assessment, to date, meant to members and what issues were outstanding. In response to a question from JB, BM advised that Elgin Energy is responsible for overseeing construction and are required to follow approved management plans. Regular monitoring and reporting are required along with weekly and monthly reporting forming an annual report to be submitted to the DPE. The DPE will respond to any issues.</p>	

It was also observed by BM that if the solar panel farm is sold off after construction, the new owner will inherit all the conditions and responsibilities attached to the approved agreement.

DR asked about whether there were any species of note that have been identified to potentially use the box gum woodland as habitat. BM replied data are still to be entered to see what is present.

Aboriginal Heritage

BM spoke to the slides, observing that first nations community involvement is required under the SEARs (Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements) provided by the DPE. An advertisement has been put out seeking input from local first nations consultants, land councils and groups, first nations elders and agencies. A committee will be formed to undertake a walkover of the proposed solar panel site specifically looking for artefacts.

It was noted by BM that a desktop survey has been undertaken and showed no artefacts on site. However, the field survey is currently in progress. If any artefacts are found, they will be salvaged and relocated to another place – in consultation with the first nations people involved - or an exclusion zone would be put in place. The final report will be prepared by archaeologists.

NS requested if the names of the selected first nations groups could be circulated to the CCC members. Members had no other major questions or comments.

BM to provide names of first nations' groups involved in archaeological assessment.

Historic Heritage

BM reported that with respect to any non-first nations' items of heritage, this applies to the front portion of the property only. CCC members were very happy that the Glanmire Inn located on the highway, and close to the proposed site, is to be avoided by the proposed construction, operation and decommissioning works.

CCC members advised that they had no comments, questions or issues associated with this specialist study.

Water

BM stated that the hydrology impact assessment report is a very important document, in relation to preserving local hydrology and maintaining water quality. As part of the hydrology assessment, a computer model is developed specific to the site to assess where there is a risk of flooding and obstructions. The model provides a map of these, highlighting specific areas that should be avoided. She stated that solar panels can withstand a lot of water flooding through the area. BM also stated it is preferable to have grazing around the panels than whippet snipping, as ground cover is needed to reduce the potential for erosion.

JB, NS and JP spoke about their concerns regarding the maintenance of vegetation cover, the prevention of erosion and salinity and the 18 trees located in the middle of the site. BM assured them that information regarding their concerns will be provided in the required reports. She noted that with respect to erosion, sedimentation, and

potential water quality impacts, it has been assessed that there is a low risk as the risks are quite predictable and therefore, mitigating measures can be implemented with confidence.

There were no further comments, questions, or issues raised by members.

Waste

BM reinforced that there are a lot of government regulations and local government guidelines to be followed in relation to waste management. Waste Management Plans must comply with approved Acts.

Some of the key points raised by BM that must be considered during the assessment include:

- What landfill will be used?
- What pollutants may be contained in damaged panels?
- Recycling of batteries

It is critical that waste management plans must consider a waste avoidance hierarchy; namely:

- Avoidance or reduce waste
- Reuse
- Recycle through to disposal.

There were no comments, questions, or issues raised by members.

Hazards and Risks

BM noted that a lot of agencies have been consulted in relation to risks, i.e. fire, pollution, radiation. The Rural Fire Service has been consulted in relation to emergency response and safety and design and mitigation strategies. Elgin Energy have also been part of the planning process for the site.

DR provided a summary of what had been spoken about by BM. Namely, most of the risks were of a low level as they are predictable. However, a special hazard analysis is required for the battery.

Update on solar panel farm layout diagram (moved up from General Business)

TA and SM provided an updated diagram of the solar panel farm site to members and spoke about the changes made since the previous CCC meeting.

One of the changes saw the relocation of the battery station further down the hill due to reduce the visual impact from the highway. SM stated there will be rows of batteries, that look like storage containers, approximately three metres high, and a sub-station will be located adjacent to the batteries. Power to the substation and batteries may be via underground lines from the highway. The main entrance to the solar panel site will be near the batteries.

The second was about screening of the site, especially along the southern boundary.

SM advised that there will be a fire barrier 20 metres from the road consisting of a width of 10 metres for 10 trees where there is landscape screening provided and 10 metres of trafficable asset protection zone which are the standard requirement by the RFS. JP also asked if transmission lines would be required. TA advised the existing lines will be used and upgraded, new poles and wires will be placed at the site but this will be handled by Essential Energy who will also have input into where the sub-station location will be.

JB asked if tourism appeal or community benefit for school groups had been considered. TA responded this has been spoken about but no concrete plans have been put in place. BM said traffic assessment would look into this. NS also added that designated parking areas would need to be looked at.

DR raised the issue of screening at the bottom boundary especially in relation to the Bonanno's residence. SM referred back to Suzie Rawlinson's report presented at the last CCC meeting. Screening mitigation works will be to a certain height level. Guided by what can be seen before construction and what can be seen after construction. The objective is that solar panels cannot be seen up to 500 metres from the residences. SM replied unfortunately not all the area will be perfectly screened.

JB asked what is the percentage of land area that the solar panels will sit on. TA replied approximately 40% and grassed land 60%.

BM left meeting at 8.00 pm. DR thanked BM for providing the presentation on the issues raised by CCC members.

7 General Business (Agenda Item 8)

TA commenced by providing update of where EIS is up too. The specialist studies are going well and everything should be ready by the end of July. The next 4-6 weeks is a very busy time as the last reports will be completed namely hydrology, traffic, socio economic and agricultural impact assessment.

JB asked about the economic value of the solar panel proposal to the Bathurst community. TA advised that during the construction phase, there will be significant increases to the Bathurst economy with contractors coming into the town. Once the solar panel farm is operational there will be 1-3 employees who will undertake various job roles.

TA also advised that Elgin Energy had a stall at the recent Bathurst Show and received positive feedback from the Bathurst community. He went on to state that local people had heard about the proposal but had positive things to say. There were some negative comments.

DR asked members what were their key takeaways from tonight's presentation. JB was confident and reassured by what he had heard, and JP was impressed with the thoroughness of processes.

Where to from here?

First DR provided the following summary of the EIS process. If the EIS is completed by the second half of July, it then goes on exhibition for 28 days where community members can make submissions supporting or objecting to the proposal. DPE then collates those submissions and provides them to the proponent to review and respond to.

The Department then undertakes an Assessment Report that can take approximately three months. Once the Assessment Report is complete, determination of the proposal can occur by one of two approaches, usually. DPE may make the determination. Or, hypothetically, if the Department receives 50 objections to the proposal or Council makes an objection, this will trigger the involvement of the IPC. The IPC has 12 weeks within which to review the various studies, undertake a public hearing and make the determination. In DR's view, it would be highly unlikely for a determination to be made this side of Christmas.

DR proposed that he and TA keep in touch over the next six months and provide email updates to CCC members.

DR finished by stating he was not sure when there may be a next meeting. If the project were to be approved and committee were to continue, DR would need to review the makeup of the committee i.e. getting more people involved as well as when committee commences etc.

TA and DR to
keep in touch and
provide updates
to members

NS spoke about community contributions. BM has been invited to speak to BRC about community contributions. It is important that this conversation occurs in July as part of the proposed conditions of consent. TA provided suggestions about how contributions can be made by BRC, for example, scholarship at CSU, traineeship within BRC.

DR thanked community members and the representatives from Elgin Energy and NGH Consulting for attending the CCC meetings and for their valuable input into the discussions held at these meetings over the last four months.

8 **Next Meeting** (Agenda Item 9)
To be notified.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm

Appendix 1: Actions

Page No.	Action No.	Description	Date Raised
2	1	DR to provide a copy of BM's presentation to CCC members.	14 June 2022
3	2	BM to provide names of first nations' groups involved in archaeological assessment	14 June 2022
6	3	TA and DR to keep in touch and provide updates to members	14 June 2022