

## Minutes

### Mt Fyans Wind Farm Community Engagement Committee

Meeting date Monday 10 May 2021

Meeting time and location 7pm, at the Council office, Mortlake

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#### 1. Welcome and introductions

Cr Meade welcome new community representative Pam Walmsley to the Committee.

#### 2. Attendees

Cr Daniel Meade (Chair)

Cr Jim Doukas

Lisa Parker, Community Representative

Jacinta Jubb, Community Representative

Kelvin Goodall, Community Representative

Wendy Bickley, Community Representative

Catherine Doulis, Community Representative

Pam Walmsley, Community Representative

Giles Rinckes, Project Director, Mt Fyans Wind Farm

Vicki Askew-Thornton, Moyne Shire (non-member)

#### 3. Apologies

Cr Damian Gleeson

Tanya Waterson, Community and Stakeholder Engagement, Mt Fyans Wind Farm

#### 4. Declarations of interest

Pam Walmsley declared a perceived conflict of interest, as she is a host landholder.
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#### 5. Minutes of previous meeting

Moved by Lisa Parker, seconded by Cr Doukas that the minutes of the CEC meeting held on 18 February 2021 be accepted. **CARRIED**

Cr Doukas raised whether CEC meetings could be audio-recorded. Following discussion, the Committee did not support this idea. Crs Meade and Doukas will discuss this matter with Council, and Council will enquire with its Governance department.

#### 6. Business arising from previous minutes

**6.1** Council has not received a response from the Minister for Planning regarding the letters that were received by Council from members of the public at the December 2020 Council meeting, which it referred to the Minister.

**6.2** Cr Gleeson requested that MFWF provide the CEC with a response to Lisa Parkers questions on notice submitted on 18 February 2021:

- *If the acoustician (MDA) are found to be guilty in a law of court for falsifying reports - then what happens to the host's indemnity against neighbours suing. If the acousticians lose their professional indemnity insurance - how does this affect the permit/ and or host family?*

Response: The owner of the wind farm is required to ensure the wind farm complies with the noise standard requirements of the permit and is required to conduct post-construction noise testing. The post-construction noise report must be accompanied by an environmental audit report from an EPA-appointed auditor, which verifies that the post-construction noise report was conducted in accordance with the New Zealand standard.

- *Brolga collision risk Modelling(CRM) why has this not yet been provided?*

Response: Detailed brolga research over the last decade has shown only small brolga numbers in and around the project site. These small brolga numbers mean there is insufficient base data to make an accurate prediction. MFWF is currently making a CRM based on a number of assumptions and this will be provided as a requirement of the planning process.

- *In 2018 why would Carmen Whittey at Mt Fyans refuse to answer questions and include Brolga nest sites? Even initially refusing to communicate.*

Response: In early 2018 there was correspondence between a neighbour and Carmen, from Hydro Tasmania, regarding brolga nests. The area the neighbour identified was specifically examined and written up in the brolga report. Earlier this year it was raised with us that Carmen had not been responding to emails. Carmen left Hydro Tasmania in May 2018 and as such her email address became defunct. The sender should have received a message that the email address no longer exists.

- *Why is the Biosis Data only for their breeding season and not the hatching and raising?*

Response: Where possible (based upon the time within the breeding season that the breeding pair was identified) MFWF documented home ranges from when a nest was identified until fledging, which for some pairs included the period above described as 'hatching and raising'.

- *Have Mt Fyans looked at the Sth West Victoria Brolga Report*

Response: MFWF is aware of this report and it is included as one of many reference documents that it has drawn material from in the process of putting together the brolga reports.

- *A few meetings ago I brought up about community consultation in particular in my area - I was going to be given road names of the roads around us that had consultation.*

Response: There was consultation with landowners of properties along South Road, North Road, Nine Mile Lane, Six Mile Lane, Woorndoo-Darlington Road, Mortlake-Ararat Road and others.

- *Has MFWF yet consulted with David Sweatman about all of his years of hard work with the Brolgas in our area?*

Response: MFWF understands that David Sweatman was employed by Trustpower/Tilt Renewables to undertake surveys for brolga nests and flocking sites as part of the work that was done for the Dundonnell Wind Farm. Tilt Renewables has publicly published the results of the surveys undertaken by David and others as part of the planning reports prepared for the project. There

was clear overlap in the surveys undertaken by DDWF and MFWF and hence broilga data was shared between the two companies. Many of the Broilga observations captured by David were also included in data that BLA provided to DELWP which was put into the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas. MFWF has also used this data. We have a range of additional flocking survey information from Tilt Renewables that includes surveys undertaken by David.

**6.3** MFWF advised that following the previous CEC meeting, it received a copy of the letters from Council. There were 267 letters from 175 households.

On 31 April MFWF replied to all 267 letters.

MFWF reviewed the comments both in the template form that was provided and also some additional comments that were hand written on the letters. MFWF referred to the letters to inform the content of its Frequently Asked Questions document which was recently sent to all Councillors, key council staff and all landholders within 10 kilometres of the project boundary.

## 7. Correspondence Incoming

- Via email – MFWF Frequently Asked Questions document. Cr Doukas asked why photos from other locations as well as the main street weren't included in the document. MFWF responded that montages from other viewpoints are on display at the project shopfront. MFWF will bring copies of the visual montages to the next CEC meeting.
- Hard copies of the Aerial Broilga Report were tabled by MFWF. **(Attachment 1)**

The November 2020 surveys followed the same methods as the 2009, 2014 and 2019 surveys (Biosis 2019) and were consistent with the methods outlined in the *Interim guidelines for the assessment, avoidance, mitigation and offsetting of potential wind farm impacts on the Victorian Broilga population 2011* (DSE 2012).

The survey team were specifically requested to note the presence of broilga nests and free-ranging broilga in the South Road/North Road areas and none were observed.

Three sites were observed to be nesting sites, all at greater than 4km from the closest turbine to each of those nesting sites.

## 8. Correspondence Outgoing

Nil.

## 9. Reports:

### 9.1 Project update – Mt Fyans Wind Farm (MFWF)

The project aims to submit the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act (EPBC) Assessment Documentation to DELWP and the federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) by the end of May. DELWP will make an assessment of the surveys and measures to protect 22 identified species and determine if MFWF have addressed the matters sufficiently to then proceed to the planning stage. MFWF will submit an amended planning application that builds on and improves the planning application that was submitted in late 2019.

## 9.2 Community Representatives

Summary of responses to questions from Community Representatives:

Responses from MFWF re avifauna:

- Brolga is not listed in the EPBC Act.
- The Wedge Tailed Eagle is not a listed species in Victoria, therefore was not required to be included in the studies.
- Woolnorth Renewables is 75% owned by China Energy, and 25% owned by Hydro Tasmania.
- In regard to what would happen when the wind farm reached 20-25 years old:  
MFWF is aware of the current lack of government regulations around decommissioning. MFWF is renegotiating its participating landholder agreements and putting more detail into the section on decommissioning.
- The need for turbine aviation lighting is determined by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).
- The closest turbine to the residential zone of Mortlake is 4.8km which is broadly in line with a 2019 recommendation from the National Wind Farm Commissioner.

Responses from MFWF re Re-Alliance's proposed joint community fund:

The idea was proposed by former Councillor, Colin Ryan in 2019.

Discussions between wind farm companies since then is that locally targeted funding programs would still be made available by them, in addition to any proposed Moyne-wide or joint fund.

The companies considered Re-Alliance as an option to draft a model for a proposed joint fund. Re-Alliance are proposing that the Bendigo Bank could be utilised to administer any such fund.

The proposal is currently being discussed between wind farm companies.

It would be application-based, but targeted towards larger projects that would provide benefit across the Shire.

The proposed fund has not commenced.

The 'neighbour benefit program' would be totally separate from any community fund.

Responses from Council:

- Council was briefed by Re-Alliance at a workshop in March.  
Council has not entered into any agreement with Re-Alliance.
- Lisa Parker read out a letter submitted by a member of the public to Council's complaints handling process public comment period.
- Pam Walmsley noted there are community members that are supportive of renewable energy and the wind farm, but perhaps are not willing to state their support publicly.

### 9.3 Council

- A review of Council's CECs will soon be undertaken.
- Prior to the most recent Mortlake South Wind Farm CEC meeting, Cr Doukas received a request from Re--Alliance to attend that meeting as a guest.

## 10. General Business

**10.1** Lisa Parker asked if a local landholder could make a presentation on brologa at the next meeting, as a guest.  
The Committee discussed this request and decided to decline the offer.

**10.2** Council will ask DELWP if they could attend a CEC meeting as a guest.

## 11. Date of next CEC meeting

Monday 9 August, 7pm at Mortlake

Confirmed this ..... / ..... / .....

Chair .....

**Minutes are to be registered in Moyne Shire's electronic document management system by the committee reporting officer immediately following the Minutes' confirmation and signing.**

## Attachment 1



16 February 2021

Mr Giles Rinckes  
Project Director  
Mt Fyans Wind Farm  
Woolnorth Renewables  
Level 1, 59 Cameron Street  
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Dear Giles

### **Aerial Surveys for Brolga at Mount Fyans Wind Farm, November 2020**

**Our ref. matter 34339**

Biosis was commissioned by Woolnorth Renewables to undertake an aerial survey for Brolga *Antigone rubicunda* at the Mount Fyans wind farm study area. The purpose of the aerial survey was to re-confirm previously known breeding sites and identify any new breeding sites within and adjacent to (within 3 kilometres of), the proposed wind farm. Aerial surveys have also been carried out across the study area in 2009 and 2014, 2019 and the November 2020 survey builds on that dataset and is an addendum to the Brolga assessment report prepared for Hydro Tasmania (Biosis 2019).

Aerial surveys are the most appropriate, efficient and rigorous method to rapidly document Brolga occurrence over large areas (Biosis 2019). The November 2020 surveys followed the same methods as the 2009, 2014 and 2019 surveys (Biosis 2019) and were consistent with the methods outlined in the *Interim guidelines for the assessment, avoidance, mitigation and offsetting of potential wind farm impacts on the Victorian Brolga population 2011* (DSE 2012). For a detailed description of aerial Brolga survey methodology and its limitations, see Wilson and Organ (2015).

On 25 and 26 November 2020, a Cessna 182 over-wing airplane with retractable undercarriage was used to fly east-west/west-east transects across the Mount Fyans study area and the 3 kilometre buffer. Both plane and pilot (Jon Western) were supplied by AeroVision, Ballarat. Transects were spaced 500 metres apart from north to south. Flight speed was kept as slow as possible at 60-70 knots, while altitude was also kept as low as safely possible at 500 ft. The plane followed pre-determined transects loaded into its on-board GPS system. Two observers were used, one on the front right side, the other on the rear left side. Visual observations, including the location of all Brolgas seen, were recorded on a GIS enabled tablet. This method required quick response from the observer to obtain as accurate a location as possible. Binoculars (10 x 42) were used to aid in identification. As required, the aircraft regularly broke from the transect route and circled over a wetland and/or Brolga sighting to permit additional observations prior to resuming transect flight.

The observers undertaking the survey were Mark Venosta (Team Leader - Zoology), Matt Gibson (Senior Consultant Ecologist, Day 1) and Ian Smales (Principal Zoologist, Day 2).

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The results of the November survey, together with the results of the previous surveys are shown in Figure 1. During the 2020 survey, Five (5) Brolgas were observed at three locations, with all being located outside of the wind farm study area, with one recorded within the 3 kilometre study area buffer. All were breeding observations. One observation was of a single bird sitting on a nest (a second adult was not observed). The single bird sitting on a nest was at a location where the species had not been recorded in previous aerial surveys East of Eight Mile Ln, just outside of the 3 kilometre search buffer (Figure 1). The other observations were of adult pairs. With each pair, one adult was observed sitting on a nest with the other adult nearby. These pairs were in wetlands at the Mortlake Common and on the Woorndoo-Dundonnell Rd, where the species has been recorded in previous aerial surveys. In respect of the distance from each of these breeding sites to the nearest proposed turbine:

- Woorndoo-Dundonnell Rd: 4.3 kilometres
- Mortlake Common: 5.0 kilometres
- East of Eight Mile Lane: 4.4 kilometres

None of the sites detected during the aerial survey were ground-truthed as they were confidently assigned as previous breeding sites and/or current breeding sites and their location accurately recorded on a hand-held GPS enabled tablet.

Please contact me if you have any enquiries.

Yours sincerely



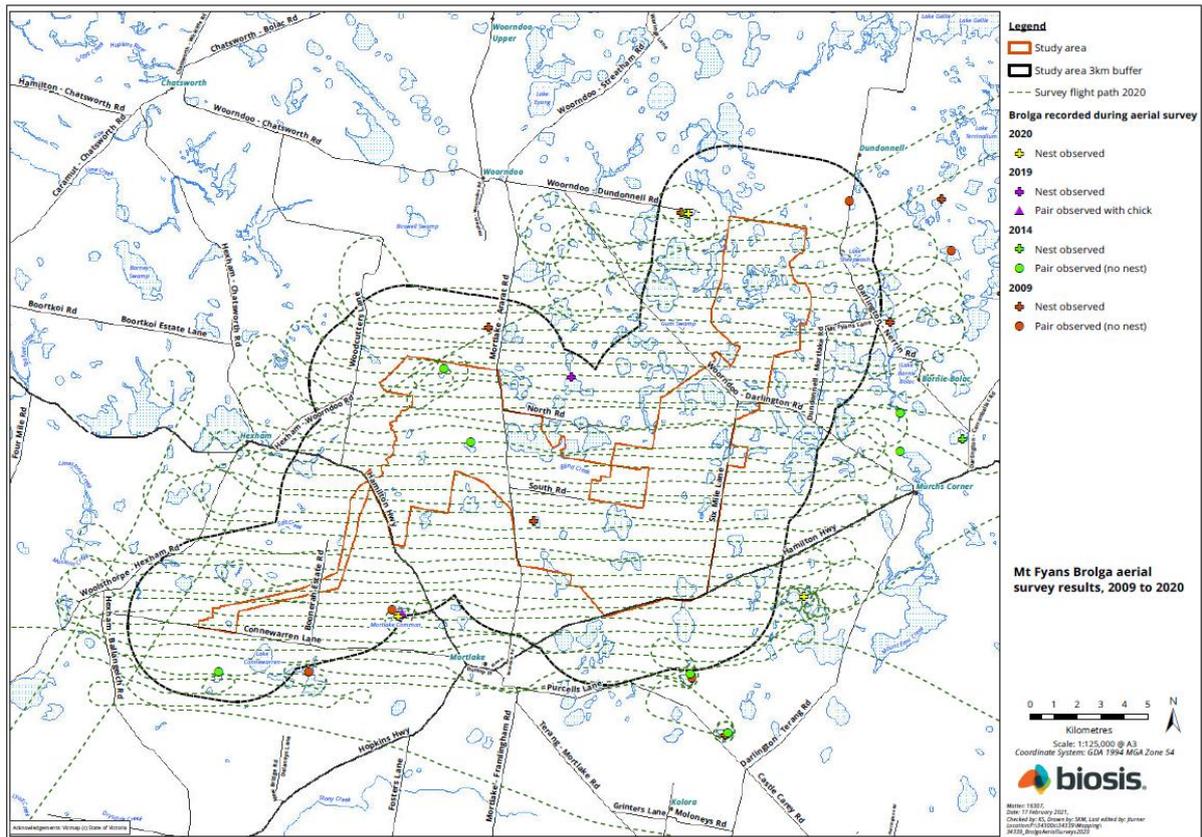
Mark Venosta  
Team Leader - Zoology

## References

Biosis 2019. Mount Fyans Wind Farm: Brolga Assessment. Report for Hydro Tasmania. Authors: Sofo, K. & Venosta, M. Biosis Pty Ltd, Melbourne. Project no. 16307.

DSE 2012. *Interim guidelines for the assessment, avoidance, mitigation and offsetting of potential wind farm impacts on the Victorian Brolga population 2011 (revised)*. Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne.

Wilson, D. and Organ, A. 2015. The Use of Aerial Surveys for the Detection of the Brolga *Grus rubicunda* Through South-West Victoria: Key Considerations for the Wind Industry in Wind and Wildlife: Proceedings from the Conference on Wind Energy and Wildlife Impacts, October 2012, Melbourne, Australia (pp.59-68).



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