

Walcha Energy
Fitzroy Street
Walcha 2354



3 May 2023

Dear Mark and Dan,

Firstly, thank you for organising the upcoming information sessions for the Ruby Hills Wind Project at Woolbrook Hall and the Walcha Showground.

This a great opportunity to start community consultation on this second renewable project proposed for the Walcha LGA. We are all part of this community and we all want to work together.

We are advised some community members are not comfortable to ask questions at “drop in day” sessions and have asked us to present their questions. Others are interested in hearing the answers to our questions.

To this end, we have listed below a number of questions that people have requested we put to you in advance to enable you to prepare your responses and confirm details around the Ruby Hills Wind project.

We have suggested interested community members attend the information session at around 5.30pm at the Walcha Showground session so they can hear the questions and your answers together.

We look forward to attending your event and to learn more about the Ruby Hills Wind Project.

Yours faithfully,
Voice For Walcha

cc: Clay Preshaw, DPIE
Nicole Brewer, DPIE
Clr Eric Noakes
Clr Scott Kermode
Clr Nena Hicks
Clr Greg Schaefer
Clr Anne-Marie Pointing
Clr Kevin Ferrier
Clr Aurora Reilly
Clr Mark Berry

Some questions from the community ...

The Cumulative Impact

- With Winterbourne Wind now in the planning process and the timeline being pushed back, the Thunderbolt Wind and Bendemeer Energy Hub being slightly ahead of the Ruby Hills Wind Project, does Walcha Energy feel that these projects of such a large Scale are appropriate for our small town?
- If so, what are the clear benefits to community?
- Have you considered the cumulative effect of the construction of Winterbourne Wind Farm, Bendemeer Solar and Wind, Salisbury Solar, Thunderbolts Wind Farm and Ruby Hills Wind overlapping?

Noise

- The cumulative noise created by Winterbourne Wind and Ruby Hills Winds' 260 turbines to the east and west of town will result in a noise assessment that is a two year study. What stage is this study up too and who is the reputable Noise Consultant being used to conduct these studies?
- If we have 2 projects with 260 around town, will we hear the turbines from in town? Will we hear them at night?
- Do you feel that there should be a buffer around town, and affected residents, of at least 5km to reduce your risk and potential impacts to the health of the Walcha community?

Biodiversity

- What percentage of the Ruby Hills Wind project will be on land that will need to be cleared? What land is required for the transmission lines? What impacts will this have to the biodiversity of the affected area?

Resources

- Where is your gravel and water resource for the project coming from? Have they considered this in light of the fact that Winterbourne Wind Farm will have proceeded before them and exhausted a lot of the existing resources?
- How many km of internal farm tracks will need to be built for the project? How many kms of Walcha shire roads will be travelled in the construction period of the project?

Traffic

- The community has identified traffic and transport as a major issue with Winterbourne Wind Farm. What impact will 2 projects have on roads and our ability to move around our council area? How will other industries in Walcha be affected and how can these impacts (with both projects, and Bendemeer solar farm) be mitigated.

Social license

- Guidelines for wind farms say developers require social license. This is a really confusing term. Can you please explain what social license is? How does a developer demonstrate social license? How can such a large project that will have so many impacts on our community hope to achieve social license, especially as it follows on from WWF, another large project proposed for our LGA?
- What is the ownership structure of the Ruby Hills project? What are the current owners' intentions going forward?
- On the Ruby Hills website the following is stated, "*MirusWind was founded in 2003 and has extensive experience developing large scale renewable energy and infrastructure projects. The team strives to*

collaborate with local communities to develop and deliver high calibre, technically and commercially robust projects". Can you please provide the names and details of these projects?

- What is the structure of the Community Consultation Committee for the project? Who will determine who is on the committee and what relevance will it have in listening to the community and shaping the project?
- Can you outline the proposed Community Benefit Fund?
- Can you please explain the decommissioning intentions of the development? What is the monetary and legal commitments to this plan from the developer?
- Can you guarantee with the large workforce required for Winterbourne Wind Farm and then Ruby Hills Wind that rental prices will not increase forcing locals to leave town?
- Why do you make potential landholders sign confidentiality agreements? Are you aware of the impact and division these contracts create. What is it that these clauses are required for? What do these confidentiality clauses mean? Are people who have signed these agreements allowed to talk about the project with others?
- How big is the Ruby Hills Wind project? 860 or 1000 megawatts?
- What is the actual area that the Ruby Hills Wind project will cover, as the map is not to scale nor does it say anywhere on the website.
- Can they provide a detailed map showing properties that will be affected within the zone and adjacent to the zone? Even if you can give the relevant map co-ordinates from Google Earth so that it is clear which properties will be affected.