



Granite Hills Wind Farm

Community Engagement and Stakeholder Management

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1. Renewable energy – introduction

Renewable energies are sources of clean, inexhaustible energy. They differ from fossil fuels such as gas and coal in their diversity, abundance and potential for use anywhere on the planet. Above all they don't produce polluting emissions or greenhouse gases – which cause climate change. While the general cost trend for fossil fuels continues to increase, the costs to produce clean energy are falling. As Australia's coal-fired power plants rapidly approach the end of their operational lifespan, replacing them with renewables is not only the most environmentally responsible option, but also the most economical. In 2017, Australia's wind farms produced 33.8 per cent of the country's clean energy and supplied 5.7 per cent of Australia's overall electricity during the year.

Wind power is currently the cheapest source of large-scale renewable energy. It involves generating electricity from the naturally occurring power of the wind. Wind turbines capture wind energy within the area swept by their blades. The spinning blades drive an electrical generator that produces electricity for export to the grid (Clean Energy Council, 2017).

1.1 Wind farms and the economy

A 2012 study by SKM on the economic benefits of wind farms in Australia found, for every 50 megawatts (MW) in capacity, a wind farm delivered the following benefits:

- Direct employment of up to 48 construction workers, with each worker spending approximately \$25,000 in the local area in shops, restaurants, hotels and other services – a total of up to \$1.2 million during the construction phase.
- Direct employment of approximately five permanent staff – a total annual input of \$125,000 spent in the local economy over the long-term operational phase.
- Indirect employment during the construction phase of approximately 160 people locally, 504 state jobs and 795 nationwide jobs.
- Up to \$250,000 per year for farmers in land rental income, including site landowners and neighbours, and \$80,000 on community projects each year.

1 Background and situation analysis

In 2016 Akuo Energy, an international renewable energy Independent Power Producer (IPP), entered into a development agreement with local Australian development company, Willy Willy Pty Limited, to develop the Granite Hills Wind Farm (GHWF) project. Leases with the two landowners of the 2,000-hectare site were signed in late 2016, and Granite Hills Wind Farm (GHWF) commenced consultation with interested parties and the local community shortly thereafter.

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has been completed and the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) was issued in April 2017.

GHWF is committed to effective and genuine engagement with key stakeholders and the local community. Engagement was initiated early in the project and will continue throughout all project phases. GHWF is continually looking to improve communication and the working relationship with the community. Feedback gained from various community members during mid-2018, suggested the community desired increased levels of engagement and communication. To facilitate this feedback GHWF has put in place multiple processes and strategies including seconding experienced stakeholder managers from OPF consulting to manage ongoing community relations and increase communication in addition to getting support from Project E to draft the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan and assist in a round of stakeholder meetings.

This Community Engagement and Stakeholder Management Strategy establishes the consultation and communication framework and activities which will be undertaken, throughout the life of this project,

to ensure communication is proactively maintained, the benefits from GHWF are shared with neighbours and the community, and any concerns are clearly understood and resolved.

GHWF is currently compiling the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project based on the requirements set out in the SEARS. The full list of SEARs and other public documents from the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) can be found [here](#)¹. Planning and design of the wind farm is subject to further changes throughout the environmental, heritage and technical research phases.

The proposed project will have up to 32 wind turbines, up to 200 metres in height (i.e. tower height plus blade tip length). The turbines will be constructed across GHWF at locations identified as optimum for wind conditions and within environmental, cultural heritage and legal constraints. Once operational GHWF which will generate enough clean energy for around 50,000 homes.

The proposed wind farm is assessed as a State Significant Development (SSD) under the Environmental Planning and Development Act 1979 (the EP&A Act).

1.1 Site location and overview

GHWF is located over approximately 2,000 hectares of rolling hills, farmland and forest, spanning Steeple Flat Road in Steeple Flat, NSW. The site is approximately 190km south of Canberra, 12km south-east of the town of Nimmitabel (population 320), in the Snowy Monaro Regional Council (SMRC) local government area and 26km west of the town of Bemboka (population 577) in the Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC).

GHWF comprises two properties, one to the east of Steeple Flat Road and one to the west. The properties are located within both the BVSC and the SMRC local government areas. The development is directly relevant to both Councils, since both transportation and supply are likely through both BVSC and SMRC council areas. This includes Port Kembla and/or the Twofold Bay Defence Wharf to facilitate receipt of wind turbine component. Upgrades to road intersections and alignments may also be required to enable transporting components to the site.

The site comprises various types of vegetation and farm land which will be described in detail in the environmental documents including the PEA and EIS. There is significant grazing on parts of the two properties and some logging is ongoing in the south-east section of the site.

Site development is impacted by nearby parks and conservation areas. South East Forests National Park is located to the east of the site and Glenbog State Forest is located to the north-east and south-east of the site. A small package of Glenbog State Forest is located within the site.

The site has a 132 kilovolts (kV) transmission line running through it which comprised part of the Cooma to Bega network upgrade in 2015.

2 Engagement plan – overview

The purpose of this Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan is to outline the engagement approach through all phases of the GHWF project – from development through construction,

¹ http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=8220

operation and final decommissioning. It includes stakeholder mapping, objectives, guiding principles and methods of engagement.

The plan provides:

- a comprehensive tool to guide engagement across all phases of the GHWF project, to ensure a consistent focus and delivery;
- an effective and adaptive stakeholder and community engagement framework, which will be continually updated in response to community needs and expectations;
- a tool for measuring the success and impact of engagement on the project; and
- structure and protocols to facilitate the complaint management process.

This plan has been informed by recommendations from the Office of the National Wind Farm Commissioner; Clean Energy Council's Community Engagement Guidelines for the Australian Wind Industry; Policy and planning guidelines for development of wind energy facilities in New South Wales (the Wind Energy Guideline for State Significant Development 2016); The Victorian Government requirements for Community Engagement; feedback from the BVSC and SMRC and previous project development experience.

2.1 Project life cycle

GHWF seeks to maintain consistent communication channels and proactively seek opinions on the Project throughout all stages of the project life cycle. This plan is intended as a 'living' document. It will be updated throughout the life cycle of the GHWF project – to document changes, capture activities undertaken and review its effectiveness against the engagement objectives.

The key phases of the project life cycle are:

Phase 1 – Site Selection and Feasibility Assessment – *completed*

Phase 2 – Planning and Approvals – *in progress*

Phase 3 – Development and Pre-Construction planning – *future*

Phase 4 – Construction – *future*

Phase 5 – Commissioning – *future*

Phase 6 – Operations – *future*

Phase 7 – Decommissioning – *future*

2.2 GHWF engagement policy

Communication and consultation about the GHWF development will be:

- clear, accurate, timely and honest
- open and transparent
- suitable and ongoing
- appropriately documented
- conducted throughout the project life cycle.

Where opportunity exists, GHWF will create partnerships with the community to create lasting benefits for people living in the region.

2.3 Current project status

The project met preliminary feasibility requirements as part of the Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) in January 2017. The proponent is now working to progress the planning approval.

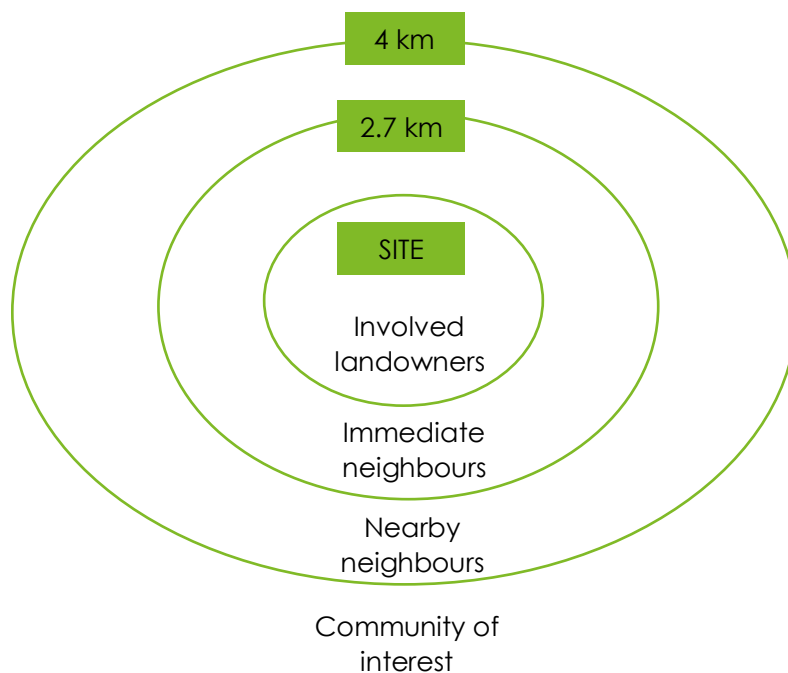
Part of this process is to demonstrate to the Minister for Planning the due diligence required in selecting the site and undertaking preliminary environmental assessments.

Actions to date include:

- The PEA was completed in January 2017
- In April 2017 the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for State Significant Developments (SSD) was issued in response to the PEA submission
- The project was referred to the Department of Energy and Environment (DoEE) as part of Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) requirements in May 2017. In October 2018 the Federal Department of Energy and Environment confirmed the classification of the project as a controlled action meaning that the Federal requirements which were provided will have to be adhered to in addition to the state requirements from the DPE. Adherence to these requirements will currently be managed under a bilateral agreement with the State DPE as a part of the overall EIS process.

3 Stakeholders – overview

Stakeholders are those who will be impacted by or who have impact on the project. Due to the difference in impact for surrounding landowners we have separated the neighbours into three groups – based on their proximity to the site. The distances selected for identifying neighbour groups were chosen as a result of the distances for impacts defined in the NSW Wind Energy: Visual Assessment Bulletin for structures of up to 200m in height.



3.1 Involved landowners

Landowners who accommodate wind turbines.

3.2 Immediate neighbours

Residents located within a 2.7km radius of turbine locations on Granite Hills Wind Farm.

3.3 Nearby neighbours

Residents whose dwellings are situated between 2.7km and 4km of turbine locations on Granite Hills Wind Farm.

3.4 Community of interest

It is anticipated that the broader community will have a high to moderate interest in the project. The Nimmitabel and Bemboka communities, including their special interest groups, will have a medium to high interest in the Granite Hills Wind Farm and will be informed and consulted throughout the process. Local groups and clubs can often act as a forum for discussions about local issues and can provide an opportunity to assist in making a change to those affected. The members of these groups are often influential within the local community.

3.5 Government agencies and representative bodies

SMRC and the BVSC councils and some members of Government agencies and representative bodies will have considerable interest in the proposed project. They will be informed and consulted on a regular basis throughout the project's development.

3.6 Media

Media generally has a high interest but a moderate influence in projects like Granite Hills Wind Farm. Media will be kept informed on the project and advised when key milestones are achieved. The media will also be used as a channel to release factual information about the project and wind energy in general, into the public domain.

3.7 General public

It is anticipated that the broader community will have a moderate interest in the proposed project.

4 Historical consultation

GHWF is committed to open, transparent and ongoing communication with stakeholders and interested parties.

4.1 Consultation to date

The following is a brief overview of consultation to date:

4.2 Neighbours

In addition to the host landowners, GHWF has engaged in direct consultation with neighbouring landowners who are likely to have one or more turbines within 2.7 km of their residence.

These immediate neighbours have been individually consulted and Neighbour Agreements will be offered to ensure any impact on the amenity of the land owner's residence is mitigated to the best of our ability and to share opportunities generated from the wind farm.

GHWF will also engage with the neighbours situated in the nearby neighbours – i.e. those whose dwellings are between 2.7km and 4km of a turbine – to determine their level of impact and possible mitigation strategies as is recommended in the NSW Wind Energy: Visual Assessment Bulletin.

Host landowners, immediate neighbours and the nearby neighbours will be informed and consulted about the potential impacts of the wind farm during all stages of the project. This consultation will be ongoing and accurate records will be maintained in keeping with best practice consultation standards.

GHWF has established a project website and keeps this updated with the latest information. GHWF has distributed three newsletters to date and will continue to do this on a regular basis. There is a public display about the project at the Nimmitabel town hall. GHWF has a dedicated contact number for all community questions and feedback. The number is 1800 961 761 and a dedicated email address granitehills@akuoenergy.com.

4.3 Government agencies

GHWF has briefed relevant statutory and regulatory authorities about the project. GHWF has consulted with multiple government agencies including NSW Planning, NSW Department Planning and Environment, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), Environmental Protection Authority, Division of Resources and Energy, Department of Primary Industries, Civil Aviation Safety Authority and Roads and Maritime Services-Southern Region on aspects of developing the wind farm.

4.4 Local councils

GHWF has consulted with the SMRC and the BVSC. Both councils are positively engaged with the project and ongoing dialogue is planned as the project develops. Representatives of both councils also sit on the Community Consultation Committee for the project (see further below at 4.7). Information about the project is displayed at both locations and will be regularly updated throughout the project life cycle.

4.5 Community and school groups

GHWF has met with representatives from Nimmitabel Advancement Group (NAG), Nimmitabel Public School, Nimmitabel Chamber of Commerce (NCC) and special interest groups to inform them about the project and build relationships. NAG has provided a list of possible ideas for improving facilities and infrastructure around Nimmitabel, and the NCC has expressed interest in ongoing engagement with GHWF.

Four public meetings were held for the Nimmitabel Community between February 2017 and September 2017 to discuss the GHWF development. These meetings were held in publicly accessible spaces and open to all.

GHWF has established a project [website](#)² and keeps this updated with the latest information. GHWF has distributed three newsletters to date and will continue to do this on a regular basis. There is a public display about the project at the Nimmitabel hotel. GHWF has a dedicated contact number for all community questions and feedback. The number is 1800 961 761 and the email address is granitehills@akuoenergy.com.

4.6 Indigenous groups

In accordance with the OEH's Aboriginal Cultural Heritage consultation requirements for proponents (2010), indigenous Australians and Registered Indigenous Parties have been consulted by an independent specialist during heritage surveys of the project area. The independent specialist determined Bega Local Aboriginal Land Council to be most connected to the project site. The specialist has been contracted to provide strategies for ensuring indigenous heritage found on site is protected and maintained. All registered parties will be asked to provide comment on the draft archaeological report.

² www.granitehillswindfarm.com

4.7 Community Consultation Committee

Initial consultation with community groups has progressed and a Community Consultation Committee (CCC) has been established. This CCC is facilitated by an independent Chair, Peter Gordon, appointed by the Department of Planning and Environment. Since October 2017, six CCC meetings have been held. Representatives of both SMRC and the BVSC attend these meetings. The CCC Minutes are publicly accessible and downloadable via the project website.

4.8 Forestry and fire

Forestry Corporation NSW has been consulted about the project and has provided consent to proceed with turbine placement to the forest boundaries or within plantations of both pine and hardwood.

The Cooma Rural Fire Service (RFS) has been consulted. They suggested the wind farm is likely to be an asset to local fire-fighting capacities due to improved access through road building and upgrades, particularly in forested areas. There will be ongoing consultation between the RFS and GHWF to consider further ways to improve local fire management systems.

4.9 Media

GHWF has issued media releases to local outlets and will continue to keep the media informed as the project develops.

5 Best practice

5.1 Best practice engagement objectives

GHWF is committed to best-practice community engagement which empowers local communities to genuinely contribute to and benefit from the development of the wind farm. Our objectives are to:

- Build strong connections with host landowners, neighbours and the wider community;
- Set clear expectations and build trust, acceptance or understanding of the project and the development process;
- Proactively engage with neighbours and other key stakeholder groups and ensure best practice communication strategies are implemented throughout the project life cycle;
- Provide opportunities for the community and stakeholders to ask questions, provide feedback and ideas and participate in decision making;
- Provide timely responses to the community's concerns;
- Use community feedback to positively influence the development of the project where possible;
- Build a deeper understanding of the potential impacts and how these will be mitigated and managed;
- Raise community awareness of the project's economic and social benefits; and
- Ensure benefits from the project are shared with landowners, neighbours and the greater community.

5.2 The engagement spectrum

The term 'Community Engagement' encompasses a spectrum of activities, ranging from everyday discussions with community members, through contact with stakeholders, group discussions, formal consultation processes, and engaging with the local Council.

GHWF conforms with the IAP2³ standard and terminology. Our community liaison team is IAP2 qualified and we refer to various levels of engagement throughout this document. They are:

Inform – keep the community informed by providing objective information regularly.

Consult – seek feedback from the community on proposals, decisions and analysis.

Involve – public aspirations and concerns are addressed by community participation.

Collaborate – partnering with the community to identify preferred solutions.

Empower – giving the community a role in the decision-making process.

5.3 State regulations and requirements

NSW has published guidelines and requirements for community engagement which must be met before the SEARs is issued. The requirements are posted [here](#)⁴. Chapter 5 refers to the community consultation recommendations and requirements. The strategies in this document include and exceed the requirements for NSW State Significant Wind Energy Development Applications.

5.4 GHWF communication and engagement principles

The following principles will be applied in building individual community engagement and communication documents for the GHWF project. Our principals are drawn from our commitment to best practice and the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum.

Ongoing early and regular engagement

- Be first to inform key stakeholders and the community about the project, its context, risks and benefits
- Use a range of engagement techniques and mediums to communicate with stakeholders and the community
- Continue to identify and engage with stakeholders, encourage dialogue to create positive relationships, minimise complaints and to share benefits

Be visible, transparent and responsive

- Ensure there is a representative to be the main point of contact for the community throughout the project
- Be available for face-to-face meetings when required.
- Attend community forums and other relevant community or stakeholder meetings

Be part of the community

- Inspire community involvement in the GHWF project through benefit sharing
- Demonstrate to the Government and local councils that GHWF has a commitment to engage with local communities

³ **About IAP2:** IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation are used in the development and implementation of public participation processes; and the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum helps to define the public's role in any community engagement program. See more (www.iap2.org.au)

⁴ https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~/_media/Files/DPE/Guidelines/wind-energy-guideline-for-state-significant-wind-energy-development-2016-12.ashx

- Encourage community participation in the project by seeking input into decision making where possible
- Look for opportunities to involve the community, e.g. employ locals and utilise local contractors where possible, engage with the community on project planning, use local accommodation and shop locally
- Ensure sponsorships or financial investment into the community are in the long- term interest of that community and have community support

Be authentic and respectful

- Deliver on commitments made to the community
- Provide regular and targeted feedback to the community on key achievements and deliverables
- Reflect GHWF's values in all engagements

Be an effective communicator

- Use transparent, simple and straight forward communication.
- Provide regular, useful information that is easy to understand and widely available

Our communications will:

- Describe the purpose and scope for engagement – **Inform**
- Make access to the project leadership team easy and available at all times – **Involve**
- Communicate limitations and constraints of the project, and where stakeholders can inform decisions – **Collaborate, Empower**
- Operate at the level of engagement requested from the community – ie. decisions at a Council level, community representatives, etc – **Collaborate**
- Discuss how we make decisions, and who we consult with from the community during the process – **Involve**
- Discuss the community engagement and communication process and any changes to the process as they occur – **Inform**
- Communicate timeframes for providing project updates and decisions back to the community – **Inform**
- How and when we report outcomes of the engagement – **Inform**
- Provide clear timeframes around engagement and when decisions will be made – **Inform**

7 Engagement tools

Many communication and engagement mechanisms can be effective tools, depending on the geographic area, the purpose and the target audience. Tools will be selected to best suit engagement objectives and audience requirements.

Engagement tools are likely to include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Telephone calls
- Emails
- Printed and electronic newsletters
- Project website
- Local print and radio media stories
- Social media
- Neighbour Agreements
- Local funding initiatives and sponsorships
- Posters, displays and community shop-fronts
- Presentations at meetings
- Information distributed via committees, schools or community organisations
- Public displays
- Special interest group meetings and workshops
- Coordination of activities with community events
- Community presence (e.g. shop front)
- Community and public infrastructure development or support (road upgrades, improvements to council or community infrastructure, strategic investments, tourism building activities)
- Open days and site visits

7.1 Neighbour Agreements

Neighbour Agreements are voluntary arrangements which acknowledge that while host landholders are remunerated for hosting assets on their property, immediate neighbours also have a strong sense of ownership over their landscape and surrounds and should also benefit from the nearby infrastructure. Neighbour Agreements can help facilitate development, establish communication and define a framework for benefit sharing. Neighbours close to a wind farm experience higher impacts than the broader community and Neighbour Agreements can provide appropriate mitigation measures. In Australia, compensation made to neighbouring landowners is voluntary and it is up to the developer to propose and negotiate with the neighbour.

GHWF plans to establish Neighbour Agreements with immediate neighbours – those landowners whose dwelling is within 2.7 km of one or more turbines as recommended in the NSW Wind Energy: Visual Assessment Bulletin for turbines of 200m in height.

Land owner benefits and mitigation measures will be scaled by level of impact based on three factors:

1. Proximity of dwelling to closest wind turbine(s);
2. Visual amenity; and
3. Noise levels.

The benefits may include one or more of the following:

- annual payments during the operational phase;
- a one-time payment at the commencement of construction of the project;
- staged payments for a defined period (annual compensation payments to the neighbours during the development, construction and operating phases of the wind farm);
- home improvements to mitigate impacts; items such as visual screening, insulation, double-glazing, energy efficiency programs, solar panels, which will reduce their electricity consumption resulting in lower power bills.

By implementing a Neighbour Agreement, GHWF aims to develop goodwill and effectively set the tone for engagement between immediate neighbours and the wind farm. The agreement encourages landowners to communicate directly with the proponent, in an open, honest manner, rather than using the appeals process as a proxy for raising project related concerns.

7.2 Nearby neighbours

GHWF will engage the nearby neighbours – whose dwellings are between 2.7km and 4km of turbines – to understand their concerns and mitigate impacts of the wind farm.

Impact mitigation strategies could include landscaping for visual screening and digital signal boosting to avoid TV and phone disturbances.

7.3 Community of interest

Individual landowners beyond the 4km boundary will be encouraged to communicate directly with GHWF if they are impacted significantly by the project. All impacts will be handled on a case by case basis.

7.4 Community benefit sharing

Community benefits that meet GHWF's and the broader renewable industry objectives are a way to demonstrate ongoing commitment to the community. Engagement with local government, organisations and nearby communities will be on-going throughout the project life cycle which will help to identify the most appropriate ways GHWF can share benefits with the community.

GHWF will also engage with local schools such as Nimmitabel and Bemboka Public Schools to enhance educational programs and promote awareness of renewable energy.

7.5 Public displays

Visual amenity and sound impacts are common concerns for communities where wind farms are proposed and developed. Once the visual and noise impact assessments are complete, GHWF public displays will provide the local community with opportunities to interact with and ask questions of the environmental, noise and visual specialists working on the project.

GHWF may use photo montages which place scaled wind turbines in the landscape where they will be constructed. This enables community members to see what the wind farm will look like from key viewpoints such as the towns of Nimmitabel and Bemboka.

In addition, residents within 2.7 km of the nearest wind turbine will be provided with a photo montage from their residence. To avoid confusion these photo montages will only be completed once the turbine height, manufacture and layout are finalised.

Auralisation may also be used to create an approximation of what the wind farm will sound like at set distances away from key viewpoints or dwellings. Auralisation has been used previously on wind farm sites to communicate the impact of wind turbines and provide an educational experience for school students and other interested community members.

7.6 Coordination of engagement activities

To maximise the ability for people from the community to participate, GHWF will carefully plan the timing of their engagement activities. For example, GHWF will consider the impact of key community and national events such as school holidays, religious festivals and other major local events. As a rule, we avoid engagement activities through December and January.

GHWF will engage with community groups to inform community members of the project at community events and festivals around Nimmitabel and Bemboka.

Examples might include:

- the *Back to Nimmitabel Festival* and the *Steampunk Festival*
- [Nimmitabel Agricultural Shows](#)⁵
- [Bemboka Agricultural Show](#)⁶
- The SMRC runs a webpage promoting events and activities in the municipality where more examples can be found [here](#)⁷

7.7 Community presence

In addition to visits undertaken by the GHWF project team, a consistent presence in the community could be beneficial in establishing relationships and support within the community. The spectrum of the presence could include:

- Information stands set up in community (local school, sporting events)
- An un-manned shop front/display that is maintained / monitored by the proponent and /or a supportive community member
- A manned shop front (one to two mornings or afternoons per week)
- A regular, periodic presence by member(s) of the project team, who could setup at a public location in Nimmitabel or Bemboka to personally address questions and concerns about the project

⁵ <http://nimmitabel.nsw.au/nimmitabel-show-society/>

⁶ <https://www.bembokashow.org.au/show.html>

⁷ http://visitcooma.com.au/events_calendar/

8 Stakeholder identification and categorisation

Stakeholders are those who will be impacted by or who have impact on the project. Examples of key stakeholders we communicate with are:

- Host landowners
- Immediate neighbours
- Nearby neighbours
- Community of interest
- Local councils
- Local indigenous communities
- Local businesses
- Surrounding municipalities
- Federal government departments\agencies
- State government departments
- Airspace authorities
- Local and national media
- Community groups
- Project partners
- Technical experts
- Supporters/opponents of renewable energy
- Heritage organisation

Primary stakeholders, such as participating landowners and neighbours may be significantly impacted by the project. All primary stakeholders will be identified, proactively engaged and communication will be maintained throughout the project life cycle. These stakeholders will naturally be more connected to decision-making and given higher levels of involvement than the general community.

Formalised stakeholder groups, such as regional councils, schools and community organisations are often the first point of contact for engagement activities. Due to their links to established community networks, they are often representative of community interests and form an excellent communication channel to local residents. Stakeholders can be categorised based on their exposure to the project and resulting impact and their power and interest, as follows:

8.1 Stakeholder categories

Stakeholder Group Tier 1#	Specific Parties	Strategy
Host landowners	Landowners who are hosting wind farm infrastructure on their property.	- Collaborate - Empower
Immediate neighbours	Landowners who live adjacent to the wind farm with a residence within 2.7km of a wind turbine and have entered into an agreement with Granite Hills Wind Farm. These agreements range from neighbour benefit arrangements to participation through associated wind farm infrastructure (e.g. access tracks).	
Nearby neighbours	Landowners who live nearby to the project. In most cases these landowners have a dwelling between 2.7 and 4km of the project. They do not have a Neighbour Agreement with GHWF in place.	
Local councils	Snowy Monaro Regional Council (SMRC) Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC)	
Energy agencies	Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) Network Service Providers	

Stakeholder Group Tier #2	Specific Parties	Strategy
Government agencies	Office of the National Wind Farm Commissioner, Office of Environment and Heritage, Environmental Protection Authority, Department of Primary Industries, Resources and Energy Roads and Maritime Services - Southern Region Department of Energy and Environment NSW Rural Fire Service, Forestry Corporation NSW Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)	
Heritage organisations	Registered Aboriginal Parties, Bega Aboriginal Land Council	
Nearby towns	Bemboka, Nimmitabel communities	
Investors	Potential investors in wind farm.	

Community groups	Nimmitabel Chamber of Commerce (NCC) Nimmitabel Advancement Group (NAG) Monaro Rail Trail (NAG subcommittee) Lions Club, Nimmitabel and Bemboka Chapters Country Women's Association (CWA), local chapters in Nimmitabel and Bemboka Nimmitabel and Bemboka Agricultural Show societies Nimmitabel Country Bowling Club Nimmitabel Garden Club Interested community groups TBD in Bemboka – eg the Bemboka Quilt and Craft Group	-Involve -Consult
Local media	Bega District News The Monaro Post Radio – Snow FM 97.7, 2XL, ABC South East NSW, Radio2ML Local television stations	
Supporters of renewable energy	Individuals, organisations (e.g. Clean Energy Council, Australian Wind Alliance, etc.)	

Stakeholder Group Teir #3	Specific Parties	Strategy
Local industry and businesses	- Industry or business stakeholders constitute those industries or businesses that are potentially impacted by construction, either as a broader landowner, tenant, or as a partner to finance or deliver. E.g. hotels, accommodation, food outlets.	Consult
National media	- Print /online media (e.g. The Age, Herald Sun, The Australian) - Television stations - Radio	
Schools	- Nimmitabel Public School - Bemboka Public School	

Stakeholder Group Teir #4	Specific Parties	Strategy
Wider community	- Residents or Businesses of nearby towns (e.g. Cooma) - Other individuals (NSW) - Tourist information centres	Inform

9 Engagement delivery

9.1 Summary of approach

Contact with stakeholders began early in the project and will continue throughout the project life-cycle. GHWF strives to ensure project staff are proactive and engaging with communities in a manner which is open, inclusive, responsive and accountable.

This plan incorporates methods of engagement designed to cover all aspects of the project life-cycle and ensure there are no silent periods. Each stakeholder group requires its own tailored communications which can vary depending on the geographic area, the purpose, and the audience.

9.2 Engagement methods

Engagement Tools and Techniques	Tier 1 Stakeholders	Tier 2 Stakeholders	Tier 3 Stakeholders	Tier 4 Stakeholders
Website	X	X	X	X
Database Management	X	X	X	X
Media releases	X	X	X	X
Flyers and other Informative content	X	X	X	X
Photomontages*	X	X	X	X
Advertisements	X	X	X	X
Signage	X	X	X	X
Website feedback	X	X	X	X
Dedicated 1800 number	X	X	X	X
Email address	X	X	X	X
Project newsletters	X	X	X	X
Complaints register and management	X	X	X	X
Personal one-on-one visits	X	X	<i>If required</i>	
Phone calls / emails	X	X	<i>If required</i>	
Community information sessions	X	X	X	X
Community Consultative Committee	X			

*Please note that photomontages will be created for a number of viewpoints deemed significant by the project team based upon consultation with the community. All photomontages will be made available to the public as part of the Environmental Impact Statement.

9.3 Access to information

To facilitate smooth progress of the project, information materials will be prepared and updated throughout the different phases of the project. These will provide the latest information available and guide discussions with all stakeholders.

These materials will:

- Familiarise key stakeholders with the wind farm project
- Recognise the importance GHWF places on the communities and environments they operate within
- Demonstrate the advantages of wind generated power both nationally and locally
- Encourage two-way communication

9.4 Positive engagement

Despite measures to actively create positive relationships with stakeholders and the community by taking a proactive approach to communication and engagement, there is risk that people will become emotional when dealing with issues that are highly technical, controversial, complex or unfamiliar. They may experience feelings of anxiety, fear, defensiveness, frustration, lack of control and/or anger. Appropriate engagement can help stakeholders channel their emotions into effective and constructive conversations.

We will always engage with those who are reacting unfavourably and attempt to listen, discuss their needs, allay their fears and encourage constructive dialogue.

10 Complaints management

GHWF is committed to managing complaints in a transparent and professional manner. All complaints will be taken very seriously. Complaints will be acknowledged and resolved in a timely manner.

If not handled correctly, complaints can undermine the trust built with key stakeholders and the community, resulting in significant cost through damage to reputation, fines or operational restrictions imposed by regulatory authorities. Complaints can also provide an opportunity to improve the way that the company conducts its business. GHWF has a specific procedure which outlines how we will receive and handle complaints. All reporting, monitoring and evaluation associated with complaints management for the GHWF project must be in accordance with this procedure.

The following will address the procedures for receiving, evaluating and responding to complaints, environmental incidents and non-compliance during the planning, construction and operation of the project.

10.1 Complaints Handling Procedure:

GHWF will ensure this procedure and appropriate contact information for complaints will be accessible to the public and displayed on the GHWF website. Upon request, hard copy details can be mailed out as appropriate for persons not accessing the internet.

The following process shall be followed:

10.2 Receiving and recording complaints

GHWF will provide members of the public with several ways to lodge complaints, including via:

- An online form on the website: <http://granitehillswindfarm.com/contact-us/>
- A 24-hour telephone number: 1800 961 761
- An email address granitehills@akuoenergy.com and
- A postal address to **Suite 10, 35 Buckingham Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010**

These services will be monitored by the appropriate team member, registered and escalated as appropriate.

The contact details of the complainant should include:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone numbers (home, work and mobile)
- Email

- Preferred method and time of follow up – GHWF will endeavour to contact stakeholders using the suggested method and time whenever possible.
- Attach any copies of correspondence relating to the complaint.

A reference number will be allocated to each complaint.

GHWF will record and track all complaints on the Complaints Handling Register. The Register will track the date, type, cause and actions against each complaint raised. The Complaints Handling Register is a publicly available document – located on the project website.

10.3 Response to complaints

Emergency complaints will be escalated in line with GHWF Emergency Management Process.

All complainants will receive an acknowledgement in writing or via email of the complaint with a reference number and details of how GHWF proposes to handle the complaint.

10.4 Complaint handling

- A complaint will be allocated to an appropriate staff member within a business unit related to the complaint. They will review all relevant information and may contact the complainant to discuss the matter.
- Complaints will be treated confidentially and with respect to privacy. Personal details will only be provided to another organisation or persons outside of the company if the complainant agrees in writing.
- GHWF may contact other parties that are relevant to the complaint and assess their willingness to cooperate to resolve the complaint.
- GHWF will endeavour to resolve all complaints as efficiently and expeditiously as possible.
- The complainant will be provided with updates of the complaint status until it is resolved or closed.

10.5 Complaint closure

Complaints will be brought to closure for any of the below reasons:

- Confirmation received from the complainant that a satisfactory outcome has been achieved.
- The complainant advises GHWF that he or she no longer wishes to pursue the complaint.
- Despite the company's best efforts, the complainant cannot be contacted to discuss the complaint.
- When a complaint is closed the Complaints Register will be updated and communicated internally to relevant stakeholders.

11 Monitoring and evaluation

Evaluating the effectiveness of the Community Engagement Plan can be achieved by measuring outcomes against the objectives, as follows

Communication Objective	Evaluative measure
Promote Granite Hills Wind Farm	Number of enquiries Attendance at public displays and events Circulation of newsletters
Identify, target and engage with stakeholders, gain their support and encourage dialogue with the community surrounding the project	Documented engagement of stakeholders in tiers 1-3. Regular (quarterly) communication Media monitoring
Minimise complaints/appeals to governing and regulatory bodies (Local Council, Minister for Planning etc)	Complaints/discussions with GHWF prior to lodging any appeals Analysis against complaints/concerns raised with GHWF vs. formal appeals. Complaints Handling Register.
Demonstrate to the relevant authorities and the Local Councils that GHWF has a commitment to engaging with the local community and will seek input into decision making where possible.	Regular communication with Council and Minister's Office and a dedicated liaison point in each office Planning meetings and other engagement mechanisms employed with Council and community to inform construction and other project phases
Determine mechanisms for seeking and acting on feedback.	Appropriate mechanisms put in place and maintained
Communicate the process for gaining development approval.	Media release – local news appearance Newsletter - delivery and opens reported Project website updated – traffic to site reported Presentations to individuals and community interest groups

12 Contact Granite Hills Wind Farm

Members of the project team can be contacted directly using the details below:

Community Engagement: Elizabeth Picker

Email: granitehills@akuoenergy.com

Phone: 1800 961 761

Website: <http://granitehillswindfarm.com/>

Akua Energy: www.akuoenergy.com