

Stockyard Hill Wind Farm



# Stockyard Hill Wind Farm Pty Ltd

## Stakeholder and Community Consultation Report

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## 1. Summary

### 1.1 Introduction

This report summarises the community consultation process that was conducted by Stockyard Hill Wind Farm Pty Ltd (SHWF P/L), with assistance from Socom Pty Ltd, for the proposed Stockyard Hill Wind Farm project. 242 wind turbine generators are proposed for the wind farm, to be located between the towns of Beaufort and Skipton, two hours west of Melbourne.

### 1.2 Description of Process

Consultation for the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm was guided by a community consultation strategy (refer to Appendix 1) that was devised at the beginning of the process. The strategy was refined and expanded to incorporate feedback and additional information as the project proceeded.

The strategy contained a number of specific aims which the process attempted to achieve. This included informing a wide range of stakeholders at various stages of the project on a variety of issues, such as facts about wind energy, notification of public events and general updates on the project. It also included a plan to contact every resident within 5 km of the project.

This report demonstrates how SHWF P/L was able to meet the aims of the strategy and includes examples which illustrate how the consultation strategy was implemented. These include details of information days, examples of newsletters and a list of registers consisting of details of stakeholders, communications and actions. This report addresses consultation activities undertaken for the proposed wind farm and associated elements, including the proposed terminal station and 132 kV power lines.

### 1.3 Effectiveness

The consultation process was effective in that it achieved the aims established in the strategy. These were:

- To achieve community support and consent for the development and construction of the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm.
- To inform the community and provide a mechanism for immediate feedback which could be used to update the consultation process and/or inform the wind farm layout.

The report discusses how a variety of communication tools were used to capture the widest possible audience and communicated effectively with the majority of the population in the area. This included the printed and broadcast media as well as information days, personal visits and newsletters. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is some opposition to the project, the majority of residents were supportive.



The feedback mechanisms developed from the consultation process were effective in refining the consultation strategy and also the wind farm layout itself.

#### **1.4 Community Feedback**

A variety of feedback techniques were used to record details of suggestions and opinions of local residents. The report lists these and other community concerns that have been documented over the consultation process and the response to these items, including any actions taken as a result.



## 2. Contents

<b>1. Summary</b> .....	<b>i</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	i
1.2 Description of Process .....	i
1.3 Effectiveness.....	i
1.4 Community Feedback .....	ii
<b>2. Contents</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>3. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
3.1 Situation Analysis.....	1
3.2 Project Details .....	1
3.3 Background .....	1
3.4 About the Author .....	2
<b>4. The Strategy – Wind Farm</b> .....	<b>3</b>
4.1 Aims .....	3
4.2 Stakeholder Analysis.....	3
4.3 Best Practice Guidelines .....	3
4.4 Engagement Techniques .....	4
<b>5. Results</b> .....	<b>5</b>
5.1 Stakeholder Registers and Documentation.....	5
<b>5.1.1</b> Involvement Register .....	5
<b>5.1.2</b> Stakeholder Register.....	5
<b>5.1.3</b> Local Tradespeople Register .....	8
<b>5.1.4</b> Neighbour Register .....	8
<b>5.1.5</b> Other registers .....	8
5.2 Timeline of Significant Consultation Events .....	8
5.3 Details of Consultation Events .....	11
<b>5.3.1</b> Meetings with Government Departments and Other Organisations.....	11
<b>5.3.2</b> Regular Shire Council Briefings .....	11
<b>5.3.3</b> Dealings with local Guardians Members.....	11
<b>5.3.4</b> Personal Visits .....	11



<b>5.3.5</b>	Information Days .....	12
1.	Introductory Information Day.....	12
2.	Community Barbecue .....	13
3.	Referral Lodgement Information Day.....	13
<b>5.3.6</b>	One-on-one Meetings .....	13
<b>5.3.7</b>	Landowner Feedback Program.....	14
<b>5.3.8</b>	Community Reference Group .....	14
<b>5.3.9</b>	Site Visit .....	14
<b>5.4</b>	Communications and Media.....	14
<b>5.4.1</b>	Communication Protocol.....	14
<b>5.4.2</b>	Website Information .....	15
<b>5.4.3</b>	Newsletters and Flyers.....	15
<b>5.4.4</b>	Suggestion Boxes .....	15
<b>5.4.5</b>	Media Presence .....	16
	Letters to the Editor.....	16
	Advertisements .....	16
	Media Releases and Interviews.....	16
	Radio Interviews .....	16
<b>5.5</b>	Feedback and Community Concerns.....	16
<b>5.5.1</b>	Visual Amenity .....	17
<b>5.5.2</b>	Property Devaluation.....	18
<b>5.5.3</b>	Brolga.....	18
<b>5.5.4</b>	Noise .....	18
<b>5.5.5</b>	Community Impacts .....	19
<b>5.5.6</b>	Community Fund Recipients.....	19
<b>5.5.7</b>	Landscape Values.....	19
<b>5.5.8</b>	Powerlines.....	20
<b>5.5.9</b>	Other Issues.....	20
<b>6.</b>	<b>The Strategy - Terminal Station.....</b>	<b>21</b>
6.1	Project Details .....	21



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6.2	Assessment of Issues .....	21
6.3	Stakeholder Identification .....	21
6.4	Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan .....	22
6.5	Summary of Consultation Events and outcomes .....	23
<b>7.</b>	<b>The Strategy – 132 kV powerline route .....</b>	<b>25</b>
7.1	Project Details .....	25
7.2	Assessment of Issues .....	25
7.3	Stakeholder Identification .....	25
7.4	Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan .....	26
7.5	Summary of Consultation Events and Outcomes.....	27
<b>8.</b>	<b>Next Steps.....</b>	<b>29</b>
8.1	Continuing Consultation .....	29
<b>9.</b>	<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>33</b>



### **3. Introduction**

#### **3.1 Situation Analysis**

As part of Victoria's Renewable Energy Action Plan, released in July 2006, the Victorian Government stated that by 2016, at least 10 per cent of the State's electricity would be provided by renewable energy sources. It further committed to facilitating the development of up to 1000 MW of this energy from wind. Since then, the Federal Labor Government has committed to 20 per cent renewable energy by 2020.

#### **3.2 Project Details**

The proposed location for the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm development is situated between the towns of Beaufort and Skipton, within the boundaries of the Pyrenees Shire Council. It would cover an area of approximately 250 km<sup>2</sup> and would generate approximately 1,272 GWh of electricity per year, based on an estimated capacity factor of 30%.

Beaufort has a population of 1100, Skipton has about 500 and the Pyrenees Shire municipality has about 7000. The towns receive the majority of their economic revenue through tourism and agriculture.

Due to the low population density of the area, the majority of the residential houses in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm are occupied by participating landowners. The surrounding land, currently used for agricultural purposes, is predominantly clear of vegetation and is reliably windy.

#### **3.3 Background**

Stockyard Hill Wind Farm Pty Ltd (SHWF) a subsidiary of Wind Power Pty Ltd, both of which are wholly owned subsidiaries of Origin Energy Wind Holdings Pty Ltd, which is in turn a member of the publicly listed Origin Energy group of companies first approached the local community in 2007 and soon after engaged Socom Pty Ltd to prepare a community consultation strategy. Additional resources enabled SHWF P/L to assume the implementation of the strategy. Socom has retained an involvement in the project by offering counsel to SHWF P/L in updating and improving the strategy as the project progressed.

Consultation in this report applies to government and non-government agencies, in addition to the local communities of Beaufort and Skipton and other stakeholder groups.

This report is written by Ross Richards from Origin Energy Wind Holdings Pty Ltd.

This report identifies the consultation strategy and activities undertaken to date for the proposed wind farm, as well as the proposed Terminal Station and 132 kV powerline.



### **3.4 About the Author**

Ross Richards has been the community consultant for the project since September 2007. He has a background in engineering, farming, teaching and community organisations. Ross' varied experience has enabled him to effectively implement the many facets of the consultation strategy. This included talking to all types of stakeholders (from landowners to government ministers), organising consultation events, record keeping and also writing the final consultation report.



## 4. The Strategy – Wind Farm

Socom devised a consultation strategy for SHWF P/L. The strategy has been updated as the project has proceeded to consider and incorporate appropriate feedback from a number of stakeholders, such as the Pyrenees Shire Council.

The aim of the strategy was to guide a process to both inform and provide feedback to SHWF P/L. The strategy was submitted to the Minister for Planning in June 2008 as part of the referral documentation to determine whether the project required an Environmental Effects Statement.

Parts of the strategy are included within this report and the entire strategy can be found in

**Appendix 1: Community Consultation Strategy**

### 4.1 Aims

- To achieve community support and consent for the development and construction of the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm.
- To inform the community and provide a mechanism for immediate feedback which could be used to either modify the consultation strategy or inform the wind farm layout.

### 4.2 Stakeholder Analysis

In order to fully understand the challenges and opportunities associated with the development of the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm, a comprehensive list of stakeholders was established. Stakeholder groups included:

- Local residents
- Local Guardians group
- Tourist operators
- Community organisations and services
- Local government
- State and Federal government departments
- Media
- Local indigenous groups

The full list is included in section 5.1.2.

### 4.3 Best Practice Guidelines

SHWF P/L is in the process of gaining accreditation with the Certified Wind Farms Australia scheme, of which consultation forms an integral part. The consultation strategy for SHWF P/L satisfies, and in some cases exceeds, the requirements under the Consultation Best Practice



Guidelines for the Certified Wind Farms Australia scheme. A summary of the relevant aspects of the scheme appears in Appendix 3: Consultation Best Practice Guidelines.

#### 4.4 Engagement Techniques

The following lists different engagement techniques:

- Information sessions
- Personal visits
- One-on-one meetings
- Regular Shire Council Updates
- Initiate and convene a Community Reference Group (CRG)
- Landowner Feedback Program
- Western Plains Landscape Guardians
- Media Interviews

The results of these events/techniques are shown in section 5.3.



## 5. Results

The following section shows the results of the consultation process undertaken to date. It includes discussion and results of specific events in addition to details of how SHWF P/L kept records of consultation activities. This high level of detail assisted in meeting the aims of the strategy.

It should be noted that SHWF P/L respects the privacy of the community and maintains confidentiality of its dealings. The information gathered from the consultation process was used internally by SHWF P/L in a variety of ways, such as initiating the landowner feedback survey. In these instances the names and personal details of the community members was kept strictly confidential.

### 5.1 Stakeholder Registers and Documentation

#### 5.1.1 Involvement Register

This document details all types of engagement with all project stakeholders, based on the Stakeholder Register (see below). The types of involvement generally fall into the categories of:

- Visit
- Phone call
- Email
- Letter
- Mail out
- Advertisement
- Meeting
- Presentation

It also includes an “Action” column to ensure that outstanding issues are followed up.

#### 5.1.2 Stakeholder Register

The compilation of the stakeholder list occurred throughout the project and was crucial in ensuring that all stakeholders were informed of significant aspects of the development.



The key stakeholders included on the Stakeholder Register are detailed below.

1	Residents in and around the project area  Participating landowners Neighbouring residents (to within 5 km of project boundary) Residents of: - Beaufort - Skipton - Snake Valley	Beaufort Development Group (Business Association)
2	Residents and land owners of nearby townships  Ballarat Ararat Lismore	7 Shire/City Councils  <i>Pyrenees Shire:</i> CEO <i>Stephen Cornish</i> Mayor <i>Lester Harris</i> Ward Councillor <i>Lysette Ashford</i>  <i>Corangamite Shire:</i> CEO Paul Younis Mayor Ruth Gstrein
3	Guardian group(s)  Western Plains Landscape Guardians Association	<i>Ararat City:</i> Mayor <i>Fay Hull</i> CEO <i>Steve Chapple</i> Executive Officer <i>Mark Hogan</i> Manager Economic Development <i>Clyde Humphries</i>
4	Local tourism businesses  Blacks Creek Farm Accommodation Mooramong Homestead Beaufort Lake Caravan Park Healthy Homes Australia	<i>Corangamite Shire:</i> Mayor <i>Ruth Gstrein</i> CEO <i>Paul Younis</i> Director of Sustainability and Environment <i>Andrew Mason</i>
5	Other Tourist Operators  Beaufort Budget Motel Beaufort on Pratt Hotel Cave Hill Creek Accommodation Golden Age Hotel	8 Heritage Organisations National Trust <i>Martin Purslow</i> Heritage Australia <i>Ray Osborne</i>
6	Local community services  CFA Beaufort Beaufort Secondary College Beaufort Primary School - Parents - Teachers Beaufort/Skipton Health Services Foundation (Hospital Trust) Probis Rotary Lions Apex Masons Tourist Information Centre (Beaufort) Skipton Progress Association	9 Ecological and environmental activists/organisations



	<p>Bird Observation &amp; Conservation Australia (BOCA) <i>Don Saunders</i></p>		<p><i>Nick Jaschenko</i> <i>Garry Peterson</i> Sustainability Victoria <i>Michael Williamson</i> <i>John Edgoose</i> Department of Planning and Community Development (Ballarat) <i>Jason Taylor</i> <i>Shannon Meadows</i> Department of Primary Industry Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development <i>Craig Eyes</i></p>
10	<p>Supporters of renewable energy Hepburn Renewable Energy Association Greenpeace</p>		
11	<p>Government Bodies/Ministers <i>State Ministers:</i> Local MP (Rippon District), <i>Joe Helper, Minister for Agriculture</i> Minister for Rural and Regional Development <i>Jacinta Allan</i> Minister for Energy and Resources <i>Peter Batchelor</i> Minister for Environment and Climate Change, <i>Gavin Jennings</i> Minister for Planning <i>The Honourable Justin Madden</i> Minister for Industry and Trade, Information and Communication Technology, and Major Projects (MLC) <i>The Honourable Theo</i> <i>Theophanous</i></p> <p><i>Federal Ministers:</i> Minister for the Environment <i>Peter Garrett</i> Minister for Regional Development <i>Anthony Albanese</i> Minister for Resources and Energy <i>Martin Ferguson</i> Federal Member (McEwen), <i>Fran Bailey</i> Local Federal Member (Wannon), MHR <i>David Hawker</i> Minister for Climate Change <i>Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</i></p> <p><i>State Government Departments:</i> Department of Sustainability and Environment <i>Rod Davison</i> <i>Andrew Pritchard</i> <i>Nicholas Wynn</i></p>	12	<p>Media <i>Local Print:</i> Skipton Community News The Courier (Ballarat) The Advocate (Pyrenees Shire) The Ararat Advertiser</p> <p><i>Metropolitan Print:</i> The Age The Herald Sun The Australian</p> <p><i>Broadcast (Local):</i> ABC Ballarat Radio WIN News</p> <p><i>Broadcast (Metropolitan):</i> Channel 7 (Prime) - <i>Today Tonight</i> Channel 9 (WIN) - <i>ACA</i> Channel TEN - <i>TEN News</i> ABC <i>News</i> <i>Stateline</i> <i>Four Corners</i> <i>Radio - ABC 774</i> <i>SBS - Dateline</i></p>
		13	<p>Local Indigenous community Ballarat and District Co-op <i>Karen Heap</i> Wutherong Aboriginal Corporation <i>Bryon Powell</i></p>



14	Airspace Authorities Airservices <i>Mitch Sloan</i> Civil Aviation Safety Authority	15	Other Electricity Transmission Authority Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator
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### 5.1.3 Local Tradespeople Register

A register was kept for those who have an interest in employment generated from the construction of the wind farm.

### 5.1.4 Neighbour Register

Neighbours were defined as those living within 5 km of the nearest turbine. The register contained contact details, notes and dates of phone calls/meetings.

### 5.1.5 Other registers

- Landowner register (contact details)
- Meeting notes
- Mailing list (for those outside the mail drop distribution zone, refer 5.4.3)
- Other interested parties (contact details for other interested people/organisations)
- Community Reference Group (contact details for those wishing to join the CRG)
- Media file (both media from SHWF P/L and articles/items about the wind farm)
- Feedback register from Referral Information Day
- Environmental Offset Register (parties interested in providing resources for offset measures such as wetland creation for the brolga)

## 5.2 Timeline of Significant Consultation Events

SHWF P/L attempted to be a visible entity in the community. This included visiting individuals in their residences, a presence in the local media, meetings with the local shire council and attending public events such as the Agricultural Show. The following table shows significant events which occurred as part of the consultation process.



Table 1: Significant Consultation Events

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date</i>
"Community Flyer #1" sent to various post offices throughout the area for distribution (Beaufort, Skipton, Ararat, Snake Valley)	March 2007
Pyrenees Shire Council Meeting	July 2007
Information Day (Socom in attendance)	August 2007
Newsletter No. 2 distributed to residents	November 2007
Advertisements for "Community Barbecue" to discuss the broлга study. Various newspapers	November 2007
Beaufort Agricultural Show. Wind Power stand and display showing wind farm layout and general information	November 2007
Advertisements for postponement of Community Barbecue in various newspapers	November 2007
Advertisement for rescheduling of Community Barbecue in various newspapers	February 2008
Community Barbecue with Brett Lane to discuss broлга study (Socom in attendance)	February 2008
Pyrenees Shire Council Meeting	March 2008
Meeting with members of Beaufort and Skipton Health Service Foundation Ltd about community fund	April 2008
Advertisements for "One on One Meetings" in Skipton and Beaufort, various papers	April 2008
"One on One Meeting" in Skipton. 2 attendees	May 2008
"One on One Meeting" in Beaufort. 2 attendees	May 2008
Pyrenees Shire Council Meeting	May 2008
Advertisements for Information Day, various papers	July 2008
Newsletter No. 3 distributed, including broader area to cover all of Beaufort and Skipton	July 2008
Pyrenees Shire Council Meeting	July 2008



Referral Information Day. 70 attendees.	July 2008
Meeting with Bendigo Bank about Community Fund	August 2008
Pyrenees Shire Council Meeting	September 2008
Advertisement for Suggestion Boxes, various papers	September 2008
Meeting with DPCD, Western Plains Landscape Guardians (WPLG) and Pyrenees Shire Council to discuss the planning application process	February 2009
Liaison with Parks Victoria to provide general project update	February 2009
Briefings with VicRoads to discuss possible traffic issues	February & March 2009
Meeting with DSE to discuss the planning application process	April 2009
Meeting with the Bird Observers Club Australia about additional information on avifauna utilisation of Lake Goldsmith	April 2009
Pyrenees Shire Council Meeting	May 2009
Liaison with Federal Member for Wannon David Hawker to provide a project update	May 2009
Liaison with Western Plains Landscape Guardians (WPLG)	May & June 2009
Pyrenees Shire Council regular two monthly meeting	July 2009
Meeting with Skipton Progress Association to provide a project briefing and to identify opportunities in Skipton	September 2009
Meeting with offices of the State Member for Rippon Joe Helper to provide a project briefing	September 2009
Pyrenees Shire Council regular two monthly meeting	September 2009
Liaison with DSE and DPCD regarding the progress of the planning application and EPBC referral	On-going
On-going liaison with landowners and surrounding residents.	On-going

All public events were advertised with three weeks notice, based on feedback from the community.



### 5.3 Details of Consultation Events

Details are provided here of other consultation events.

#### 5.3.1 Meetings with Government Departments and Other Organisations

The following government departments and other organisations were personally consulted.

- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Sustainability Victoria
- Department of Planning and Community Development (Ballarat)
- CFA Region 16

#### 5.3.2 Regular Shire Council Briefings

SHWF P/L provides a briefing to the Pyrenees Shire Council every two months to keep council informed of the project. It also provided the community with a mechanism to provide feedback to SHWF P/L via their elected council representatives. Additionally, it has allowed council members to offer advice which has been incorporated into the consultation strategy. For instance, the one-on-one meetings were the result of a discussion between SHWF P/L and the Council.

Additionally, Corangamite Shire Council and Ararat Rural City were briefed twice on the project.

#### 5.3.3 Dealings with local Guardians Members

The Western Plains Landscape Guardians group is a body of local residents opposed to the wind farm development. SHWF P/L has enjoyed a positive and open relationship with many representatives of the Guardians group. This has included eight visits to residences in addition to a large number of phone calls, emails, letters and faxes which continue to respond to questions and provide clarification on issues discussed. As stated above, a meeting was held (February 2009) with members of the Guardians, other residents, members of DPCD and Shire Council members. This was a productive meeting that enabled a wide range of topics to be discussed in a neutral environment provided by the Pyrenees Shire Council.

#### 5.3.4 Personal Visits

SHWF P/L has attempted to contact and offered to visit every non-participating resident who could be affected within 5 km of the project boundary. (This excludes residents in Beaufort and Skipton and some residents who are buffered by the wind farm by thick vegetation. These residents are informed by other communications means such as newspaper advertisements and newsletters.) Every adjoining landowner was either visited or contacted, which is a requirement of the Best Practice Guidelines.



The strategy itself, however, exceeds the guidelines. Personal visits were made to many but not all of the neighbours. Many residents preferred a phone call and detailed information about the proposal.

The main purpose of the visits was to inform the local community of the development. SHWF P/L is committed to a deep and thorough consultation process and believes that personal visits, while resource intensive, are one of the most powerful ways to engage and listen to the community. A comprehensive database was used to track residents and any contact made with them.

Additionally, these meetings provided a mechanism for feedback to identify other residents who may have had concerns or anxieties about the project. Such residents were then contacted immediately and visits organised in order to consult with them as soon as possible in order for them to have input in the consultation process.

### 5.3.5 Information Days

Several information sessions were conducted to inform the community of various aspects of the project. These sessions allowed local residents and interested stakeholders to discuss the proposal with SHWF P/L representatives and expert consultants.

These sessions will continue to be used to inform the community at various project milestones, such as the lodgement of the planning application.

The emphasis of the information sessions was on sharing information and also listening to the opinions and concerns of the community. The community was also encouraged to play an active role in shaping the future of the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm by offering feedback on matters such as identifying sensitive landscape features or suggesting recipients of the community fund. This was particularly the case for the information day for the lodgement of the referral which specifically sought feedback from the community on the layout. Additionally, the Brolga information session sought feedback from the community on sightings and this information was used to inform the Brolga investigation.

The following information days were held for the community.

#### *1. Introductory Information Day*

The purpose of this information day was to introduce the proposal to the community. It was held on 18/8/2007 at the Steam Rally Building. There were approximately 60 people in attendance. The Guardians group was invited by SHWF P/L to set up a stall on-site and distribute their own information.

Examples of information that was available included:

- Wind Power – Who are we?
- Wind Energy in Australia
- Wind Farm Fact Sheets



## *2. Community Barbecue*

An information session and barbecue was held on the evening of Saturday 20 February 2008 specifically about the targeted broлга investigation. Approximately 70 people attended the event at the Lake Goldsmith Hall, including members of the Bird Observers Club of Australia, the Guardians group and local government. Brett Lane, from Brett Lane & Associates (flora and fauna consultant), gave a presentation on the methodology and results of the investigation up to that time.

Additionally, feedback from the community was sought on sightings via the collection of names and addresses for those wishing to fill in a Broлга Questionnaire form. This information was used to inform the Broлга investigation over the following breeding season.

## *3. Referral Lodgement Information Day*

The lodgement of the referral was an opportunity for SHWF P/L to consult with the community about the details of the turbine positions. Approximately 80 people attended the event.

Five Wind Power P/L staff were present in addition to Brett Lane (flora and fauna consultant) and a representative from ERM (landscape and planning consultant) to discuss any planning issues. Feedback was specifically sought from the community in relation to the layout. The turbine locations proposed were consistent with the submission that was made to the Minister for Planning and represented a true and accurate version of what was proposed.

Other information presented at this information day included:

- Bird mortality mitigation devices
- 2 x A0 maps of the wind farm area showing the layout of the wind farm
- Numerous display boards on wind farm facts
- An information board on the planning process
- Broлга brochure developed by Brett Lane & Associates
- Explanation of the Garnaut Report and climate change
- Emissions Trading Scheme Information
- Comparison of the range of studies that SHWF P/L has commissioned and other projects that have required an EES.

Results of the data collection are shown in section 5.5.

### **5.3.6 One-on-one Meetings**

One-on-one meetings provided an opportunity for members of the community to discuss the wind farm with a SHWF P/L representative in a confidential and non-threatening environment.



The result of these sessions were disseminated to the wider community (where appropriate) to further inform stakeholders of any issues or concerns raised. These meetings were held at Beaufort and Skipton and advertised three weeks prior to the events.

#### 5.3.7 Landowner Feedback Program

SHWF P/L conducted an informal survey of all participating landowners which was a result of feedback that had been gathered. The results showed that all landowners were satisfied with SHWF P/L's handling of the project (with the exception of one, which was addressed).

#### 5.3.8 Community Reference Group

The community was informed about the formation of a Community Reference Group. A database was established to record details of residents wishing to join the group, which is expected to be established close to financial close of the project during 2010.

More details on the aims of the CRG can be found in Appendix 1: **Community Consultation Strategy**

#### 5.3.9 Site Visit

A site visit to an operational wind farm for local residences was not required for this project due to the community's familiarity with existing and under construction wind farms. The Chalicum Hills Wind Farm is located approximately 14 km from the project boundary and can be clearly viewed from many positions surrounding the proposed wind farm. Additionally, members of the community are able to view the Waubra Wind Farm, which is currently under construction between Ballarat and Beaufort.

### 5.4 Communications and Media

#### 5.4.1 Communication Protocol

SHWF P/L used communication protocols developed by Wind Power P/L for its consultation strategy. This included documenting contact with external parties and a timely response of all phone calls, visits, meetings and correspondence with stakeholders.



#### 5.4.2 Website Information

The Wind Power Pty Ltd website underwent a major facelift in early 2008 which enabled SHWF P/L to improve its communication to stakeholders. The available features included:

- Downloadable newsletter
- Broilga questionnaire
- Project information and updates
- Contact details for all community queries
- Downloadable information materials
- FAQs
- Upcoming events
- Answers to community issues and concerns gathered from visits and meetings

Information was thus able to be communicated to the residents in an efficient means, particularly for large documents such as the referral to the Minister to determine if the project required an EES.

The website is regularly updated to provide information and updates on the project to the public. This includes information and media related to the Origin acquisition.

#### 5.4.3 Newsletters and Flyers

Three newsletters were issued which kept members of the community up-to-date with important events, site developments and current issues. They have either been general updates or, in the case of the referral lodgement, specific to an event and an invitation to a corresponding information day.

The distribution of the newsletters included all residents in the towns of Beaufort and Skipton as well as other localities such as Ballyroan, Stoneleigh and Pittong.

Additionally, flyers were sent out to residents via post offices at different times. These differ from newsletters in that they generally contain a brief message on a single topic, such as the first community meeting or the postponement of an information session.

This process will continue as the project develops, including during construction and operation if that eventuates.

Newsletters are contained in Appendix 5: Examples of Newsletters.

#### 5.4.4 Suggestion Boxes

Suggestion boxes were placed in Skipton and Beaufort and their placement advertised in the local newspapers on 19/9/2008. The inclusion of suggestion boxes in these two major townships provided another means for the community to provide feedback and suggestions in a simple and non-confrontational way. No submissions were received since their placement.



#### 5.4.5 Media Presence

The local and regional media have shown a high level of interest in the project. SHWF P/L keeps the media updated with relevant information, including a media release detailing the acquisition of Wind Power Pty Ltd by Origin, providing project briefings to the media and participating in radio interviews. SHWF P/L acknowledges the role that the media plays in providing information on the project to the broader community.

##### *Letters to the Editor*

It was common for letters to the editor to appear in newspapers such as the Ballarat Courier, Pyrenees Advocate and Weekly Times. SHWF P/L tried to be as proactive as possible when dealing with the media. It also respected individuals' right to have a say and at times SHWF P/L chose to not respond to letters through the media.

##### *Advertisements*

Local newspapers were used to advertise events such as information days, the cancellation of an information day and the placement of the suggestion boxes. Information session advertisements were additionally publicised on community bulletin boards and in shop windows. A list of printed media is found in the Stakeholder List in section 5.1.2.

##### *Media Releases and Interviews*

Media releases were issued for significant events such as the submission of the referral to the Minister for Planning. A media release was also issued to announce the Minister's decision on the referral. These releases were sent to local and metropolitan print press, ABC local radio and television stations, both local and metropolitan.

Additionally, interviews were often conducted with these organisations at their request.

##### *Radio Interviews*

SHWF P/L gave radio interviews during the consultation process, generally leading up to information days to promote events and opportunities for the community to participate and provide input. Additionally, interviews were given to provide more information on other significant events, such as the lodgement and decision from the Minister on the referral.

### 5.5 Feedback and Community Concerns

Some simple feedback mechanisms were developed to collect community views outside of the information forums. These included suggestion boxes at Skipton and Beaufort, a broilga questionnaire form on the website and regular phone calls, emails and faxes from the community. It is expected that the CRG will play an active role in collecting community feedback.



As stated above, SHWF P/L contacted all landowners to invite feedback in relation to their level of satisfaction of SHWF P/L's handling of the project.

SHWF P/L acknowledges that the consultation process is effective when the views of the community are considered and appropriate action taken to alleviate any concerns that arise. If action was not required, or was inappropriate or impractical, then the course of action was explained to the concerned parties.

Throughout the consultation process several concerns were raised by residents. These are discussed here.

#### 5.5.1 Visual Amenity

One of the most widespread concerns about the project was the aspect of visual impact and amenity. It was raised in residential visits and also at information sessions. Some residents claimed that the impact on their lives would be drastic.

It should also be noted that other locals expressed their positive views on the aesthetics of the turbines, with one adjoining land owner describing the turbines as "dancing ballerinas".

##### *Response:*

A visual impact assessment has been conducted by ERM. This includes assessing views from roads and also selected residences which have a view of the wind farm within a nominated distance (determined by ERM). Photomontages have been commissioned for a number of residences. These locations were chosen either because of the magnitude of the visual impact or if they were determined by ERM to be significant for other reasons, such as for heritage value.

An inspection of the residences often revealed that the wind farm would have a low visual impact due to the orientation of the view points or the existence of other buildings or plantations.

Residents were informed of mitigation measures to reduce visual impact by either SHWF P/L representatives or directly from ERM. This generally consisted of visual screening by revegetation. This often includes techniques such as the strategic positioning of a minimum number of trees in a way to reduce impact from particular view points within a residence.

Results of research were discussed with locals that suggest that, worldwide, the public acceptance of wind farms actually increases after the wind farm has been built. It appears that residents become accustomed to the turbines and this is reflected in greater acceptance levels in surveys. "This study supports the view that familiarity does not increase opposition to a wind farm, but rather increases acceptance and support for wind turbines in the landscape" (ERM 2007).



### 5.5.2 Property Devaluation

Concern was raised over the possible effect the wind farm may have on property values.

*Response:*

Residents were made aware of anecdotal evidence that suggests that agricultural properties are unaffected by the presence of a wind farm. Several specific sites were referenced, including Bald Hills, Smeaton and Esperance.

### 5.5.3 Brolga

A large number of residents expressed concern over the possible impact on the region's brolgas. This concern was made apparent at information days, personal visits and also in the press via letters to the editor.

*Response:*

A comprehensive brolga study was undertaken to understand the behaviour of the bird. The data for the study included anecdotal evidence supplied by locals and the results of the study were used to modify the layout of the turbines.

SHWF P/L sought public input into the brolga study. Residents were invited to contribute observation details based on personal experience. Questionnaires were made available for completion at the informal brolga BBQ, posted on the website and sent to people who expressed an interest. This data was then used by the flora and fauna consultant to assist in further studies on the site in relation to the brolga.

Reasons for population decline of the brolga were explained to residents, namely that the largest threats to the brolga have been loss of habitat and fox predation. This explanation generally came as no surprise since it was already widely accepted by local residents. Brett Lane also attended information days to offer explanations about the brolga study.

It was explained that a strategy for mitigation and offset measures on brolga population impacts would likely form part of the planning application or be implemented as a condition of the planning permit.

### 5.5.4 Noise

There was a perceived issue of noise from the turbines. This included the type of noise and also the level of noise. This was raised at a number of instances, mainly the personal visits to residents' houses.

*Response*

All residents were aware of Challicum Hills Wind Farm and most were aware that there had been no local issues with noise. Residents were made aware of the strict noise standards that apply to wind farms through the planning guidelines. Data was supplied to indicate how these standards are applied and what safeguards are in place to ensure compliance.



Additionally, at least 10 residents have had noise logging conducted at their premises. This has given them firsthand experience and involvement in the study on noise.

#### 5.5.5 Community Impacts

Residents placed a high value on community harmony and had concerns about possible divisions caused by differences of opinion on the wind farm.

*Response:*

Regardless of their attitude towards the wind farm proposal, it was found that people in the community expressed a similar desire for community harmony and good will. They appeared to genuinely respect the different opinions of others and acknowledged that it is common for neighbours to not agree on all matters and still maintain a positive relationship.

It was found that the more distant residents from the wind farm had less concern about community cohesion. The issue related more to those that were closer and hence more affected by the wind farm. This, however, is somewhat mitigated by the low numbers of non-participating landowners within or on the project boundary.

Additionally, aspects of the project such as the community fund are seen as a way of enabling the wind farm to benefit the broader community. This could assist in mitigating community cohesion issues.

#### 5.5.6 Community Fund Recipients

Residents expressed interest in the community fund. Such interest was in the areas of administration of the fund and possible recipients.

*Response:*

The nature of the fund was explained in detail, including Wind Power Pty Ltd's experience in establishing funds for other projects. Such discussions included the establishment of criteria for receipt, membership of the governing body of the fund and possible recipients.

Additionally, community input was sought on possible recipients. This information was garnered from information sessions, personal visits and also from other activities such as the landowner feedback survey. More research and analysis of community needs in relation to the fund will be conducted closer to the time of the establishment of the fund.

#### 5.5.7 Landscape Values

Turbines had been proposed for the extinct crater of Monmot. This particular land feature was mentioned by several locals on numerous occasions as one of local significance. It was made clear that locals would prefer the crater to remain free of turbines.

*Response:*

Based on the advice from the geomorphological consultant and on the community wishes turbines were removed from the Monmot crater.



### 5.5.8 Powerlines

Another issue raised by locals was powerlines and grid connection. People were concerned about several aspects of grid connection, including the type of poles or pylons used, and the visual impact of the poles and the impact on the broilga.

*Response:*

People were informed that the electrical connections between turbines would be mostly underground and the connections between substations above ground. Grid connection would most likely be via poles, similar to what they have seen on the Western Highway, to the 500 kV line near Lismore.

In terms of the broilga, residents were informed of typical measures to reduce environmental impacts, such as avoid, minimise then offset. These principles also apply to the broilga. At the referral information day residents were shown examples of mitigation measures, such as bird deflectors that are fitted to power lines to increase their visibility to birds.

### 5.5.9 Other Issues

Some residents suggested that a public meeting should have been held to address issues. These views were noted and stakeholders informed of the wide range of communication channels available for input, as part of SHWF P/L's consultation strategy. It was also noted that industry best practice suggests that information days are the most effective means of disseminating large amounts of information to large groups of people.



## **6. The Strategy - Terminal Station**

### **6.1 Project Details**

A terminal station for the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm is required to connect the wind farm to the electrical grid. It is to be located south-west of the intersection of Four Tree Road and Collins Lane, Berrybank and will connect to the 500 kV transmission line via a 132 kV sub-transmission. The site of the terminal station is on cleared agricultural land.

The size of the site for the proposed terminal station is 400 m by 200 m plus an area to be used for landscaping. The terminal station will include two transformers plus other associated infrastructure.

The terminal station for Stockyard Hill Wind Farm will be located within the Corangamite Shire Council. The Corangamite Shire Council has been briefed on the wind farm project, including site location, indicative construction timing and potential impacts.

### **6.2 Assessment of Issues**

Stockyard Hill Wind Farm Pty Ltd has identified a number of issues and potential impacts associated with the proposed terminal station that stakeholders and the community may be interested in. They are:

- Visual amenity – how the terminal station may impact on the visual amenity and landscape values of the area;
- Safety – whether there are any risks to safety, including security, fire and health, associated with the proposed terminal station;
- Property value – the potential impact that the presence of the terminal station will have on property values, particularly for adjoining properties; and
- Noise – whether there is any noise impact arising from the terminal station.

### **6.3 Stakeholder Identification**

Given the location of the proposed terminal station, the issues that stakeholders and the community may be interested in and the potential impacts of the terminal station, the target audience for this part of the consultation strategy comprises:

- All adjoining landowners;
- Residents within a 2km radius of the site of the proposed terminal station;
- Local government – Corangamite Shire Council; and
- Relevant state government departments.



#### 6.4 Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan

Different stakeholders have different information needs. Consultation methods and activities should be tailored to ensure that each stakeholder group is engaged in a way that is effective and suitable to their needs so that input from stakeholders in this process can be maximised.

Based on the stakeholder's identification above, the following consultation activities on the proposed terminal station should be undertaken to ensure that the aims and objectives of the project consultation strategy is achieved.

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Consultation Activity</b>
Adjoining landowners	Visit property – one-on-one discussion
Residents within a 2 km radius of the terminal station	Visit property – one-on-one discussion
Local government	Briefing with Corangamite Shire Council
State government	Briefings with relevant authorities, such as DPCD
VicRoads	Briefings
CFA	Briefings



## 6.5 Summary of Consultation Events and outcomes

The consultation events and activities undertaken as part of the development process of the Terminal Station and the outcomes of these events are outlined below:

<i>Event</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Date</i>
Briefing with CFA	CFA was contacted and provided information and background on the wildfire overlay.	January 2009
Liaison with DPCD via email about the planning application.	Questions raised and answered from both parties. This included issues associated with lodgement of the application.	February 2009
Personal visits were undertaken with adjoining landowners	No major issues raised.	February & March 2009
Briefing with VicRoads to outline project details.	Details of the project provided	February & March 2009
Personal visits with residents within 2 km of the terminal station were undertaken.	Risks raised by several residents – fire management discussed; Noise raised by one – background information offered; Visual amenity raised by one – landscaping discussed; No other concerns.	March 2009
A briefing meeting with Corangamite Shire Council (CSC).	A list of questions was compiled and answers provided in a timely fashion. SHWF P/L worked in conjunction with CSC to determine the appropriate process for the lodgement of the planning application.	April 2009



Liaison with Federal Member for Wannan David Hawker	Letter distributed providing details of the proposed wind farm and associated facilities, as well as details of the planning and development process.	May 2009
Liaison with DSE and DPCD regarding the progress of the planning application		On-going
On-going liaison with landowners and surrounding residents.		On-going

Further consultation will occur during the development process.



## **7. The Strategy – 132 kV powerline route**

### **7.1 Project Details**

A power line is proposed to connect the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm to the electrical grid. It is to connect into the 500 kV transmission line via a terminal station to be located at Berrybank. The line route will be approximately 60 km in length.

The power lines will have a voltage of 132 kV and be located on concrete or hardwood poles with heights of up to 18.5 m. There will be either 6 or 7 wires in a double circuit configuration.

The Corangamite Shire Council has been briefed several times on the line route during 2008 and 2009.

### **7.2 Assessment of Issues**

Stockyard Hill Wind Farm Pty Ltd has identified a number of issues and potential impacts associated with the proposed line route in which stakeholders and the community may be interested. They are:

- Visual amenity – how the line route may impact on the visual amenity and landscape values of the area.
- Safety – whether there are any risks to safety, such as fire and the poles on road sides being a risk to drivers.
- Property value – the potential impact that the presence of the power line could have on property values, particularly for adjoining properties.

### **7.3 Stakeholder Identification**

The line route is to be located predominantly on road reserves through areas with a relatively low population density, with the township of Skipton being a notable exception.

ERM has suggested that the zone of visual impact would extend to 200 m from the line route for poles of this nature. To be conservative the zone for consultation has been set at 500 m from the power lines. That is, all residents within 500 m. An exception to this is residents in the township of Skipton, whereby many residents will have the view obscured by other buildings such as houses. The consultation plan will cover only residents that have a view to the power line.



Given the location of the proposed line route, the issues that stakeholders and the community may be interested in and the potential impacts of the line route, the target audience for this part of the consultation strategy comprises:

- Residents within 500 m of the proposed line route;
- Local government – Corangamite Shire Council; and
- Relevant state government departments.

#### 7.4 Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan

Different stakeholders have different information needs. Consultation methods and activities should be tailored to ensure that each stakeholder group is engaged in a way that is effective and suitable to their needs so that input from stakeholders in this process can be maximised.

Based on the stakeholder identification above, the following consultation activities on the proposed powerline route should be undertaken to ensure that the aims and objectives of the project consultation strategy is achieved.

Stakeholder	Consultation Activity
Residents within 500 m	Visit property – one-on-one discussion
Local government	Briefings with Corangamite Shire Council
State government	Briefings with relevant authorities, such as DPCD
VicRoads	Briefings
CFA	Briefings



## 7.5 Summary of Consultation Events and Outcomes

The consultation events and activities undertaken as part of the preparation of the planning application for the proposed Terminal Station and the outcomes of these events are outlined below:

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Date</i>
Personal visits were undertaken with residents within 500 m of the line route	A variety of responses. Most are unconcerned, with a small number of residents raising some concerns. Issues raised included: Fire risk – informed of fire management strategy and level of risk; Visual amenity – nature of pole discussed, particularly since similar to existing poles; Television interference – digital signal to be introduced before the construction of the line route.	February & March 2009
A briefing meeting with Corangamite Shire Council (CSC)	Discussion on process of construction, including planning and guidelines.	April 2009
Briefing held with VicRoads to discuss project details.	Details of the project provided and recommendations made from VicRoads.	March 2009
Briefing with CFA to discuss project.	Communications have commenced and further briefings planned.	July 2009



Liaison with Federal Member for Wannan David Hawker	Sent letter providing details of the proposed wind farm and associated facilities, as well as details of the planning and development process.	May 2009
Liaison with DSE and DPCD regarding the progress of the planning application		On-going
On-going liaison with landowners and surrounding residents.		On-going

As above, further consultation will occur as the development proceeds.



## **8. Next Steps**

### **8.1 Continuing Consultation**

The consultation process will continue throughout the life of the project, with appropriate strategies and techniques used at different times. For instance, it is envisaged that the community reference group will play a vital role in providing an interface for SHWF P/L with the community, particularly during construction. This in turn will provide feedback which can be incorporated into many aspects of the operation at that time, such as traffic management or construction noise mitigation.

It is envisaged that the consultation strategy will continue to be refined and influenced by community feedback as the project progresses. This should improve acceptance levels of the wind farm, or at least reduce anxieties, by taking into consideration the views and suggestions of residents and stakeholders. This should result in a minimised impact on residents and the environment during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the project.



## 9. Conclusion

This report shows the process conducted by SHWF P/L to consult with the community and stakeholders for the proposed Stockyard Hill Wind Farm project and the outcomes of the consultation. SHWF P/L believes that its consultation with community and stakeholders was effective.

SHWF P/L was able to achieve all of the aims of the consultation strategy developed for the project. Feedback from the community suggests that the consultation process has been a meaningful way for residents to be involved in the wind farm planning process. It also indicates that SHWF P/L was able to effectively communicate with a large number and wide range of stakeholders. The inclusive, proactive and informative approach taken by SHWF P/L towards engaging the community has generated a high degree of interest and acceptance for the proposed project. This has been gauged by the attitudes of residents that were personally visited.

SHWF P/L used a combination of different communication tools throughout the consultation. This included: information sessions, personal visits, one-on-one meetings, regular shire council briefings, landowner feedback program, Western Plains Landscape Guardians visits and a regular media presence. The variety of opportunities for information provision and feedback has enabled members of the community to participate and contribute their views on the project in one or more ways that are suitable to them.

The three information sessions also allowed a large amount of information to be disseminated to the community, as well as providing opportunities for in-depth conversations and obtaining feedback from residents.

Feedback was gathered, documented and used to inform and update the consultation strategy so that the methods of communication and engagement for SHWF P/L remained relevant and appropriate. The wind farm layout has also been modified to accommodate relevant community feedback as well as specialist and expert advice on issues.

The consultation strategy will continue to play an important role through subsequent stages of development of the project.



## 10. References

ERM, 2006. "Mortlake Wind Farm Victoria, Preliminary Landscape Assessment".  
Downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au> on 7/11/2008.



**11. Appendices**



Appendix 1: Community Consultation Strategy.



# Wind Power Pty Ltd

## Community Consultation Strategy: Stockyard Hill Wind Farm

Date:	23 December 2008
Document Version:	18
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Approval:	Vaughan Hulme

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## Community Consultation Strategy

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### Table of Contents

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SITUATION ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>AIMS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>OUTCOMES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>STAKEHOLDERS AND INFORMATION NEEDS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>STRATEGIC APPROACH.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Inform .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Engage .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Analyse.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Recommend.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION TOOLS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Milestone Action Plan.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>13</b>



## Community Consultation Strategy

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### Situation Analysis

As part of Victoria's Renewable Energy Action Plan, released in July 2006, the Victorian Government stated that by 2016, at least 10 per cent of the state's electricity consumption would be provided by renewable energy sources. They further committed to facilitating the development of up to 1000 MW of this energy from wind. Since then, the federal Labor government has committed to 20 per cent renewable energy by 2020.

The proposed location for the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm development is situated between the towns of Beaufort and Skipton. Beaufort has a population of 1100, Skipton has about 500, and the Pyrenees Shire municipality has about 7000. The towns receive the majority of their economic revenue through tourism and agriculture.

Due to the low population density of the area, the majority of the residential houses in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm are occupied by participating landowners. The surrounding land, currently being used for agricultural purposes, is predominantly clear of vegetation and is reliably windy.

Communications consultants Socom were involved in the development of an early consultation strategy. The project is currently in the pre-feasibility stage and this strategy has been used to inform the development of this plan, which will guide us throughout the project.

Wind Power Pty Ltd (WP) has already undertaken several steps in informing the community of the project. This includes several public meetings, an informal BBQ meeting to discuss the broilga study, "one-on-one" meetings, newsletter distribution as well as numerous visits to residents and presentations to the Pyrenees Shire Council.

#### **Challenges:**

Electricity generation by wind is still a relatively new technology and one that is not fully understood or accepted by some parts of the community. WP aims to address any misinformation surrounding the proposed development, wind farms and wind energy by providing comprehensive, accurate and easy to understand information in a variety of forums where members of the community are encouraged to share their opinions and voice their concerns.

#### **Opportunities:**

One of the greatest opportunities available to WP through this project is to educate the community about the benefits of wind as a source of renewable energy and to debunk any myths and misconceptions. If community education and consultation is successful, several opportunities exist for WP to contribute to the local community. These include:

- Financial contributions (through both the direct lease payments to the landowners and the community fund); and
- Becoming an active member of the community and participating in events, such as the agricultural show.

## Community Consultation Strategy

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### Aims

- To achieve community support and consent for the development and construction of the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm.
- To inform the community and provide a mechanism for immediate feedback which could be used to either modify the consultation strategy or inform the wind farm layout.

### Objectives

- To educate stakeholders and interested members of the public about the wind farm development and its potential benefits to the community.
- To minimise false beliefs and misconceptions regarding the environmental and ecological impact of wind farms.
- To listen and respond to community opinions and concerns.
- Establish a Community Reference Group and provide accurate information to the community.
- To have balanced media coverage where we conveyed several of the following key messages:

#### **WP is listening to the community**

As part of this project, WP will establish a Community Reference Group (CRG). The primary role of the CRG is to inform and engage the local community on the proposal and provide advice to WP.

#### **WP is boosting the local economy**

Specific details of projected employment were not known at the time of the strategy. A report is being commissioned as part of the planning application.

#### **WP cares about the environment**

With 242 wind turbines in operation, the proposed wind farm would generate enough renewable energy to power 182,000 households or 14% of Melbourne's homes (based on 2006 census data). This represents a saving of 1,272,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year, which is the equivalent of planting over 1.9 million trees or removing 294,000 cars from the roads<sup>1</sup>.

#### **WP undertook extensive research**

WP undertook comprehensive, independent studies into:

- Flora and fauna, including an extensive broilga survey
- Landscape and visual impacts
- Aboriginal cultural heritage

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<sup>1</sup> This estimate is based on the MM92 2MW Turbine operating with a capacity factor of 30%. This is a conservative estimate based on a preliminary site analysis and also considering another Wind Power project nearby that has a forecast gross capacity factor of 41%. SHWF expects to report a higher capacity factor for the project once further wind monitoring has been completed. However, figures of between 30% and 35% are typically applied to calculate and model the capacity factor of planned Victorian Wind Farms. See, for example, "Assessment of Greenhouse Gas Abatement from Wind Farms in Victoria: Report to Sustainability Victoria", McLennan Magasanik Associates, July 2006. p.(i)

## Community Consultation Strategy

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- Noise
- Geomorphology
- Geotechnical issues
- Aviation
- Electro Magnetic Interference
- Socio-economic
- Land use and planning
- Community consultation
- Traffic and transport
- Shadow flicker
- Hydrology

## Outcomes

The desired outcomes of the strategy, in terms of information about wind farms, were:

- Wind energy is one of the most efficient sources of energy in Australia (35 per cent “efficiency” compared to 29 per cent for brown coal).
- The energy payback period for a turbine is four to six months, including decommissioning.
- Research has found that there have been no recorded mortalities of rare or significant bird species in Victoria.
- Wind farms have not been linked to decreases land values. In fact wind farms have recently been linked to increased property prices (based on an informal study of the Esperance Wind Farm at Salmon Beach in Western Australia) and other sales around Victoria.
- It is possible to carry on a conversation at the base of a wind turbine without having to raise your voice.
- Wind farms have been shown to have a positive effect on local tourism.
- Wind is a safe, clean and efficient source of renewable energy.
- The acceptance of wind farms by locals generally increases after the wind farm has been built. This is a worldwide trend.

## Stakeholder Analysis

In order to fully understand the challenges and opportunities associated with the development of the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm, the following key stakeholders have been identified:

- |          |   |  |
|----------|---|--|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Residents in and around the project area</b><br>Participating landowners | Neighbouring residents (to within 5 km of project boundary)<br>Residents of: |
|----------|---|--|

## Community Consultation Strategy

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	- Beaufort	Mayor
	- Skipton	Ruth Gstrein
	- Snake Valley	
<b>2</b>	<b>Residents and land owners of nearby townships</b>	<i>Ararat City:</i>
	Ballarat	Mayor
	Ararat	Fay Hull
		CEO
		Steve Chapple
		Executive Officer
		Mark Hogan
<b>3</b>	<b>Guardian group(s)</b>	<b>8</b>
	Western Plains Landscape Guardians Association	<b>Heritage Organisations</b>
		National Trust
		Martin Purslow
		Heritage Australia
<b>4</b>	<b>Local tourism businesses</b>	<b>9</b>
	Blacks Creek Farm Accommodation	<b>Ecological and environmental activists/organisations</b>
	Mooramong Homestead	Bird Observation & Conservation Australia (BOCA)
	Beaufort Lake Caravan Park	Don Saunders
	Healthy Homes Australia	
<b>5</b>	<b>Other Tourist Operators</b>	<b>10</b>
	Beaufort Budget Motel	<b>Supporters of renewable energy</b>
	Beaufort on Pratt Hotel	Hepburn Renewable Energy Association
	Cave Hill Creek Accommodation	Greenpeace
	Golden Age Hotel	
<b>6</b>	<b>Local community services</b>	<b>11</b>
	CFA Beaufort	<b>Government Bodies/Ministers</b>
	David Gerrard	<i>State Ministers:</i>
	Beaufort Secondary College	Local MLA, Minister for Agriculture
	Beaufort Primary School	Joe Helper
	- Parents	Minister for Rural and Regional Development
	- Teachers	Jacinta Allan
	Beaufort/Skipton Health Services Foundation (Hospital Trust)	Minister for Energy and Resources
	Probis	Peter Batchelor
	Rotary	Minister for Environment and Climate Change,
	Lions	Gavin Jennings
	Apex	Minister for Planning
	Masons	The Honourable Justin Madden
	Tourist Information Centre (Beaufort)	
	Norman	Minister for Industry and Trade, Information and Communication Technology, and Major Projects (MLC)
<b>7</b>	<b>Shire/City Councils</b>	The Honourable Theo Theophanous (Labor)
	<i>Pyrenees Shire:</i>	
	Shire Councillor	<i>Federal Ministers:</i>
	Lysette Ashford	Minister for the Environment
	CEO	Peter Garrett
	Stephen Cornish	Minister for Regional Development
	Mayor	Anthony Albanese
	Lester Harris	Minister for Resources and Energy
		Martin Ferguson
	<i>Corangamite Shire:</i>	
	CEO	
	Paul Younis	

## Community Consultation Strategy

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<p>Federal Member,          HoR, Fran Bailey          Local Federal Member (Wannon), MHR          David Hawker          Minister for Climate Change          Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</p> <p><i>State Departments:</i>          Department of Sustainability and          Environment          Rod Davison          Andrew Pritchard          Nicholas Wynn          Nick Jaschenko          Garry Peterson          Sustainability Victoria          Michael Williamson          John Edgoose          Department of Planning and Community          Development          Jason Taylor          Shannon Meadows          Department of Primary Industry          Department of Innovation, Industry and          Regional Development          Craig Eyes</p> <p><i>Other:</i>          VicRoads          Parks Victoria</p>	<p>The Age          The Herald Sun          The Australian</p> <p><i>Broadcast (Local):</i>          ABC Ballarat Radio          WIN News</p> <p><i>Broadcast (Metropolitan):</i>          Channel 7 (Prime) - Today Tonight          Channel 9 (WIN) - ACA          Channel TEN - TEN News          ABC          News          Stateline          Four Corners          SBS - Dateline          Radio - ABC 774</p>
<p><b>12 Media</b>  <i>Local Print:</i>          Skipton Community News          The Courier (Ballarat)          The Advocate (Pyrenees Shire)          The Ararat Advertiser</p>	<p><b>13 Local Indigenous community</b>          Ballarat and District Co-op          Karen Heap          Wuthorong Aboriginal Corporation          Bryon Powell</p> <p><b>14 Airspace Authorities</b>          Air Services          Joe Doherty          Civil Aviation Safety Authority          Department of Defence (Land Planning          and Spatial Information)          John Kerwan</p>
<p><i>Metropolitan Print:</i></p>	<p><b>15 Other</b>          Electricity Transmission Authority          Office of the Renewable Energy          Regulator</p>

## Stakeholders and Information Needs

In acknowledging the need for proactive communication, it is important to recognise that each stakeholder group may require different levels of information. This information is detailed in Appendix 1: Stakeholder Issues Analysis Chart.

## Best Practice Guidelines

WP is in the process of gaining accreditation with the Certified Wind Farms Australia scheme. Consultation forms an integral part of the scheme. WP is following a series of prescribed checklists that include specific

## Community Consultation Strategy

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consultation actions at the three main stages of a project – feasibility, siting and development. This document appears in full in Appendix 1: Stakeholder Issues Analysis Chart

### Strategic Approach

Consultation is a process of two-way, informed communication between an organisation, the community and other stakeholders on a particular issue prior to the organisation making a decision in relation to that issue. While the exact process varies slightly according to each unique situation, there are four steps common to any effective consultation strategy.

- Step 1: Inform
- Step 2: Engage
- Step 3: Analyse
- Step 4: Recommend

Using these four steps as a foundation, a consultation plan has been developed in order to gain community support for the construction of the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm.

### Inform

#### **Prepare information for the consultation**

One of the keys to effective community consultation is to ensure that all participants have a basic level of understanding about the proposed development, an understanding that has been formed from accurate information rather than common myths and speculation.

In addition to the information pamphlets and flyers already provided to the community, further material will be developed with a local focus to addresses specific concerns.

Detailed information such as the results of the flora and fauna report, noise analysis and the environmental impact report will also be made available to interested members of the community.

The website has been used to convey key messages and updates on the project and will continue to be utilised in this manner. WP acknowledges that this medium is not accessed by all stakeholders and therefore is not relied upon as a sole dissemination source.

### Engage

#### **Facilitation of community information sessions**

Several information sessions have been run to inform the community of various aspects of the project. The most recent was the broilga survey barbecue. These sessions allow various community members from all parts of Victoria to come and consult with WP representatives and consultants.

These sessions will continue to be used to inform the community at various project milestones, such as at the time of the lodgement of the referral.

The emphasis will be on sharing information, listening to the opinions and concerns of the community, encouraging them to play an active role in shaping the future of the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm and imparting a sense of pride and satisfaction that they are providing a better future for their children by assisting the development of cleaner, greener energy solutions.

## Community Consultation Strategy

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### **Initiate and convene a series of one-on-one meetings**

One-on-one meetings have provided an opportunity for members of the community to discuss the wind farm with a WP representative in a confidential and non-threatening environment. The result of these sessions were disseminated to the wider community (where relevant) to further inform stakeholders of any issues or concerns raised. These meetings were held at Beaufort and Skipton.

### **Regular Shire Council Updates**

WP provides a council update, in person, every two months. This is an opportunity to keep council informed and provide the community with a mechanism to provide feedback to WP via the elected council representatives.

### **Initiate and convene a Community Reference Group (CRG)**

A local Community Reference Group (CRG) will be established, which will act as the “eyes and ears” for WP in the community. In order to impart a sense of ownership in the project, local residents will be encouraged to participate either by self-nominating or nominating another member of the community.

Members of the CRG will become the community’s key points of contact for the project and will be responsible for supporting WP in providing accurate and timely information to the community and leading some local discussions. The CRG will meet on a monthly basis and provide regular feedback to WP. The regularity of the meetings allows early identification and resolution of any issues that arise, reducing the chance of adverse media attention.

To ensure effective management of the CRG in this project, the group will be guided by clear Terms of Reference (ToR) and a sunset date will be agreed upon.

### **Landowner Feedback Program**

WP recently conducted an informal survey of all participating landowners. This was in response to a shire council meeting discussion. The results showed that all landowners were satisfied with WP’s handling of the project (with the exception of one, which has been addressed). Landowners were also asked about possible recipients of the community fund. This information will be used to guide the relevant process associated with that aspect of the project.

## Analyse

### **Develop a process of collecting and analysing feedback**

A variety of simple feedback mechanisms have been and will continue to be developed to collect community views outside of the information forums. These may include, but are not limited to, the distribution and collection of feedback forms by CRG members and an online feedback form on the company website.

WP recently sought public input into the brolog study. Residents were invited to contribute observation details based on personal experience. Questionnaires were made available for completion at the informal brolog BBQ, posted on the website and forwarded to people who expressed an interest.

As stated above, WP contacted all landowners to invite feedback in relation to their level of satisfaction of WP’s handling of the project.

## Community Consultation Strategy

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WP acknowledges that the consultation process will be ineffective unless the views of the community are considered, are seen to be considered and appropriate action is taken to alleviate any concerns that arise.

### Recommend

#### **Detailed records kept to inform the planning of the wind farm**

Detailed records are being maintained that document the history of community consultation and identify all stakeholder and community issues. These records detail the steps taken to engage the community, the actions taken to resolve their concerns and any future recommendations. The records will be used in the design of the wind farm, and may be used to accompany any statutory application that WP may need to submit for the proposal.

### Communication Tools

The following tools will be used to support the community consultation strategy for the Stockyard Hill project.

#### **Information materials**

Using the information gathered through surveys and the materials previously produced by WP, relevant information sheets that are simple and easy to read with clear supporting diagrams and images either have been or will be developed. These materials will have a distinct local focus so that members of the community will feel that WP is making an effort to address their specific concerns. Examples of topics that may be covered are:

- WP – Who are we?
- Wind Energy in Australia
- Wind Farm Fact Sheets (see below)

The information materials will be produced in a variety of formats in order to appeal to the widest possible audience and distributed at both information sessions as well as being readily available through the Community Reference Group.

#### *Flyers and Mail Out*

Flyers will be used to publicise upcoming information sessions and provide an agenda of the topics that will be discussed on the day.

Flyers may take the form of simple, single colour, double-sided information sheets, covering a range of topics such as: “What’s all this about wind?” and “Wind energy and you”.

Mail Outs are used to convey similar messages. These are sealed envelopes and addressed to the resident.

#### *Fact Sheets*

Information on specific topics of interest will take the form of easy to read fact sheets. The following are currently available on our website:

1. Wind Farm Basics
2. Wind Farming & the Australian Electricity System
3. Wind Farming & the Environment
4. Wind Farming & Tourism
5. Wind Farm Siting Issues
6. Wind Farms & Noise

## Community Consultation Strategy

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7. Wind Farms & Visual Amenity
8. Wind Farms & Bird & Bat Impacts
9. Wind Farming on a Traditional Farm
10. Wind Farming, Electromagnetic Radiation & Interference
11. Wind Farm Safety Issues
12. Wind Farms & Land Values

### *Newsletters*

Several newsletters have been issued which keep members of the community up-to-date with important events, site developments and current issues. This process will continue as the project develops.

### *Mailing List*

A mailing list will be developed so that people who live outside the area covered by the usual mail drop will be able to keep informed on the project. A message on the website will be posted instructing people how to add themselves to the mailing list.

### **Personal visits**

WP is currently in the process of contacting and offering to visit every non-participating resident within 5 km of the project boundary. Exceptions to this include residents in Beaufort and Skipton, who are dealt with by "One on One" meetings in the towns. This is to inform the local community of the project and also allows WP to hear the thoughts of residents directly. Brief notes on these visits are also kept for our records.

The Best Practice Guidelines expect every adjoining landowner to be visited. This aspect forms part of this strategy.

It has been found that many residents are satisfied with the proposal and are satisfied with a phone call, provided they are not adjoining. Nonetheless, the offer of a visit is made to all residents within 5 km and accepted by some.

### **Information sessions**

Several information sessions have already been conducted and have been used to inform and the community about different aspects of the project. This process will continue and interested members of the community will continue to be given the opportunity to attend open information sessions where they will have a chance to voice their own opinions and concerns. The facilitator will ensure that participants remain focussed on relevant issues by guiding discussions towards resolution. Information learned from these sessions will further assist WP in tailoring our communications.

### **Advertisements**

To ensure maximum attendance, information sessions have been publicised in the local newspapers and on the community bulletin boards. Additional advertisements clarifying common misconceptions surrounding wind farms and identifying some of the key benefits of renewable energy sources will also be placed in the local media if the need arises.

### **Media monitoring and issues management**

Local and metropolitan media will be monitored for stories that are relevant to WP, wind energy and the development of wind farms. This will allow any positive community sentiment to be incorporated into future consultation forums and should the project receive any negative publicity, an appropriate response will be issued in a timely manner.

### **Site visit**

## Community Consultation Strategy

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A site visit will not be undertaken for this project. The Chalicum Hills Wind Farm is located approximately 14km from the project boundary and can be clearly viewed from many positions surrounding the proposed wind farm. Additionally, members of the community are able to view the Waubra Wind Farm, which is currently under construction between Ballarat and Beaufort.

### Website

The website underwent a major facelift in early 2008 which has enabled WP to improve its communication to stakeholders. The available features include:

- Downloadable newsletter
- Broilga questionnaire
- Project information and updates
- Contact details for all community queries
- Downloadable information materials
- FAQs
- Upcoming events
- Information about the CRG
- Answers to community issues and concerns gathered from visits and meetings

### Action Plan

The following timeline has been proposed for the implementation of the consultation strategy.

Item	Time Line
Undertake stakeholder and issues analysis and define scope of the consultation	
Prepare milestones action plan	Already completed
Prepare information for consultation	Already completed
Development of an information page dedicated to the Stockyard Hill project on the website	Already completed
Media monitoring and issues management	As required
Landowner Phone Survey. Inform of project progress, feedback on our processes, neighbour information	Started week of 31/3/08
Neighbour Visits/Contacts (within 5km of boundary)	Gleaning info from survey phone calls
Broilga Study barbecue. Inform community of survey process and implications.	Already completed
Community Fund Beneficiaries. Community suggestions gathered from personal visits.	Start week of 7/4/08
Regular Shire Meetings. Provide consultation update, present strategies & plans, indicate level of record keeping.	Attend every 2 months. Next one: 15/7/08
One-on-one meetings (Skipton)	13/5/08

## Community Consultation Strategy

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One-on-one meetings (Beaufort)	14/5/08
<b>• Determination of Brolga Setback Guidelines/Final Layout Determination</b>	
Consult with landowners that are affected by setbacks	4/6/08
Hold meeting with landowners that lose turbines	25/6/08
Offer to brief Ministers	18/6/08
Prepare website update	22/6/08
<b>• Referral Submission</b>	27/6/08
Publish referral information on website.	27/6/08
Email to Ministers informing of referral submission	27/6/08
Advertise Information Session	4 & 5/6/08 for 3 weeks leading up to event.
Newsletter	Coincide with information session
Information Session: Project Scope/Brolga Results	26/7/08
Suggestion Box at Skipton and Beaufort Post Offices	27/7/08
Consultation report	December 2008
<b>• Planning Application Submission</b>	
Newsletter advertising submission and info day	3 weeks notice of event
Advertisements in paper for info day	3 weeks notice of event
Information Day	Within 6 weeks of Planning Application Submission
<b>• Panel Hearing</b>	

### Milestone Action Plan

This document was prepared by Socom and lists various milestones associated with the project. It includes aspects of consultation if an EES is required, and is shown in Appendix 3.

### Appendices

[These are the appendices as they appeared in the referral submission to the Minister for Planning in June 2008.]

Appendix 1: Stakeholder Issues Analysis Chart

Appendix 2: Consultation Best Practice Guidelines

Appendix 3: Stockyard Hill Milestone and Action Plan



Appendix 2: Stakeholder Issues Analysis Chart

Stakeholder issues analysis chart	Noise	Visual amenity	Impact on property values	Number of turbines	Position of turbines	Size and scope of the project	Impact on native wildlife	Impact on environment	Impact on tourism	Green energy contribution	Carbon footprint	Greenhouse gas reductions	Fire risks	Jobs generated	Ongoing maintenance	Turbine reliability	Steps taken to engage consult the community	Benefits to the community	Community fund	Community views/position	Facts about renewable energy	Impact on business values	Compliance with relevant legislation and regulations	Councillor support/opposition	Minister support/opposition	Achieves state/federal policy objectives	EES Required?	EPBC Controlled Action?	Monitoring tower installation	Height greater than 110m?	
	<b>Primary Stakeholders</b>																														
Residents and landowners in the immediate vicinity																															
Residents and landowners in nearby townships																															
Western Plain Landscape Guardians Group																															
Local businesses and tourism																															
Local community services eg: CFA, local schools, health services etc)																															
Pryenees Shire Council and councillors																															
State Ministers																															
Federal Ministers																															
Department of Sustainability and Environment																															
Department of Planning and Community Development																															
Federal Department of Environment, Heritage and The Arts																															
<b>Secondary Stakeholders</b>																															
Bird Observation and Conservation Australia and other bird enthusiasts																															
Hepburn Renewable Energy Association																															
Sustainability Victoria																															
Department of Primary Industries																															
Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development																															
Other tourist operators																															
Local print media																															
Metropolitan print media																															
Broadcast media (ABC, Win, Prime, Ten) & Radio (774, local radio)																															
Beaufort Tourist Information outlet																															
Local Indigenous community																															
Air Services																															
Civil Aviation Safety Authority																															

**Primary Stakeholders**

Those groups that are directly affected by or directly involved in, the development of a wind farm at Stockyard Hills

**Secondary Stakeholders**

Those groups that are indirectly affected by or have some interest in the development of a wind farm at Stockyard Hills



Appendix 3: Consultation Best Practice Guidelines



## Consultation BPG Checklist

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<b>Siting</b>					
3.1.1.1	Regardless of planning requirements, has the planning authority been advised of the installation of a wind monitoring tower?				
3.1.1.4 and 3.1.3.3	If Native Title applies, has there been early consultation with the relevant Traditional Owner?				
3.1.2	Has the local planning authority been contacted to determine planning, environmental and amenity issues?				
	Has the local planning authority been contacted to seek suggestions about potential stakeholders?				
3.1.2	Has a preliminary check with the relevant state planning authority about land use zoning and restrictions been made?				
3.1.2.3	Has it been ascertained from the state authority whether approval for such disturbance (natural vegetation) is required?				
3.1.2.4	Has the local planning authority been contacted to determine whether there are items/places of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal archaeological or historical value on or near the proposed site?				
3.1.2.4	Have local Aboriginal groups/Traditional Owners been confidentially contacted in cases of aboriginal heritage?				
3.1.2.7	If air strips are nearby, have we contacted CASA or the local aerodrome supervisor?				
3.1.3	Has it been considered whether community consultation would be useful at this stage or whether it may cause unnecessary concern?				
3.1.3.1	Have owners of the land which may potentially be used for siting turbines been visited?				
	Have immediate neighbours of land owners been visited?				
3,1,3,1	Has a consistent approach with regards to communication strategies for landowners been put in place?				
<b>Feasibility</b>					
3.2.2.4	Has the draft project layout been used as the starting point for discussions with landowners, authorities and the community?				
3.2.1	Has a Stakeholder Communication and Consultation Plan been developed?				
	Does it include a procedure for informing stakeholders if the project is abandoned?				
3.2.1	Has face-to-face consultation begun with a broad and representative community cross section				
3.2.1	Have records been kept of all consultation undertaken such as who was consulted and what method of consultation was used?				
	Does the record contain communication with stakeholders with a justified interest?				



## Consultation BPG Checklist

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Feasibility				
	Does the record contain a number of communication mechanisms to ensure the community is kept informed?			
3.2.1.1	Has the local planning authority been notified of our intention to initiate a feasibility study on the site?			
3.2.1.1	Has advice been obtained from the local planning authority about any advertising required for this approval? <b>Should be a will - regulatory requirement.</b>			
	If advertising is required, is it included in the Stakeholder Communication and Consultation Plan?			
3.2.1.2	Has the Stakeholder Communication and Consultation Plan been reviewed with the local planning authority?			
3.2.1.2	Has it been ascertained how the outcomes of consultation can be incorporated into project planning?			
3.2.1.3	Have the relevant State and Commonwealth agencies (and personnel) with a stake in the planning approvals process for the project been identified?			
3.2.5	Has community consultation commenced?			
3.2.5	Have the planning authorities been notified of the intention to initiate a feasibility study?			
	<b><i>Wind Monitoring Tower</i></b>			
3.2.1.4	Have Air Services been provided with the timing, description and location details of any monitoring mast exceeding 20 metres in height?			
3.2.1.4	If the proposed wind monitoring structure will exceed 110 metres have CASA been advised of the timing, description and location of the mast?			
3.2.1.4	Have both the regional and local rural fire services been consulted in order to work towards fire response action plans?			
3.2.2.2	Have detailed discussions been held with the land owner/other appropriate land owners to identify any special constraints on the layout.			
3.2.2.3	Has the routing of buried cables been discussed with the land owner to identify unforeseen constraints on the wind farm layout?			
3.2.4.2	Has an agreement with the Traditional Owner been formalised which sets out the terms and conditions for undertaking site investigations?			
3.2.4.2	Has specialist assistance been sought when dealing with Traditional Owners?			



## Consultation BPG Checklist

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Development				
3.2.1	Has a Consultation Report been prepared?			
3.4.1	Have the questions posed by the planning authority as a result of public notification/advertising been responded to?			
3.4.1	Is the Stakeholder Communication Plan continuing?			
3.3.3	Have any changes to the original design been regularly communicated to the community?			
3.3.3	Have any plans to withdraw from the proposal been communicated to the community?			
3.4.3	Have the relevant stakeholders been consulted with about the conditions of approval?			
3.3.4	Have agreements been formalised with Native Title Claimants?			

### Issue History:

Issue	Date	Description
A	25/02/2008	Original to Socom

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_



Appendix 4: Stockyard Hill Milestone and Action Plan

## Stockyard Hills Project Milestone and Action Plan

The following action plan is intended as a flexible tool to help guide stakeholder communications for the proposed project at Stockyard Hills. The plan is driven by project milestones and their associated communication opportunities, including information provision and consultation. This is a living and breathing document that should be regularly updated as new milestones are identified or achieved. For advice on community engagement please see end note.

Project Milestones	Communication Opportunities	Target Audiences	Actions Required	Timeline
The broilga study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal meeting to discuss the scope of the study and when it will be completed. Seek stakeholder input</li> <li>Informal meeting to share results with interested parties. To be held in a relaxed and appropriately sized venue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bird enthusiasts</li> <li>Western Plains Landscape Guardians</li> <li>Pyrenees Council</li> <li>Residents and landowners</li> </ul>	<p>Letters to target audiences. Include information on date/time, venue, meeting purpose and expectations.</p> <p>Organise catering</p> <p>Liaise with Council to arrange a suitable venue/date for information session</p> <p>Place item in newsletter. Include time/date/location/meeting purpose</p> <p>Prepare flyer and place in local shops/community centre. Update website</p>	
Application to DPCD to determine if EES is necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform stakeholders of application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local and nearby residents and landowners</li> <li>Western Plains Landscape Guardians</li> <li>Local tourism businesses</li> <li>Local community services</li> <li>Pyrenees Council</li> </ul>	<p>Advise Council of application by telephone</p> <p>Upload DPCD application and the supporting information to Wind Power (WP) website (10 days after lodging with DPCD)</p> <p>Prepare information sheets as easy-to-read guides on the supporting information</p> <p>Place item in newsletter with explanation of what this means &amp; what's involved</p>	
Determination of EES application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform stakeholders of determination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local and nearby residents and landowners</li> <li>Western Plains Landscape Guardians</li> <li>Local tourism businesses</li> <li>Local community services</li> <li>Pyrenees Council</li> <li>Bird Observation &amp; Conservation Australia</li> <li>Local print media</li> </ul>	<p>Upload of determination to WP website</p> <p>Place item in newsletter with details of how the EES will be conducted (if required) and an estimated timeline</p> <p>Letters to listed target audiences (excluding media)</p> <p>Media release and personal briefing with the local print journalists</p>	
Engagement of company to carry out EES (if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information session to notify stakeholders that EES is being conducted and discuss what it entails and the estimated timeframe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local and nearby residents and landowners</li> <li>Western Plains Landscape Guardians</li> <li>Local tourism businesses</li> <li>Local community services</li> <li>Pyrenees Council</li> </ul>	<p>Place in newsletter &amp; invite interested parties to attend casual information session</p> <p>Letters to listed target audiences. Include details of company contracted, what is involved and expected timeline</p> <p>Create new page on website for information relating to the EES and estimated timeline</p>	

Project Milestones	Communication Opportunities	Target Audiences	Actions Required	Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual meetings with landowners to discuss project details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adjoining landowners</li> </ul>	<p>Personal letter to adjoining landowners advising of WP's wish to meet and advising WP will be in contact to arrange suitable date/time</p> <p>Place in newsletter – advising that WP will be meeting with immediately adjoining landowners to discuss X during Y period</p> <p>Meetings to be conducted on landowner's properties</p>	
Results of EES (if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual meetings with interested parties to discuss the results and what they mean</li> <li>▪ Casual information sessions at the local library or community centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>Facilitate easy access to the EES by placing a copy(s) of the EES at the local library/school/council/post office in nearby towns</p> <p>Upload EES report onto website</p> <p>Produce an easy-to-read version of the EES with key outcomes and upload onto website</p> <p>Place item in newsletter with results and clear explanations of what they mean. Inform people of where to go for more information and how they can make formal submissions</p> <p>Letters to target audiences. Include easy to read version of EES and advise where they can access full report and how to make submissions</p> <p>Media release (local and metro)</p>	
Finalisation of design (& revision of design if applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Information session/BBQ to show community what the final design looks like</li> <li>▪ Individual meetings with interested parties to discuss design and invite feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local and nearby residents and landowners</li> <li>▪ Western Plains Landscape Guardians</li> <li>▪ Local tourism businesses</li> <li>▪ Local community services</li> <li>▪ Pyrenees Council</li> </ul>	<p>Upload design onto website include mechanism for feedback. Highlight how community input has shaped the design. Set out next steps eg: planning application and timeline. Include details of community consultation report. Invite feedback.</p> <p>Place item in newsletter, include images and clear descriptions of markings. Highlight how community input has shaped the design. Set out next steps eg: planning application and timeline. Include details of community consultation report. Invite feedback</p> <p>Media release to local media (metro if required)</p> <p>Letters to all stakeholders thanking them for their input, advising them of next steps and where to go for further information</p>	
Lodge planning application		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local and nearby residents and landowners</li> <li>▪ Western Plains Landscape Guardians</li> <li>▪ Local tourism businesses</li> <li>▪ Local community services</li> <li>▪ Pyrenees Council</li> <li>▪ Local and metro media</li> </ul>	<p>Upload planning application onto website. Include timeline, next steps and information regarding how to make formal submissions</p> <p>Letters to listed stakeholders</p> <p>Place item in newsletter. Include timeline and next steps. Advise stakeholders of their avenues for further input.</p> <p>Media release (local and metro)</p>	

## **End note:**

### **Community engagement opportunities**

Effective community consultation requires the provision of adequate opportunities for community input and discussion. Information sessions and community meetings are often not ideal methods of communication as large numbers of people often make it difficult for everyone to have a say. The main aim of holding an information session is to share new facts or details about the project. If there is no new information, it is difficult to encourage people to attend.

A more effective method of engagement may be to set up a dedicated information stall at nominated towns on a rotating basis. This would provide an opportunity for interested parties to meet with a Wind Power representative at a mutually convenient time to discuss the issues relevant to them.

For example: (dates given as an indication only)

Wind Power information stalls could be held at:

Beaufort on 8 March between 11am – 2pm  
Skipton on 15 March between 11am – 2pm  
Snake Valley on 22 March between 11am – 2pm  
Ararat on 29 March between 11am – 2pm

Those interested in attending would need to make an appointment. This could be achieved by phone, email or in-person on the day.

Appointment times could run for 15 – 20 minutes each. If more time was required, people would need to book a double session. This would ensure that each stakeholder was able to discuss their concerns privately and without disruption.

The information stalls could be advertised in the newsletter and in the local papers. Flyers could be placed in the local shops/post office/council building/library/community centres.



Appendix 5: Examples of Newsletters

## Business Cards—Created Using Wind Energy

For Wind Power's business cards and other minor stationery, we were able to find a company that powers its operations using solely wind energy. Idaho Design, who do our website and desktop publishing, were able to source the paper from Mohawk Fine Papers, which increased its purchase of wind-generated electricity RECs from 60,000,000 kWh to 100,000,000 kWh annually. This is 100% of the electric power required for all of Mohawk's operations. Additionally, they make a range of paper which is carbon neutral. In their own words: "Because paper is a highly disposable item, produced in vast quantities in a very resource and energy-intensive process, Mohawk has a responsibility to be a good environmental steward. We believe that conserving energy, using emission-free energy, and supporting sustainable forestry practices are fundamental to mitigating climate change." Quite an impressive stance.

## Website Upgrade

Wind Power's web site is in the middle of an update process. Idaho Design are working on improving the user friendliness of the site, including significant structural changes. New things to be added will include a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions section, an extensive photo gallery (including an internal turbine tour), performance data of the Wonthaggi wind farm, including power generation by-the-hour, every hour, for the last 20 months.

## New Office and Contact Details

Wind Power has moved to a new office. Located in downtown Hawthorn, the office sits high above the bustling shopping district of Glenferrie Rd. The office has an abundance of natural light, huge open spaces and an inventive car stacker in the basement, although no one has been game to use it.

Note the new phone numbers also on the front of this newsletter.

Additionally, please use the email address [info@wind-power.com.au](mailto:info@wind-power.com.au) for contacting us electronically.

### Did You Know?

... that there is a Black version of the search engine Google that saves energy? Normally Google is white on a computer screen, which uses more power. In January 2007 a blog post titled "Black Google Would Save 750 Megawatt-hours a Year" proposed the theory that a black version of the Google search engine would save a fair bit of energy due to the popularity of the search engine. Visit [www.blackle.com](http://www.blackle.com)

... that by turning down the central heating by 1 degree you can knock 10% off your heating bill?



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*Wonthaggi Sunset. The sun slipping below the horizon at the Wonthaggi site.*



# Stockyard Hill Wind Farm

## Newsletter

Issue 2 October 2007

Welcome to the second edition of the Stockyard Hill newsletter. This newsletter provides information to the communities involved in the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm development, situated between Skipton and Beaufort, 50km west of Ballarat. More copies are available by either contacting us, or downloading from our website. See below for details.

## Bird Study Update



*Brolgas at Stockyard Hill. Brett Lane and Associates are currently on site observing 12 breeding pairs of these majestic birds.*

As part of its detailed feasibility studies for the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm, Wind Power has commissioned a detailed investigation of the status and behaviour of all the brolgas near the site.

The brolga is a native crane, predominantly grey in colour with a small red head patch and standing about 1.2 m tall. Pairs of brolgas move each year between many dispersed breeding sites in small wetlands to larger flocking sites on lakes and wetlands where up to 80 to 100 individuals can gather.

About 600 brolgas occur in Victoria and nearby south eastern South Australia. About 85% of these birds occur in south western Victoria, which represents the last remaining stronghold for the species in south eastern Australia. The species once occurred in hundreds around Port Phillip Bay and in the Riverina but wetland drainage and cultivation has reduced numbers to their current lows. Consequently, the species is listed as threatened on the state *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. Under the state wind energy planning guidelines, Wind Power is therefore obliged to investigate the potential impacts of the wind farm on the brolga.

Currently, brolgas have been found breeding on a number of wetlands within 20 km of the Stockyard Hill wind farm site. Studies are currently underway to document the movements of these breeding birds as the breeding season progresses, eggs hatch and young learn to fly. These studies will help determine how far turbines need to be from breeding sites to reduce the risk of interference with breeding birds.

The studies have been developed in cooperation with the state Department of Sustainability and Environment. By participating in this collaborative effort, Wind Power is making a significant contribution to understanding the brolga and to ensuring that wind farm projects do not seriously threaten its status in Victoria. The studies will significantly inform future efforts to protect and manage this iconic bird.

In terms of what's next for the project, this will depend on the brolga study. The results of this investigation will determine the location of some monitoring masts to gather more information on wind speed and direction for the area.



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## Stockyard Hill Information Day

More than 100 people attended a wind farm information day held at the Steam Preservation Rally Hall. The session provided an opportunity for people to meet, learn about and discuss the wind farm proposal. Consulting experts on flora and fauna and wind farm engineering attended and were able to answer a wide range of questions about wind farms. Representatives from the Western Plains Guardian Group accepted an invitation from Wind Power to display information and a Guardian group from near Smeaton also put up large signs outside the Hall.

A large vinyl map of the area between Beaufort and Skipton was displayed and a number of people showed interest in purchasing the map for local display. Wind Power has agreed to donate a map to the community once it is replaced with a more definitive plan, which should be available by the middle of next year.

See below for the next community event: a community barbecue.



**Data Tower Installation.** A combined effort of Enviromet, Wind Power and a local land owner saw the recent erection of a 60m data tower.

## What is Forecasting?

Australia's national electricity market will soon include forecasting of wind energy production based on real time analysis of wind speeds. This is an important step in integrating renewable energy into the grid and in developing alternatives to coal fired power generation.

The forecasting system can predict the level of energy production 6 hours ahead of time with an accuracy of above 95%. This means the managers of the electrical grid can see when, where and how much wind energy will be produced across the grid. Based on this information other generators (such as gas and hydro) can be directed to increase or decrease their production so that power is produced with a low carbon footprint.

Wind Power spokesman Vaughan Hulme said "opponents of wind energy criticise the technology because it only generates when the wind blows and so does not produce 'base load' power. This new system shows how the increasing levels of wind (and solar) energy can effectively contribute to our growing power needs."

The system can also be applied to larger scale solar production and is modelled on European electricity management practices. These are much more advanced in integrating energy production from renewables and carbon producing fossil fuels. The forecasting system will be included in the proposed design for the Stockyard Hill wind farm.

### Wind Power

### Community BBQ

*This is a chance for the Stockyard Hill community to have a chat to Wind Power about some of the latest developments with the wind farm. Brett Lane will be there to speak about his broilga findings, as well as the Wind Power folk to keep you all updated on other things. All this over a beer and some chops, compliments of Wind Power.*

**When:** Fri 30 Nov, 6:30pm

**Where:** Lake Goldsmith Hall

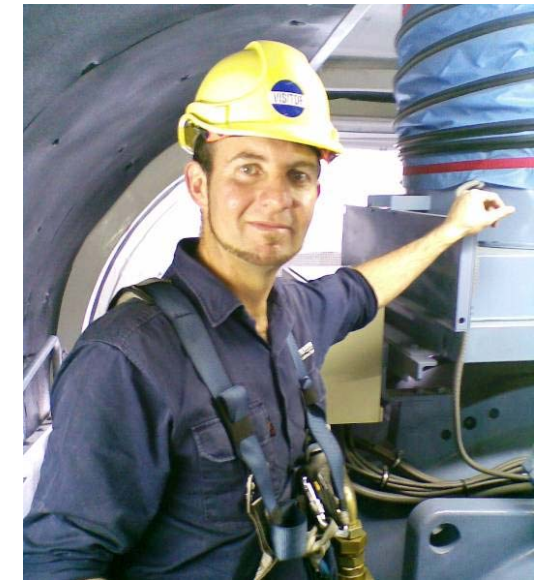
*Please RSVP by 23 November so we can properly cater. We don't want anyone going hungry.*

## Wind Power's New Recruit

The new kid on the block at Wind Power is Ross Richards. Ross will be involved with general project management, but his main responsibility is community liaison. As such, Ross will be putting in appearances at community meetings, writing newsletters, getting relevant information published on the web site, and coordinating other community activities.

Ross has a varied background. Before moving back to Melbourne he was directing a non-profit organization called Wollangarra in the heart of the Victorian high country near Licola, battling fire and flood in the last year. Otherwise, he has been a teacher in various schools around the state, worked full time on the family farm at Anakie (near Geelong), and worked as an engineer for the Ford Motor Company after finishing his degree in aerospace engineering at RMIT.

Ross is looking forward to his career in the renewable energy industry, particularly getting to know the communities with whom Wind Power is involved.



**The new boy.** Wind Power's newest addition up inside the nacelle of a Wonthaggi turbine.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Wind Power is committed to community consultation. We try to answer all questions and listen to everyone that is involved with the areas affected by proposed wind farms. These questions below have come directly from a community reference group, and we are happy to answer them here for the benefit of others.

**Q. Do turbines cause fires?**

In rural areas, electricity-related fires are most likely to result from damage to overhead power lines by falling branches. As all high-voltage connections for turbines around the site will be run underground, the risk of electricity-related fire is extremely low.

Each turbine is also fitted with a comprehensive lightning protection system that safely transfers any high voltages or currents directly to the earth without affecting turbine performance. However, any electrical facility has the potential to catch fire. The fire control methods for wind farms are the same as those used for all other high-voltage electrical assets.

**Q. Who receives financial payment for a wind farm project?**

Landowners hosting turbines on their land as part of the wind farm project will receive an annual payment of approximately \$7000 per turbine for the life of the wind farm.

The owner of the wind farm will also pay \$500 per turbine, per year into a Community Fund. The Community Fund will be used to support a range of projects that directly benefit the local community.

*I'm not hosting a turbine on my property. Will I be eligible for financial payment as an adjoining landowner?*

Only landowners who have agreed to host turbines on their property as part of the wind farm project will receive a direct financial payment. The community in general will, however, benefit from the Community Fund.

**Q. What sort of projects will benefit from the Community Fund?**

The Community Fund will provide financial support to organisations and individuals that work to make a positive and lasting contribution to their community. Further details on the types of projects that will be eligible for funding will be determined through community consultation, the community reference

group and ultimately be decided by the committee formed to administer the Community Fund.

**Q. Who decides which projects will receive funding from the Community Fund?**

The committee administering the Community Fund, made up of local people who wish to be involved, will ultimately decide which projects will receive funding.

**Q. Is it possible for more than one project to benefit from the Community Fund?**

Yes, it is possible that multiple projects will receive funding. The exact number of projects will depend on the size and scope of each individual project and may vary from year to year and be decided by the committee.

**Q. What is an example of a project that might benefit from the Community Fund?**

Some examples of eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Recycled watering systems for community parks, gardens and sporting grounds
- New playground equipment for the local school
- Community centre upgrade
- Local festivals and community events

**Q. How will funding applications be assessed?**

The Community Fund assessment criteria will be developed by the committee established to administer the Community Fund. As stated above, the committee will be made up of interested and suitably qualified local people.

# Stockyard Hill Wind Farm

## Newsletter

Issue 3 July 2008

Welcome to the third edition of the Stockyard Hill newsletter. This newsletter provides information to the communities involved in the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm development, situated between Skipton and Beaufort, 50km west of Ballarat. More copies are available by either contacting us, or downloading from our website. See below for details.

## Proposal Ready for Consultation

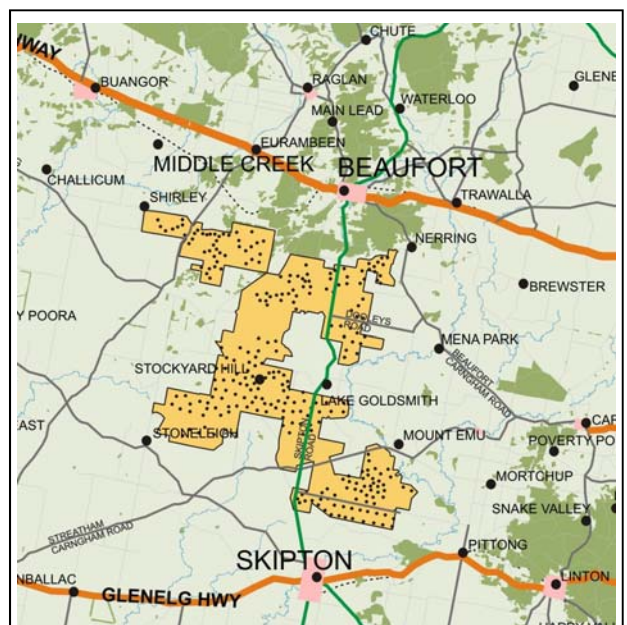
The layout of the wind farm has now been prepared for consultation with the community. This input is invited at the information day (see over), which can be used to revise the project before the final planning application is prepared.

A submission was made in June to the Minister for Planning. It was a referral to determine whether the project requires an Environmental Effects Statement, which is a document that a developer must prepare if it is deemed that the project may have a significant environmental impact.

The referral submission contains details about the scope of the wind farm. We have been working in conjunction with DSE to determine appropriate turbine positioning so as to minimise potential environmental impacts. Additionally, the referral contains the following: preliminary landscape and visual assessment; detailed flora and fauna study; the targeted Brolga assessment; cultural heritage and geotechnical.

The studies have had a substantial impact on the project—originally there were 370 potential turbine positions and this has been reduced to 282. The referral documents are available to the public and can be found on the website of the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Now we have the proposed layout we can investigate likely grid connection options. These include augmenting the 66kV line to Ballarat and a new powerline connecting to the 500 kV line south of Lismore.



**Referral Layout.** This is the layout as it will be presented to the Minister, showing 282 turbine locations.

The capacity of the wind farm is such that it is currently intended to use a pole-type construction for to connect to the grid. Once fully investigated, the best option will be further detailed in the planning application.

## Benefits

Stockyard Hill Wind Farm should produce approximately 1.482 TWh (terawatt hours, or 1,482,000 MWh) of electricity per year (as a long term average based on an assumed capacity factor of 30%). (These figures are only assumed and site monitoring of wind speeds is currently being undertaken. This information will be used to determine a site specific capacity factor. In the interim a figure of 30% is applied, which is a typical capacity factor for wind farms in Victoria.)

Over the long term this amount of electricity generation is the equivalent to providing for more than 211,000 dwellings, or approximately 16% of Melbourne homes or more than 6 times the homes in Ballarat, per year. It represents an equivalent saving of 1,347,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, taking 340,000 cars off the road, or planting 2.2 million trees, per year.

In terms of economic benefits, the community fund would receive over \$140,000 p.a. for 25 years, while local landowners would be paid a total of over \$2,100,000 p.a. Rates paid to the Pyrenees Shire would be over \$540,000 p.a. All these amounts are indexed to CPI. Additionally, there would be substantial local employment created, including jobs during construction (such as road building and fencing), ongoing operation jobs, and other indirect jobs (such as catering).



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## Information Day

**A**n information day at the Lake Goldsmith Hall will be held on Saturday 26 July 2008. The aim of the session is to inform the public about the lodgement of the referral, the scope of the project and the way in which the results of the targeted Brologa study have been used to modify the wind farm design. Brett Lane, our flora and fauna consultant, will be available to discuss the study. Additionally, we'll be informing the public about the planning application process, including matters such as the referral, environmental effects statements, the application, the selection of the panel, the hearing and the nature of environmental planning conditions.

Wind Power representatives will also be available to discuss more general matters about the project.



### ***Referral Information Day***

**When:** *Saturday 26 July  
11:00am to 3:00pm*

**Where:** *Lake Goldsmith Hall*

Brett lane will be discussing flora and fauna study results and others will talk about the planning application process.

*Food will also be available. Contact us for more details.*

## What's Next?

**T**he next stage of the project will be consulting with the community about the current layout. This information can then be incorporated into the preparation of the planning application. Wind Power expects to lodge this in the last quarter of 2008, although this would be delayed if an Environmental Effects Statement is required.

Wind Power will be working on the preparation of the following detailed assessments, to be included in the planning application:

- Landscape and visual assessment
- Town planning
- Geomorphology
- Electromagnetism
- Acoustics
- Electrical systems study and engineering
- Shadow flicker and blade glint
- Socio-economic
- Traffic and transport
- Flora and fauna (including bat survey, rare flora, habitat hectare, ongoing brologa study, golden sun moth, and striped legless lizard)
- Cultural heritage management plan
- Micro siting

We will continue to monitor the wind and install additional masts, the next being an 80m lattice mast. We will also continue to consult with neighbours of the project. If you are a neighbour or an interested party and haven't been contacted, please call Ross on 9819 0117.

## Wind Power News

**T**he Bald Hills Wind Farm is now on the way to being constructed, with Mitsui & Co. (Aust) taking ownership of the project. Wind Power remains involved by being part of the development team and will be managing the wind farm for at least the first 10 years of the life of the project. This is an exciting time for the company.

Largely due to this, Wind Power is currently experiencing great expansion, with five new staff joining the team and more projects being considered.

## Community Reference Group Members Wanted

**A**CRG is a way in which members of the public can provide input into the project in an official capacity. It allows locals to provide feedback immediately to Wind Power, and for Wind Power to communicate directly to members of the local community. It is a vehicle to voice community concerns and also provide insight which can help all members of the project, be they farmers or engineers.

Typically, a CRG involves a small number of people representing different groups of the community that have an interest in the project, as well as a Wind Power representative. They would meet on a regular basis and the results of those meetings are passed on to the rest of the community, or fed back to any external parties or organizations.

If you are interested in joining the CRG, please contact the office and we will inform you of future developments.



Appendix 6: Sample of advertisement in printed press



Wind Power



# Stockyard Hill Wind Farm *Community BBQ*

Wind Power would like to invite the local community to a barbecue to get an update on the bird study for the proposed wind farm. Talk to fauna expert Brett Lane over beers and a barby, compliments of Wind Power.

*When:* Fri 29 February, 6:30pm

*Where:* Lake Goldsmith Hall

*RSVP:* To Kasia by 23 November

*Ph 9819 0117 for more details.*