

**Minutes:** Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Glanmire Solar Farm Community Consultative Committee (CCC) **Tuesday 18 October 2022**  
held at the Mantra Hotel, Stewart Street, Bathurst.

**Members Present:** Tim Averill (TA, Elgin Energy), Antoine Pavane (AP, Elgin Energy), Jim Lavis (JL, alternate member, Bathurst Climate Change Action Group), Jan Page (JP, Napoleon Reef, Walang & Glanmire Residents Association), Rebecca Welsh (RW), Neil Southorn (NS, Bathurst Regional Council).

**Apologies:** Shane Melotte (Elgin Energy), Andrew Young, Ben Smith (NGH Consulting), Dr Jim Blackwood (Bathurst Climate Change Action Group)

**Independent Chair:** David Ross

**Independent Secretary:** Jeannine Bryant

**Guest:** Brooke Marshall (BM, NGH Consulting), Bree Schubach (BS, alternate for Ben Smith).

<b>Agenda Items</b>	<b>Who to Present</b>
1. <b>Introductions and apologies</b>	David Ross
2. <b>Declaration of pecuniary or other interests</b>	David Ross and all
3. <b>Previous Minutes</b>	David Ross
4. <b>Business Arising from Minutes</b>	All
5. <b>Correspondence</b>	David Ross
6. <b>EIS update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Discussion on connection to transmission lines</b></li></ul>	Brooke Marshall and Bree Schubach NGH Consulting
7. <b>General Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>“Where to from here?”</b></li></ul>	All
8. <b>Next meeting:</b>	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/ By Whom
1	<p><b>Introductions and apologies</b> (Agenda Item 1) DR welcomed members and guests to the fifth CCC meeting. .</p>	
2	<p><b>Declaration of pecuniary or other interests</b> (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.</p>	
3	<p><b>Previous Minutes</b> (Agenda Item 3) Members accepted that the minutes were an appropriate reflection of what was discussed at the fourth CCC meeting. RW advised she had not received a copy of BM's presentation from the fourth meeting.</p>	DR to resend presentation to RW.
4	<p><b>Business Arising from the Minutes</b> (Agenda Item 4) DR advised members that actions 1 and 3 have been completed. In relation to action 2, a request had been previously made to provide the names of the first nations' representatives/groups involved in the archaeological assessment. BM informed the meeting that the information requested is of a sensitive nature and cannot be provided. The Aboriginal Heritage study was completed and provided to people for review and comment. Comments have been incorporated into the document which has now been finalised - but deemed not for public exhibition.</p>	
5	<p><b>Correspondence</b> (Agenda Item 5) No correspondence had been received since the last CCC meeting.</p>	
6	<p><b>EIS update (see attachment)</b> (Agenda Item 6)</p> <p>A copy of the draft EIS is anticipated to be submitted to the DPE shortly.</p> <p>BM's presentation covered an update on the proposal as well as the various impact assessment.</p> <p><b><u>Project update</u></b></p> <p>TA advised that he has held several discussions with Essential Energy in relation to the design of augmenting the nearby transmission lines to fit requirements for the solar farm and discussions are ongoing. Essential Energy have their own technical requirements regarding the transmission lines and further consultation will be carried out with landholders and stakeholders through the part 5 process. BM spoke to slides showing where the power lines will be located and advised there will be some power poles that need to be replaced. There will be approximately 47 new poles required between Raglan substation and solar farm, with a height of up to 20.7 metres (except where there are aviation issues). BM continued stating an aviation expert has been consulted in relation to the higher power lines with regards to the Bathurst Airport. In addition, the existing 11kV line will either be re-routed beneath a new 66kV line or by establishing new overhead or underground lines.</p>	DR to provide copy of BM's presentation to members.

JP asked if the transmission lines will look much the same as is, just higher and more lines. BM replied she expected that they should – but could not guarantee this as the proposal requires this work to still be completed.

BM observed that, as the works are to be undertaken by Essential Energy and aren't controlled by Elgin Energy, it was unclear whether Elgin had to cover the assessment of these works in the EIS or not. However, after consultation with DPE, it was decided to be proactive and undertake a high-level assessment of these specific works, thereby complying with the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). This is also consistent with DPE's cumulative impact assessment guidelines.

BM went on to describe how the impact on aviation, amenity, cultural heritage, and biodiversity were assessed. Generally speaking, the impact resulting from undertaking the connection with the transmission network was considered to be low.

Members were comfortable with how Elgin was managing these issues.

#### **Visual Amenity**

BM confirmed that there will be no views from the highway in the long term, with plantings. Under the draft guidelines, a surveyor would need to be consulted in the preparation of the photos. The specialist for the proposal, however, undertook her work in alignment with these requirements but the final guidelines have some aspects that could not be addressed. As much as possible the assessment has leaned into the changing expectations (which technically don't apply to this project yet).

The impact on the surrounding area is generally low, with the exception of Brewongle Lane where, without mitigation, the impact would be moderate. There was interest shown and questions asked about the vegetation screening that is proposed to be implemented to reduce impacts on nearby residents to a low level, particularly to the south of the proposed site. Much discussion then occurred about the impact, how it was being managed and members were shown photomontages of the area. JL asked a question about the vegetation plan and how it will be monitored and the vegetation maintained. BM responded that there would be a requirement for the to-be planted vegetation to be maintained until the life of the proposed infrastructure.

RW asked if the roads will be sealed. TA observed that Elgin Energy needs to speak with Bathurst Regional Council about this. Elgin also needs to speak with the DPE re the intersection with the highway. The traffic consultant has confirmed no sealing or intersection works are required to meet relevant guidelines however.

NS had several questions in relation to the number of dwellings located outside of the boundary line that could be affected. BM provided slides that cover this (slides 15-16)

**Biodiversity**

Most of the proposed site is grazed or cropped. BM advised that up to 0.65 hectares and six trees that are indicative of degraded White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland will be impacted. One species of bat and the superb parrot could still be located within the area. NS had questions about tree planting and species located around dams and watercourses. BM replied there was no native vegetation that had been mapped in those parts.

**Aboriginal Heritage**

BM advised that there had been two sites found: (i) a culturally modified Yellow Box tree that would be avoided by the proposal (ii) a quartz flake that, after discussion with First Nations' people, will be moved to an exclusion zone and protected from impact.

NS commented that it is important to have First Nations' people present who can speak for (local) country.

**Hydrology**

BM noted that, as discussed with the CCC previously, there is a need for the proposed infrastructure to avoid impacting the local hydrology. The proposal has been modelled to have a very minor to insignificant change to the maximum flood level and velocity.

NS asked about the modelling and assessment undertaken and how the area to be assessed was defined, taking into consideration any runoff issues for neighbouring residents. BM took on notice.

**Land Use Capability**

As this had previously been discussed with members, BM reminded those present that the soil is classed as predominantly Class 4 with some areas Class 5. This means that the proposal would be situated on soil considered to have moderate agricultural capability, restricting options for regular high-impact land uses such as cropping, high-intensity grazing and horticulture. In comparison, BM noted that the proposed solar farm's development would not be considered appropriate if it was sited in soils assessed as Class 1 – 3 (which the non ground truthed desktop sources show it to be in part).

Hence, the impact on agricultural land use is assessed as being negligible.

No further questions on land use capability.

BM to report on how study area was defined, considering nearby residents

<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>General Business</b> (Agenda Item 8)</p> <p>TA advised CCC members that Elgin will be hosting community engagement sessions on Thursday 20 October. The information session commences at 11.00 am, followed by a meeting with Glanmire Action Group.</p> <p>DR provided a summary of the next steps once the EIS is submitted to the DPE and placed on exhibition. BM stated that it is anticipated the EIS will go on exhibition in the next couple of weeks.</p> <p>DR continued. At the end of the exhibition period, the DPE will collate all the submissions for Elgin Energy to respond to. Once the Department receives that response, it will develop an Assessment report. At that point, the DPE could make a determination on the proposal. Or, the proposal could receive a determination by the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council submit an objection</li> <li>2. 50 individual objections are made against the proposal.</li> </ol> <p>If the IPC is to get involved, it has three months within which to review documentation, hold hearings and make a determination. Hence, it could be near mid-year 2023 before a determination may be made.</p> <p>NS advised Bathurst Regional Council will be writing to the DPE advising Council needs more time to prepare it's submission.</p> <p>Finally, DR also reminded members that the CCC guidelines are being revised. A copy of this email has been forwarded to CCC members. DR suggested that members could forward their comments to him by the beginning of November and he will submit collated comments to the Department. It is proposed in the draft guidelines that CCCs would only be instigated in the future for projects that have gained approval.</p>	<p>TA to send details of meetings to NS.</p> <p>TA and DR to keep in touch and provide updates to members.</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Next Meeting</b> (Agenda Item 9)</p> <p>No further meetings are anticipated to be held until if and when a determination is made. 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.</p>	

**Meeting closed at 7.55pm**

## Appendix 1: Actions to be completed

<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date Raised</b>
2	1	DR to resend a copy of BM's presentation to RW.	18 October 2022
2	2	DR to provide a copy of BM's presentation to CCC members.	18 October 2022
4	3	BM to report on how study area was defined, considering nearby residents	18 October 2022
5	4	TA to provide details of meetings to NS	18 October 2022
5	5	TA and DR to continue having discussions and provide updates to CCC members especially when the EIS goes on exhibition.	18 October 2022