

13th March 2024

Stephen Barry, Planning Director

Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW

Sent by email to: Stephen.Barry@ipcn.nsw.gov.au, callum.firth@ipcn.nsw.gov.au,
kylie.dorsett@ipcn.nsw.gov.au

Dear Stephen,

Re: Thunderbolt Wind Farm – Questions on Notice

I am writing on behalf of Neoen Australia Pty Ptd (Neoen) to provide our responses to the questions requested by the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) on the 6th March 2024.

Question 1: What was the approximate number and method of community engagements the Applicant undertook during 2023? Please also provide an outline of any ongoing engagement plans for the Project.

Neoen's response:

Engagement undertaken in 2023:

Meetings with Councils

- March 1, 2023 – Meeting with both Tamworth Regional and Uralla Shire Councils
- September 13, 2023 – Meeting with Uralla Shire Council
- January 29, 2024 – Meeting with both Tamworth Regional and Uralla Shire Councils (in person)
- March 6, 2024 – Meeting with Uralla Shire Council

CCC Meeting

- May 8, 2023 – Minutes available on request.

Project Website Update

- August 29, 2023 – Update on the increase in community benefit sharing fund from 100k\$ to 160k\$ pa.

Newsletter

- September 4, 2023 – Project Newsletter to local advertisement groups (Uralla Wordsworth, Walcha Telecottage) on the following topics:
 - ✓ Response to submission report update
 - ✓ Change in project management of Neoen Staff
 - ✓ Community benefit fund update

Future Engagement

We intend to conduct the following activities in 2024 based on community feedback:

1. Opening a project shopfront that will be managed by a local person (likely to be in Uralla). The shopfront will be open 1-2 days per week for any members of the public to attend and discuss the project. The initial opening of the shopfront will provide an

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- opportunity to discuss the outcome of the IPC and determination of the project, and what to expect from the project moving forward.
2. CCC meeting – following determination of DA.
 3. Face-to-face meetings with the Registered Aboriginal Parties.
 4. Project newsletter – to be sent out at least every six months.
 5. Project website – to be updated quarterly.
 6. Proactive engagement with nearby residents of the project area, 1-on-1 meetings and follow-up phone calls/emails on items raised.
 7. Jobseeker and Supplier Networking Session – organising a community information and supplier network session for local jobseekers, suppliers and businesses to drop-in and discover job opportunities.

The focus for community engagement will shift towards construction timelines, and the expected impacts that would result from the infrastructure project.

All future community engagement will be in accordance with the project’s community relationship plan (please refer to RTS: Appendix 4 for more details) which is periodically reviewed and updated.

Question 2: During the proposed construction phase and with regard to worker numbers and potential noise and traffic impacts, at what point/s in this period are the most intensive activities intended to take place and approximately over what period of time?

Neoen’s response:

It is expected that the most intensive construction activities would occur during the first 6-12 months following construction commencement. This work would comprise the civil works required to build the internal access roads and foundations required for the above ground infrastructure (such as the turbines and substation). The Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment provided in the EIS submission provides details on both the construction schedule and the approximate vehicle use per day as shown in **Table 8** and **Table 12** below.

Construction tasks labelled B,C,D and E highlight potential the areas in which the most intensive activities are intended to take place.

Table 8 Proposed Construction Schedule – Thunderbolt Energy Hub (Stage 1 - Wind Farm) [Source: Neoen]

ID	TASK	DURATION	MONTH																	
			Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
			Q1 2024			Q2 2024			Q3 2024			Q4 2024			Q1 2025			Q2 2025		
A	Mobilisation & Site Establishment	1 M	█																	
B	Internal Access & Road Upgrades	8 M	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█									
C	Site Infrastructure Areas	8 M		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█								
D	Cabling (Underground & Overhead)	7 M			█	█	█	█	█	█	█									
E	Turbine Foundations	5 M			█	█	█	█	█											
F	Turbine Transportation	6 M							█	█	█	█	█	█						
G	Turbine Erection	9 M								█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
H	Finalisation / Commissioning / Demobilisation	6 M															█	█	█	

Table 12 Summary of Total Project Material / Equipment Delivery Movement Volumes

Task	Duration	Total Vehicles	Type of Vehicles	Max Vehicles per Day (Avg)
Task A – Mobilisation and Site Establishment	1 month	1,534 vehicles (external) 42 internal concrete truck movements	Semi-Trailers Truck and Dog Combinations Concrete Trucks	64 vehicles / day (external)
Task B – Internal Access and Road Upgrades	8 months	9,674 vehicles (external)	Truck and Dog Combinations	54 vehicles / day (external)
Task C – Site Infrastructure Areas	8 months	1,300 vehicles (external) 317 internal concrete truck movements	Semi-Trailers Truck and Dog Combinations Concrete Trucks	18 vehicles / day (external)
Task D – Cabling (Underground & Overhead)	7 months	314 vehicles (external)	Semi-Trailers Truck and Dog Combinations	4 vehicles / day (external)
Task E – Turbine Foundations	5 months	1,946 vehicles (external) 5,333 internal concrete truck movements	Semi-Trailers Truck and Dog Combinations Concrete Trucks	18 vehicles / day (external)
Task F – Turbine Transportation	6 months	1,266-1,554 vehicles total (including 844-1,036 light vehicle escorts)	Special Transport Vehicles (Permit) Escorts (light vehicle)	18 vehicles / day (including 6 OSOM vehicles)
Task G – Turbine Erection	9 months	10 vehicles required for crane delivery.	B-Doubles / Low Loaders	5 vehicles / day (external)
Task H – Finalisation / Commissioning / Demobilisation	6 months	580 vehicles (external)	Semi-Trailers	14 vehicles / day (external)
Other – Site Water (Does not include internal water truck movements)	18 months	3,774 vehicles	Water Trucks	10 vehicles / day (external)

We have not been able to source actual information for vehicle movements on a recently constructed wind farm project in Australia. However, we believe the data in Table 8 to be a fair representation of how vehicle types over the different phases of the construction will vary.

Some actual construction data that we have been able to source which provides additional visibility, is from our Kaban Wind Farm (a 28 turbine Neoen wind farm in Queensland that is now operational). Figure 1 below shows the average daily workers onsite and shows that the peak number of personnel on site was reached 9 months after construction commenced in July 2022, noting that there is usually 1-2 months of mobilisation included at the start of the ‘construction’ phase.

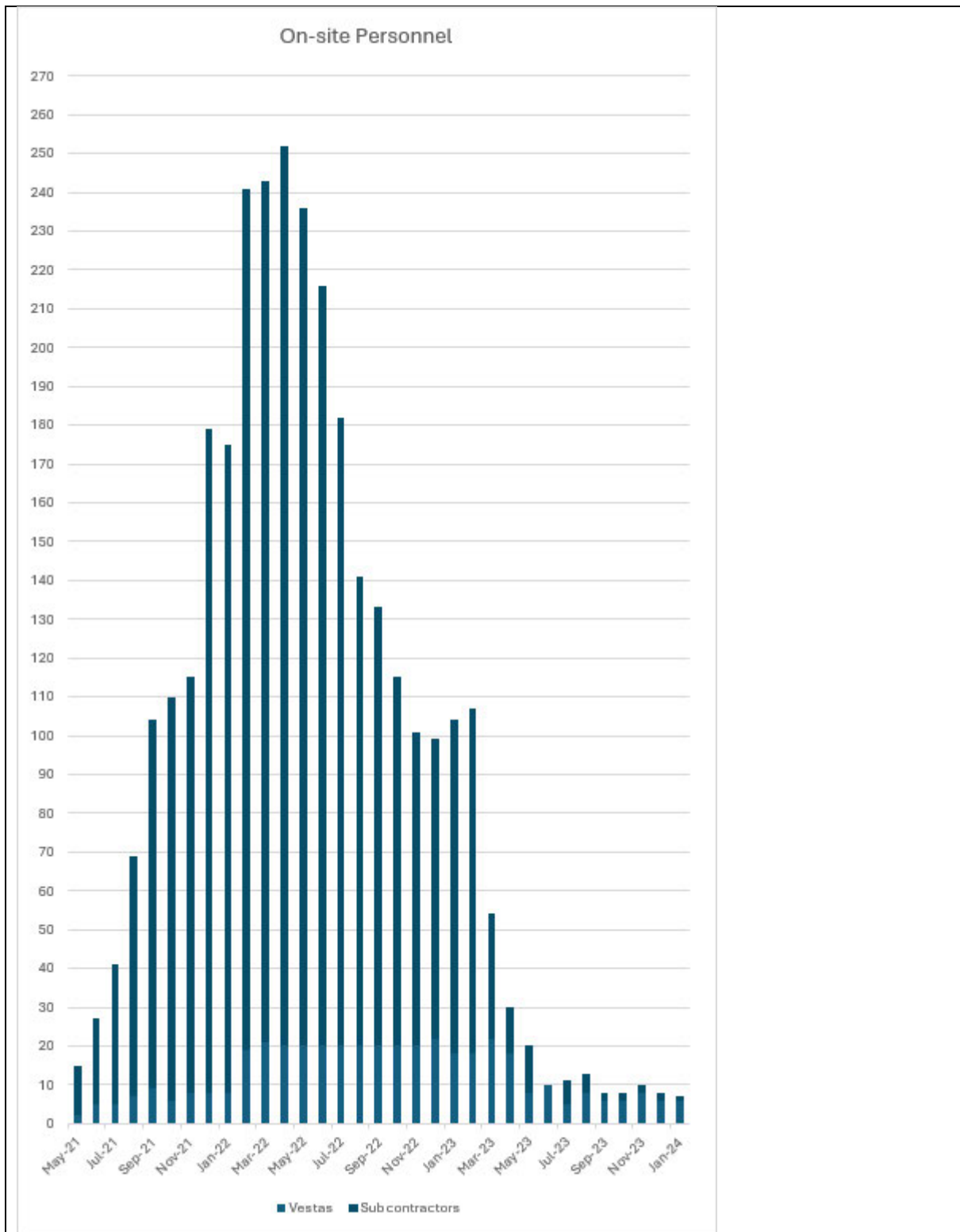


Figure 1: Histogram of the average daily workers onsite Kaban Wind Farm.

Question 3: Please set out a typical monitoring process associated with a Bird and Bat Strike Management Plan along with any information as to how the Plan is proposed to be developed.

Neoen's response:

The Bird and Bat Strike Management Plan (**BBAMP**) would be developed by specialist consultants and endorsed and approved by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (**DPHI**). The BBAMP would be implemented prior to construction and would generally include reporting obligations which can be periodic or ad-hoc or both. The specific components and timeline of the BBAMP will be confirmed during development of the document and consultation with the state and commonwealth environmental agencies.

A typical monitoring process may include the following:

Pre-commencement of operation:

- Carcass search survey program (Interim program): Following construction of turbine clusters, once all construction activities and associated exclusion areas have been removed.
 - Duration: During construction, prior to commencement of operation of the Development.
- Bird surveys: Autumn, winter, spring and summer during the first year, third year and fifth year following commencement of commissioning of the Development.
 - Duration: First year following commissioning (with additional surveys in second year should they not be undertaken in Year 1).
 - Timing should broadly align with when baseline surveys were completed.
- Bat surveys: During the first year, third year and fifth year following commencement of commissioning of the Development at the following times: autumn, winter, spring and summer.
 - Duration: First year following commissioning (with additional surveys in second year should they not be undertaken in Year 1).
 - Timing should broadly align with when baseline surveys were completed.
- Targeted Surveys
 - Should be completed consistent with those undertaken for baseline surveys.

Post-commencement of operation:

- Bird surveys: First year, third year and fifth year within three months of commencement of wind farm operation.
 - Timing should broadly align with when baseline surveys were completed.
 - Commencement of wind farm operation being, once all of the following have occurred:
 - all turbines are commissioned and tested (including testing dependent on wind conditions)
 - all turbines have been handed over from the Contractor to Neoen

- Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) testing is complete (grid compliance testing)
- Targeted Surveys
 - Should be completed consistent with those undertaken for baseline surveys.
- Bat surveys:
 - Ongoing as described above from prior to the commencement of operation of the Development.
 - Duration: First year, third year and fifth year within three months of commencement of wind farm operation, as described above.
 - Timing should broadly align with when baseline surveys were completed.
- Carcass search surveys (full program):
 - First and second year initially, starting within commencement of operation, as described above. The search program will be reviewed for efficacy after two years, with the possibility of extension for a further three years, potential total five-year program. Requirement for extension of the program if there is clear discrepancy between estimated and realized frequency of bird and bat mortality.
 - Duration: Five years.
- Carcass persistence trial:
 - Completed during the first and second year carcass search program, but once per season (not each month)
 - Duration: Two years.
- Carcass detectability trial:
 - During the first year carcass search program, but one per season (not each month).
 - Duration: One year.
- Incidental bird and bat finds:
 - Will be conducted opportunistically through the operational life of the Project.
 - Duration: Operational life of the project.

If the Independent Planning Committee has any questions in relation to this response, please don't hesitate to contact myself, or Emily Walker (State Leader of NSW Development).

Kind Regards,



Aaron Gutteridge

Project Manager Thunderbolt – NSW Development

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