

Stockyard Hill Wind Farm

Newsletter | Edition 7: December 2010



Together we can
make a difference.™

Welcome to the seventh 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, 35 km west of Ballarat. More copies are available by either contacting us, or downloading from our website.

Planning approval for Stockyard Hill Wind Farm

On 29 November 2010, the Minister for Planning announced the approval for a 157-wind turbine facility and associated infrastructure at the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm. This is a significant milestone and a major step forward for the Stockyard Hill proposal.

The Minister's decision comes after nearly three years of investigation and consultation, and a comprehensive assessment process with 21 days of public hearings. The assessment process has been a thorough and rigorous one where people who were interested in the project have had the opportunity to have a say about the proposed wind farm.

The original planning permit application lodged in December 2009 was for 242 turbines. During the panel hearing process, 30 turbines were withdrawn by Origin as a response to public submissions and issues identified at the public hearings. The Minister accepted the recommendations of the Planning Panel to remove a further 55 turbines from the proposal, due to potential impacts on the Brolga identified by new information presented during the panel hearings, and also to reduce impacts on the historic Mawallock homestead.

We are now examining the Panel report to fully understand its reasoning and will carefully examine the permit conditions set down by the Minister to understand our obligations and ensure that the relevant issues are addressed. You can download a copy of the Panel report from: <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/panelsandcommittees/reports/permit-call-in-panel-reports#stockyard> or by contacting Planning Panels Victoria on 03 9637 9691.

There is still much work to do before we can start construction, including further technical and environmental assessments and developing management plans so that any potential issues can be appropriately managed. These works will take some time. In the meantime, we will continue to consult with the local community and relevant Government agencies as we prepare for the next stage of the project.

Stockyard Hill Wind Farm remains a very important project for Origin and its success in receiving a planning permit is due in no small part to the participation and support from the local community.

We wish to thank all participating landowners and the local community for their interest, support and involvement with the project and the approvals process so far. We look forward to working with the community in delivering this project and will continue to keep you informed as the project progresses.

The Stockyard Hill Wind Farm is just one of the many ways in which Origin is working with communities to create a more sustainable future.

For more information visit:
www.stockyardhillwindfarm.com.au or call 1800 753 730



Origin's Cullerin Range Wind Farm, New South Wales.

No obstacle lighting proposed at Stockyard Hill

Obstacle lighting on wind turbines – also known as aviation safety lighting – has been a topic of interest, not only for communities around Stockyard Hill, but other wind farms across Australia.

In responding to issues raised by the community about obstacle lighting on wind turbines, Origin engaged specialist aviation consultants to advise on whether obstacle lighting would be required at the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm.

After undertaking a detailed risk assessment and engaging with a number of local aviation operators and stakeholders, our consultant's report concluded that the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm presents a very low level of risk to the safety of aircraft and airport operations. As such, obstacle lighting on the wind turbines is not considered necessary. We put forward the expert consultant's advice to the Planning Panel and on its recommendation, the planning permit for the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm does not allow obstacle lighting on the turbines.

Obstacle lighting was initially installed at a number of wind farms where wind turbines were higher than 110 metres, under the guidance of a Draft Advisory Circular by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA). However, the Draft Advisory Circular was withdrawn by CASA in September 2008 which meant there was a lack of clarity about what was required.

In the absence of any other relevant regulatory guidelines we have engaged with CASA and adopted the risk-based approach for our wind developments. A recent assessment of Origin's Cullerin Range Wind Farm in New South Wales, including consultation with local and regional aviators, communities and regulators, has led us to switch off the obstacle lights at Cullerin Range on 1 November 2010.

Wind Farm Noise Paper

The Clean Energy Council has recently released a report on wind farm noise prepared by independent noise assessors, Sonus. The study finds that noise standards and guidelines used in Australia are amongst the most stringent and the most contemporary in the world. It also finds no evidence that there is anything produced by wind turbines that can make people sick.

The report can be downloaded from the Clean Energy Council website: <http://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/cec/resourcecentre/reports.html>, or you can call us and we will send a copy out to you.

Local AFL champion named inaugural Clean Energy Ambassador

The Clean Energy Council (CEC) has named former All Australian champion and seventh generation potato farmer Danny "Spud" Frawley as Australia's first Clean Energy Ambassador.

The former St Kilda defender and one-time Richmond coach led a CEC 'clean energy' visit on 13 October to the Ballarat region, including a whistle-stop at the Central Victoria Solar Cities' Ballarat Solar Park of which Origin is a partner. The visit was attended by a number of politicians, bureaucrats and media representatives.

Danny Frawley spoke passionately about his vision for his three children and how he believes that clean energy is the way to go towards looking after the land.

"I have a passion for the Ballarat region and it's great to see so many wind turbines and other clean energy projects taking shape. It means money and jobs going back into our community," Mr Frawley said.

"Most importantly this energy is clean and helping the environment in this area that I love. Renewable energy enjoys 90 per cent public support for good reason – it produces electricity naturally from the sun and the wind."



Source: Clean Energy Council, October 2010

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