

Bendenine Wind Farm

Meeting Minutes

Bowning and District Progress Association Meeting

Date: 16 July 2025

Time: 6.30 – 8:00 PM

Location: Bowning Community Hall

Attendees

Name	Position
Brad Croxford (BC) Ben Purcell (BP) Michael Sale (MS)	Senior Development Officer – Wind Prospect Managing Director – Wind Prospect Regional Development Manager – Wind Prospect
Cara Layton (CL)	Head of Planning, Environment and Stakeholder Relations – Mint Renewables
Rosie Pritchard (RP)	Community and Stakeholder Engagement – Premier Strategy
Michele Ferguson (MF) Meg Bowman (MB)	Senior Social Consultant – Umwelt Social Consultant – Umwelt
Various attendees	Near neighbours Binalong, Goondah, Kangaria and Bowning residents Other community members from surrounding areas including from Bookham, Boorowa, Yass and Harden. Gayleen Burley, CEO - Yass Valley Council Jasmin Jones, Mayor – Yass Valley Council Wendy Tuckerman, Member for Goulburn Yass Valley Councillors Ngunnawal elders Binalong and Bowning Community Action Group (BBCAG) representatives Binalong Progress Association representatives Bowing and District Progress Association representatives

Agenda

Agenda Item	Action/Notes
Welcome	Meeting commenced at approximately 6.30pm. Andrew Henderson, President of the Bowning and District Progress Association, welcomed attendees to the meeting and stepped through housekeeping for the evening. Andrew noted that Wind Prospect would provide a presentation followed by 50 minutes of questions and answers.

PO Box 110
Suite 10, 19-35 Gertrude Street
Fitzroy Victoria 3065

E: info@bendeninewindfarm.com.au

P: 1800 497 133

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Agenda Item	Action/Notes
Introductions – Ben Purcell	Presentation from Wind Prospect – should be read alongside these minutes
Scoping Phase Development – Michael Sale	Presentation from Wind Prospect – should be read alongside these minutes
Social Impact Assessment – Michele Ferguson	Presentation from Umwelt – should be read alongside these minutes
Site Selection and Indicative Turbine Layout, Community and Stakeholder Engagement - Brad Croxford	Presentation from Wind Prospect – should be read alongside these minutes

Action Items

Action Item	Responsible	Due By
Investigate and respond to concerns raised regarding: - potential for microplastic contamination from wind turbine blades and - the potential impact on livestock accreditation	Wind Prospect	15 August 2025
Provide any additional questions not asked on the evening for Wind Prospect to respond to	Bowling and District Progress Association	Ongoing

Discussion Notes

The following summarises important points made during the presentation.

Introductions

- Ngunnawal elders provided an Acknowledgement of Country
- BP provided an introduction of those in attendance from Wind Prospect, Mint Renewables, Umwelt and Premier Strategy. BP shared overview of Wind Prospect, including projects in development and operational across Australia.
- CL introduced Mint Renewables and its role in the proposed Project.

Scoping Phase Development

- MS discussed various teams working across development during the scoping phase and then provided detail around what is included in a Scoping Report, noting that the project is a State Significant Development. MS reiterated the planning process in NSW and associated timeframes. Details on the Visual Impact and Noise Assessments that are underway for Scoping was shared, including that the Project has applied a 3.5km setback from each turbine in residentially zoned

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areas of Binalong and Bowring. This is in addition to a minimum setback of at least 1.7km for all known neighbour dwellings with the current layout.

- MF spoke through in detail about the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) process in NSW, noting that the Umwelt team are currently preparing the Social Impact Scoping Report to gain an understanding of the existing community context where the Project is proposed. The SIA runs parallel to the EIS and focuses on the community baseline. It will cover eight categories including way of life, traffic, health and wellbeing, services, cohesion, visual/noise impact, safety and decision-making. MF noted that primary research will include direct interviews and surveys.

Site Selection and Indicative Turbine Layout

- BC provided overview of the NSW renewable energy context and the Bendenine Wind Farm's place in this, noting that not all projects are within the NSW Government's Renewable Energy Zones. A cumulative impact map showing projects in planning/operational in the Yass Valley, Upper Lachlan, Hilltops and Cootamundra-Gundagai Local Government Areas (LGAs) was shown and the proposed project in relation to these. BC shared detail around site selection considerations for the proposed Bendenine Wind Farm, including its strong and reliable wind resource, proximity to major transport/transmission routes and minimal impacts to the ongoing agricultural productivity. BC shared the indicative turbine layout, noting that this is a concept subject to further feedback and assessments.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- An overview of proposed engagement milestones for the Project was shared, noting that this is in line with industry best practice and follows the engagement requirements set out by the NSW Government. BC added that Wind Prospect will be guided by the community on preferred methods of engagement and communication.
- MS acknowledged that projects such as this can bring a range of views and emotions and that Wind Prospect is taking steps to address this, including development of a social wellbeing program. MS shared details regarding the benefit sharing program to be shaped by community input and feedback.

Question and Answer

The below provides a summary of questions asked by the community and responses provided by Wind Prospect.

Theme	Summary of question	Summary of response
Property values	Will you compensate near neighbours at least \$100 million for impacts on property values, visual amenity, and vibration?	Studies show wind farms are generally not a significant factor affecting land values. Property values are influenced by many factors. Wind Prospect requests that any information supporting the claimed \$100 million impact figure, including the calculations used, be provided so it could be reviewed and considered in the context of social impacts and benefit sharing.
Property values and community trust	From 20 years' real estate experience, wind farms only detract	Acknowledged experience and sought that the details of any local and specific

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Theme	Summary of question	Summary of response
	from property value. How will your towers add value to nearby properties?	examples or case studies be shared so they could be reviewed and considered. Reiterated that land values are complex and influenced by multiple factors; studies generally showing no significant impact from wind farms.
Fire risk and microplastics	How will you manage aerial firefighting around 260 m towers? What about microplastics from blades contaminating farmland?	Fire risk will be assessed by experts as part of the EIS. Many wind farms operate in bushfire-prone areas without creating additional hazard. Unaware of microplastics as an issue in wind energy, but open to reviewing any evidence that is shared.
Social Impact Scoping Report	Online survey inaccessible for many residents due to length, technical skills and poor internet. How can this appropriately inform impact assessments?	Acknowledged issues and apologised. Described steps taken to address issues with the survey including ensuring paper surveys are available locally. Offered alternative engagement methods, including phone interviews. Aim to improve processes for next phase of the EIS.
Social wellbeing	If you knew this project would cause even one person's mental health to collapse, would you still proceed?	Mental health is complex and influenced by many factors. Acknowledged feedback regarding pre-existing mental health issues and lack of support resources available. In response to community feedback, an initiative that provides mental health support will be launched in the near future.
Grid connection	Where will the transmission line connect, and who will install it?	Connection point not yet confirmed. Multiple options under investigation.
Foreign investment	Why should we support this when profits go to billionaires and foreign investors?	Transition from coal requires new generation, with wind and solar technologies being the cheapest forms of new electricity generation. Large-scale infrastructure projects require significant capital, and foreign investment is required to fund some of the new generation projects.
Local government policy	Why pursue this when local council policy states the community has already "done its heavy lifting" with existing renewable projects?	Acknowledged the concern however noted that land zoning allows for renewable energy development to be explored in this area and that state planning authorities ultimately decide on state significant projects. The intent is to

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Theme	Summary of question	Summary of response
		minimise impacts where possible and work with Council to address issues, including cumulative impacts.
Cumulative impacts	Will cumulative impacts from multiple projects in the region be assessed?	Yes. Cumulative impacts are considered in social and environmental impact assessments as part of the EIS. They are assessed across environmental, visual and other relevant impact areas.
Solar v wind turbines	Why wind turbines instead of solar panels?	A reliable energy supply requires a mix of technologies for diversity and stability; solar alone cannot ensure reliability without other technologies including wind and storage. Solar and wind often complement each other as they don't always generate electricity at the same time.
Communications	Will turbines affect internet or TV reception?	Communications impact assessment will be undertaken; baseline and post-construction monitoring will be used to identify and address issues.
Renewable energy zones	Why not move the project into the REZ instead of outside it?	REZs have been developed primarily to support planning around new infrastructure and to coordinate regional benefits. They have never intended to be the only location for renewable energy projects and projects can therefore be developed both inside and outside REZs. The siting of renewable energy projects considers many factors, including transmission access and environmental constraints.
Noise monitoring	Will you commit to post-construction noise monitoring at Bango Wind Farm to validate your modelling?	No. Bango is no longer owned or operated by Wind Prospect. Will comply with any post-construction noise monitoring requirements for this project.
Community opposition	If the directly impacted community overwhelmingly rejects the project, will you walk away?	It is unlikely that Wind Prospect and Mint are going to walk away from the project at this stage. The aim is to engage, understand issues, and minimise impacts as much as possible. It will be up to the planning authorities to determine whether the benefits outweigh the impacts and whether the impacts are acceptable.

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Theme	Summary of question	Summary of response
Biodiversity	How will biodiversity impacts, especially to threatened species like the Wedgetail Eagle (WTE), be addressed?	Biodiversity assessments will be extensive and may take years. Impacts to biodiversity, include Wedgetail Eagles, will be avoided and minimised where possible and mitigation measures developed as part of the EIS.
Community engagement	Why was the advertised drop-in session at Café on Queen unattended?	Apologised; acknowledged error and said there was no intent to mislead. <i>NB: Further clarification was provided after the meeting that sessions were advertised in the newsletter and online as 1:1 meetings requiring bookings. As no bookings were received, no one was in attendance.</i>
Livestock	What assurances can you give that livestock produce will not be contaminated, affecting marketability, considering the new addition to the National Vendor Declaration which requires declaration that livestock graze near renewable infrastructure such as wind turbines, solar panels, and transformers?	Will investigate; took details as an action item.
Land use	How much land will be cleared for the project?	Wind farms typically use only 2-3% of the project area, allowing renewable energy infrastructure and agricultural practices to operate side by side.
Biodiversity	How do you protect the environment beyond buying biodiversity credits?	Dependent on the type of species. Measures can include habitat buffers and avoidance of sensitive areas.
Traffic management	What will you do about safety concerns for school buses during construction?	Traffic management plans will address safety, with construction traffic avoiding school bus times.
Access and planning	When will we know turbine locations, access points, and transmission line routes? Said the project has caused personal stress and mental health impacts. Property views and building plans affected after decades of investment. Asked for certainty on access routes.	WP said these details are not yet finalised and will be confirmed during the EIS process. Noted that the project is in an early stage of development and will take significant time to progress. The requested details will be shared with communities when available.

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Property values	Will turbines prevent planned subdivisions and housing developments?	Reiterated studies on property values.
Community opposition	Will you stop “dancing around” questions and state what it would take for you to walk away?	Very unlikely to walk away at this stage; Wind Prospect is committed to meaningful engagement and planning the project to avoid and minimise impacts.
Cultural heritage	Will you consider impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage and habitats?	Yes. Cultural heritage and biodiversity impacts will be assessed with the intent to avoid and minimise disturbance.
Community opposition	If the community and First Nations groups overwhelmingly oppose the project, will you walk away?	Unlikely to walk away; will continue engagement and plan effectively by avoiding and minimising impacts where possible.

Meeting closed at approximately 8.30pm

Opportunity for informal discussions until 9:30 pm

Attachments to minutes:

- PowerPoint Presentation
- Indicative turbine layout

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