

Collector Wind Farm Project

Community Open House – Questions and Answers

Transfield Services hosted a Community Open House at Collector on Thursday 14 October to provide the community with information on the proposed Collector Wind Farm project and seek community views on the proposal. Over 100 community members attended the Open House and various views were expressed and questions asked. The community feedback received will be used by Transfield Services to guide the planning approval and wind farm design.

Below is a summary of the questions recorded at the Open House and from individual enquiries. Each question has our response. Should you require further detail on any of these matters, or have additional questions, please don't hesitate to contact Transfield Services' Project Manager, Nick Valentine, on 02 9963 9924 or by email at valentinen@transfieldservices.com.

Will aviation obstacle lighting (red lights) be required at the Collector Wind Farm?

Transfield Services does not anticipate installing aviation obstacle lighting at the Collector Wind Farm. Recent consultation with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), together with recent developments at the Cullerin Wind Farm, suggest that this position is reasonable.

Does Transfield Services propose to establish a community fund and how would this be administered?

Transfield Services proposes to establish a community investment fund to provide assistance to community facilities and services in the locality of the wind farm. The design and administration structure of such a fund is currently being developed, with further detail to be provided in the next issue of our community newsletter.

What is the proposed construction access route to the wind farm site and how will damage to local roads be repaired?

A traffic and transport assessment is currently being undertaken to examine potential access routes to the wind farm site. Preliminary assessments indicate that the site could be safely accessed directly from the Hume Highway near Lerida South Road. Entering and exiting the site from this point would avoid the need to use local roads and will minimise the construction phase impacts on nearby residents.

Transfield Services priority is to avoid using local roads due to the potential for damage, disturbance to residents and local traffic impacts. Planning approval conditions for the project will require Transfield Services to repair any damage caused to local roads during the construction phase.

What makes up the \$400 million capital cost of the wind farm?

Approximately 60% of the capital cost of a wind farm is associated with the purchase of wind turbines. At present there are no wind turbine manufacturers in Australia, meaning that these components would need to be sourced overseas. A significant proportion of the capital cost - approximately 25%, or \$100 million - is construction activities (i.e. access track construction, foundations, cable installation etc.). It is this component that provides opportunities for local and regional suppliers and businesses. Approximately 120 full-time jobs are expected to be created during the two-year construction phase, making a substantial contribution to the local economy.

Further detail on the community and economic benefits of the Collector Wind Farm will be provided in Issue 2 of our community newsletter.

How will Transfield Services address the requirements of the Upper Lachlan Shire Council Wind Farms Development Control Plan (DCP)?

The provisions of the Wind Farms DCP will be addressed in the environmental assessment document to be submitted to the NSW Department of Planning.

How long will it take to offset the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the construction of the wind farm?

The greenhouse gas emissions generated during the manufacture, construction, operation and decommissioning phases (including transport of components, production of concrete and steel etc.) would be offset in less than 9 months of wind farm operation.

How will the visual impact of the wind farm be assessed and what is the cumulative impact associated with the Cullerin project?

Transfield Services will be undertaking a comprehensive visual assessment of the proposal. This will include a landscape character assessment, consideration of the visual impact of the wind farm on the local landscape, and assessment of the cumulative visual impacts. A series of photomontages will be prepared, simulating the appearance of the wind farm from various viewpoints.

Will construction and maintenance workers be employed from the local area?

The Collector project would generate employment in the local area during construction and operation. Workers required for the project would include plant operators, truck drivers, mechanics, welders, fencers, electricians, labourers and other trades typically used in civil construction. It is estimated that the onsite workforce during the construction phase would peak at around 120 employees.

Transfield Services will look to recruit skilled construction and maintenance workers from the local area and involve local contractors and suppliers in the construction phase of the development.

Will property values decrease as a result of the wind farm?

A recent study by the NSW Valuer General into the impacts of wind farms on property values concluded that in most cases wind farms do not appear to negatively affect property value.

Who would be responsible for decommissioning the wind farm at the end of its operating life?

Decommissioning of the wind farm at the end of its operating life would be the responsibility of the wind farm owner. Current development approval conditions in NSW require that a wind farm site is returned to its pre-development condition within 12 months of decommissioning. Furthermore, conditions in lease agreements between the proponent and landowners require that all above-ground infrastructure be removed at the end of the lease.



At what stage in the NSW Government planning approval process is the project at?

The project is currently at the beginning of the planning approval process. Transfield Services is aiming to submit its planning application to the NSW Department of Planning before Christmas. Following submission there are a number of stages including public exhibition, response to public comments on the proposal and assessment by the Department of Planning. The planning process concludes with a decision by the Minister for Planning to approve the project or otherwise.

When will the planning application be submitted to the Department of Planning and when will the documents be made available to the public?

Transfield Services proposes to submit the planning application prior to Christmas. Allowing for the Department's review processes, the documents are expected to be available for public comment in the first quarter of 2011.

Transfield Services will advise the community when the planning documents become available.

Will there be ongoing consultation with the community and will there be another Community Open House?

Transfield Services will maintain its community and stakeholder engagement program throughout the development and operation phases of the project. This will include: periodic newsletters at project milestones; posting of information on the Transfield Services wind farms website (windfarms.net.au); and ongoing dialogue with individual stakeholders. A further Community Open House is proposed in early 2011 prior to the public exhibition of the planning application documents. We are committed to being open and transparent throughout this process.

Will financial compensation be provided to residents within a 5km radius of the wind farm?

No direct financial compensation to individuals is proposed. Transfield Services will establish a community investment fund, allowing a share of the wind farm revenue to be directed toward community projects.

Does Transfield Services propose to acquire any properties affected by noise and other impacts?

Transfield Services does not anticipate acquiring any properties. The wind farm layout will be designed to meet current NSW Government noise guidelines at all neighbouring residences. Similarly, the impact of the proposal on other environmental factors will be assessed.

What studies are being conducted into the health and social impacts on the community?

A recent review by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) concluded that there is no evidence wind turbines impact the health of nearby residents. The World Health Organisation (WHO) also argues that wind power represents one of the most benign of all forms of electrical generation (alongside other renewable technologies) in terms of direct and indirect health effects. Nevertheless, Transfield Services will undertake a review of current studies into the health impacts of wind farms as part of the environmental assessment.

The socio-economic impacts of the proposal on the local community will also be considered in the environmental assessment.

How will noise levels be monitored during the operational phase of the wind farm and what enforcement is there if levels are exceeded?

The Department of Planning's conditions of approval for the development would require preparation of a Noise Compliance Plan for the operational phase of the project. This would require monitoring of noise levels at nearby residences in the first three months of operation. If noise limits are exceeded, Transfield Services would be required to take steps to reduce noise levels to comply with the limits. If noise compliance cannot be achieved in a reasonable timeframe, then the offending turbines would be turned off.

Why has the region around Collector been targeted for wind power development?

The Collector area falls within the NSW/ACT Border Region Renewable Energy Precinct, one of six such precincts identified by the NSW Government. These precincts have been established in areas of the state with the best-known wind resources. The Collector site is also very close to the electricity grid (limiting the need for transmission lines) and has relatively low environmental constraints.

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Will the project proceed if there is strong community opposition?

Transfield Services has commissioned a community attitudes survey for the Collector project. The outcomes of this survey, together with feedback received at the Community Open House and from other correspondence, will be reviewed and documented in the environmental assessment. The Department of Planning will then consider these findings, together with the comments received on the planning documents, before making a decision on whether the project will proceed.

The wind farm has the potential to supply electricity equivalent to the needs of 80,000 NSW homes. Is this amount of electricity produced at all times?

The figure of 80,000 homes is an average figure based on the expected annual energy generated by the wind farm. Energy generation has been calculated using the data gathered from wind monitoring at the site. When wind speeds are too low to generate energy (approximately 5% of the time) no power would be supplied to the grid. On the other hand, when wind speeds allow maximum generation (approximately 10% of the time) the equivalent of approximately 250,000 homes could be supplied.

What is the required separation distance between the wind turbine towers?

The spacing between wind turbines is based on the size of the towers and the wind conditions at the site. For the towers under consideration at Collector a separation distance of between 270 and 450 metres will be required.

What is the fire risk associated with wind turbines?

There have been a small number of wind turbine fires in Australia; however the overall risk is low according to organisations such as the Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA). The low fire risk is due to a number of factors:

- Each wind turbine is connected to a control centre which will shut down the turbines if there is a risk of overheating;
- Wind turbines are a passive technology and have few flammable materials;
- Although wind turbines attract lightning, the built-in lightning protection systems safely dissipate the electricity to the ground; and
- Wind turbines are located in cleared areas, limiting the chance of fires spreading if they do occur.

Transfield Services is currently looking at new and innovative ways to reduce this risk, including investigating opportunities for installing automatic fire extinguishers within each turbine housing.

Where can I get further information about the project?

Should you have specific queries about the project, please contact Transfield Services' Project Manager, Nick Valentine, on 02 9963 9924 or by email at: valentinen@transfieldservices.com.

Transfield Services will be issuing a project newsletter (Issue 2) prior to Christmas, with a focus on the community benefits of the wind farm and the planning process, including details on the public comment arrangements. In addition, all published material will be available on Transfield Services' wind farm website – windfarms.net.au.

Wind Farm Workshop

The NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water will be hosting a landholder wind farm workshop in Yass on Monday 6 December 2010. This one-day workshop is open to all those interested in wind farms and will be held at the Yass Soldiers Club Auditorium from 9.00am to 4.00pm. Further details can be obtained by emailing the Department's representative at andy.hughes@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Apology

Transfield Services wishes to extend an apology to the Edwards family for including their property "Bohara" on the wind farm layout plan tabled at the Open House without their permission. Transfield Services regrets any distress to the Edwards caused by this oversight.

