

OSMI AUSTRALIA

CLEAN ENERGY COUNCIL BEST PRACTICE CHARTER REPORTING

2025

BEST PRACTICE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



OSMI Australia is committed to best practice community engagement and is a signatory to the **Clean Energy Council's Best Practice Charter** for Renewable Energy Developments

OSMI is developing the Delburn Wind Farm in Victoria and is in early discussions with landholders and key stakeholders on a number of other potential developments



ENGAGING EARLY



Local residents were taken on tours of the Bald Hills Wind Farm to learn about living near a wind farm

1. We will engage respectfully with the local community, including Traditional Owners of the land, to seek their views and input before submitting a development application and finalising the design of the project.

Prior to environmental referrals or planning applications being sought, OSMI researches proposed wind farm sites to gain an understanding of the community and their local priorities.

OSMI respects First Nations people, their cultural heritage and enduring connection to Country. We engage with Traditional Owners prior to investigating any potential projects. Meetings are also held with local governments and key stakeholders as early as possible. We listen to their feedback and tailor our projects to ensure they are sensitive to local community, cultural and environmental values. This information helps to inform the design of the proposed project's layout, engagement program and benefit sharing program.

OSMI proactively shared information about the Delburn Wind Farm via letter box drops, through technical information available on the website and in the project office. This was done well in advance of the required statutory timeframes to ensure community members had sufficient time to review, question and comment on the proposed project. Tours of a nearby operating wind farm were offered to facilitate an understanding of living near a wind farm.

During the feasibility stage of the Delburn Wind Farm, the proposed early concept and footprint design was shared. Community feedback highlighted concerns about the scale of the project, visual amenity, noise and property values. OSMI reduce the scale of the wind farm, resulting in increased setbacks from neighbouring homes.

LISTENING & RESPONDING

2. We will provide timely information and be accessible and responsive in addressing the local community's feedback and concerns throughout the life of the project.

OSMI is proactive and timely in sharing information with near neighbours, stakeholders and community members and answers questions about the wind farm promptly.

Numerous public information sessions were held about the Delburn Wind Farm in community halls and local markets to share information and answer questions. Presentations were delivered to local councils, MPs, schools, universities and community interest groups.

Community engagement activities and updates continue across all phases of the wind farm development via a dedicated website, e-Newsletters, email, social media channels and media releases. A project office is staffed by locals five days a week for community members to drop in and provide feedback and ask questions.

The Delburn Wind Farm Community Consultative Committee (CCC) was established as an additional mechanism for feedback and input during early development. The CCC was established prior to the formal Planning Panel assessment and refreshed following the granting of all the statutory approvals. The CCC provides ideas and local insights into potential community impacts and opportunities. Minutes and questions from the CCC are published on the website.

A Delburn Wind Farm information session held at the Thorpdale Community Hall



RESPECTING SENSITIVITIES



Western Port Biosphere Reserve received a Pre-Development Grant for koala habitat tree planting

3. We will be sensitive to areas of high biodiversity, cultural and landscape value in the development and operation of projects.

OSMI's approach to development and operations of wind farms is to be sensitive to the needs of the surrounding environment, flora and fauna, biodiversity and cultural heritage. We design wind farms to excel when it comes to meeting the Government statutory requirements.

OSMI first approached the Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation (GKLaWAC), at the Delburn Wind Farm prospecting stage to understand any environmental or cultural sensitivities across the site. Through a partnership approach, areas of cultural significance were identified and informed the projects planning and design. Cultural heritage assessments and site investigations were undertaken throughout 2020-2023. A Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been developed to build awareness of the local First Nations people and place storytelling and culture at the centre of the project. OSMI is engaging with Traditional Owners on a number of other potential project sites that are yet to be announced.

OSMI's wind farm layouts are carefully designed to minimise impacts on local flora and fauna, with mitigation measures to ensure impacts on local wildlife are low. Native vegetation removal is minimised and offset requirements are met. Potential impacts to waterways will be prevented by careful choice of construction techniques and by preventing the run-off of sediment into waterways during construction.

During the development of the Delburn Wind Farm, the community highlighted the ecological importance of the Strzelecki Koala, which has higher genetic diversity than other koalas across Victoria. The Delburn Wind Farm provided a Pre-Development Grant to the Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation to plant 470 koala habitat trees. This grant will help strengthen the Strzelecki koala population into the future.

AGRICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

4. We will minimise the impacts on highly productive agricultural land and explore opportunities to integrate agricultural production.

Wind farm developments support agricultural enterprises and provide real benefits to all parties involved. Farmers have the opportunity to secure a long-term income.

When working with host landowners, OSML's Operational Protocols ensure farm or forest management activities and renewable energy developments allow flexible and practical work practices for the benefit of all parties.

This includes biosecurity and livestock management, site access, security and safety protocols, interparty and external communications, rehabilitation of disturbed areas, reinstatement and remediation of landowner assets, shared use of project infrastructure, aviation operations, fire regulations and environmental management. Operational Protocols are reviewed jointly by the parties at key project milestones and other agreed triggers such as changes to regulatory settings. OSML works with landowners on the layout of wind farm infrastructure to drive operational improvements to the productive capacity of the land.

The Delburn Wind Farm will not impact surrounding farming properties as it is being built above the existing HVP Thorpdale plantation. OSML has worked with HVP to ensure the wind farm design minimises impacts on their tree production and business operations.

Agricultural enterprises and wind farm developments deliver mutual benefits



MITIGATING IMPACTS



Visual assessments are provided to near neighbours to show how the turbines will look from their dwelling

5. We will consult the community on the potential visual, noise, traffic and other impacts of the project and on the mitigation options.

OSMI is responsive to queries, concerns and feedback. The social impacts of a wind farm development are initially identified through a social risk assessment and then investigated through extensive community engagement.

The Delburn Wind Farm project team responds to community interest and inputs across all phases of the project by answering questions, developing fact sheets and publishing 'FAQs', sharing key technical reports, offering email subscriptions and regularly updating its website.

Traffic and Construction Management Plans are being prepared incorporating communication processes to ensure updates on impacts are shared with communities well ahead of any works and unavoidable distribution to local traffic. The CCC will be invited to provide feedback ahead of works commencing to help inform on mitigation measures.

To provide context on visual impacts, the Delburn Wind Farm offers assessments to near neighbours using augmented reality and GPS technology to display how the turbines will look from their individual dwellings. Landscape screening of views will be offered to eligible near neighbours when construction commences. Information on turbine noise and Neighbour Profit Sharing is also provided to near neighbours of the wind farm site.

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT



OSMI employed a local Year 12 First Nations student as an Administration Assistant while studying a Certificate III in Business

6. We will support the local economy by providing local employment and procurement opportunities.

OSMI is committed to working with local communities to deliver long term benefits to the economy through employment opportunities, local investment and delivery of legacy projects. Local people will be employed and local suppliers used as much as possible.

The Delburn Wind Farm will support the renewable energy transition in Gippsland. A minimum of 186 full-time roles will be available during the two-year construction period and 24 jobs during the 35-year operational life of the wind farm. Many indirect jobs will be created through the supply chain to support the delivery of the project, boosting the local economy of towns across Gippsland.

Throughout the development phase of the Delburn Wind Farm, over 80% of the OSMI employees have been employed from the local community including a Year 12 local First Nations student who trained as an Administration Assistant while undertaking studies in a Certificate III in Business. In addition, two local high school students completed work experience with OSMI.

BENEFIT SHARING

7. We will offer communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the project, and consult them on the options available, including relevant governance arrangements.

In collaboration with surrounding communities, OSMI develops leading Community Benefit Schemes designed to provide ongoing legacies for the communities in which it operates.

To develop the Delburn Wind Farm Community Benefits Scheme, OSMI consulted with the community via an on-line survey and with local partners and stakeholders including GLaWAC, HVP, project neighbours, local businesses, community groups, schools, local governments and members of the wider community.

To date, Delburn Wind Farm has shared \$70,000 in Pre-Development Grants with 32 diverse community groups since 2020.

The Community Benefits Scheme for the Delburn Wind Farm includes:

- Neighbour Profit Sharing of \$500,000 p.a. (CPI indexed) directly to near neighbours (within 2 km from a wind turbine)
- Community Development Fund of \$150,000 p.a. (CPI indexed)
- Community Co-investment program to allow the community to directly invest in the project and receive annual returns
- Approximately \$11M in community legacy projects

The pre-construction CCC were asked to consider two options for the distribution of Neighbour Profit Share payments. A local lawyer answered questions about the pros and cons of both the Trust and Individual Agreement payment distribution methods. CCC members shared their preferences to inform the project team. This information will be shared with near neighbours and they will be asked to provide feedback on the two options. The project team will update the community on the final distribution payment decision.

Pre-Development Grants are shared with a diverse range of community groups





Thorpdale Playgroup received a grant for childrens table and chair sets along with comfortable chairs for nursing mothers

\$70K

of Pre-Development Grants shared with

32

local community groups since

2020



Yinnar Community Garden received a grant to establish the Indigenous Garden "Yanun Wanduin"

EDUCATION & TOURISM

8. We commit to using the project to support educational and tourism opportunities where appropriate.

OSMI will work with communities to design meaningful tourism experiences across all its projects. Wind farms provide an excellent opportunity for tourism, providing a boost to local businesses and other surrounding attractions.

The Delburn Wind Farm will complement existing experience tourism in the region with two viewing platforms and a Visitor Information Centre. A walking and cycling track may be incorporated at a later date.

This project presents an opportunity to develop an energy trail to learn about wind turbines, renewable energy and the historical land use from a Traditional Owners perspective post European settlement. Signage, viewing platforms and QR codes will link to Gunnaikurnai information about culture and country.

Opportunities will also be presented to educate tourists and communities about wind energy and renewable benefits and will include community open days and educational tours of the wind farm. Celebrations will be held on Global Wind Day and community events such as renewable energy themed picnic days or fun-runs.

OSMI has assisted local students to learn about renewable energy by providing traineeships, student work experience and educational tours to near-by wind farms





Yinnar South Landcare Group received a Pre-Development Community Grant to assist with Indigenous plant seed collecting

9. We will demonstrate responsible land stewardship over the life of the project and welcome opportunities to enhance the ecological, cultural and/or agricultural value of the land.

OSMI seeks out sites for development that present opportunities to enhance the ecological values and understanding of cultural heritage through its projects.

The Delburn Wind Farm will be the first plantation-based wind farm to be constructed in Australia. The existing pine plantation and land has been extensively disturbed, leaving it with low likelihood of undisturbed cultural heritage values and relatively low ecological values.

This presents an opportunity for the landowner, HVP to diversify land use and revenue streams and the Gunnaikurnai to explore the historical uses of the land which was cleared by European settlers well before current understanding of the importance of cultural history and practice was accepted. Collaboration between OSMI, GLaWAC and HVP on the project design ensures optimal integration of the wind farm's operations into existing land uses.

The project layout has been carefully designed to minimise impacts on local flora and fauna and incorporates mitigation measures to ensure overall impacts to local wildlife are low. Native vegetation removal has been reduced and offset requirements will be met.

A Pre-Development Grant was provided to the Yinnar South Landcare Group to purchase equipment for the collection of Indigenous seeds. The purchase of specialist sieves allowed the group to quickly process seeds for their current and future re-vegetation projects.

MANAGING THE LAND

A Pre-Development Grant was provided to the local "Wednesday Warriors" volunteer group for motorised gardening equipment to maintain the Mirboo North Lyrebird Walk and Grand Ridge Rail Trail.

Rain, hail or shine the Wednesday Warriors maintain these beautiful walking tracks keeping them pristine for others to enjoy. Without support from local grants, the group explained they would not be able to do this work.

The "Wednesday Warriors" received a Pre-Development Grant to purchase tools to maintain local walking tracks



RESPONSIBLE RECYCLING



Organic waste material from site clearing will be reused where possible

10. During the life of the project, we will recycle waste materials where feasible and commit to responsible decommissioning or refurbishment/repowering of the site at the end of the project's life

The construction of the Delburn Wind Farm is expected to have an overall positive impact on the environment with a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the improvement of local environment spaces, through offsets, revegetation and weed management and encouraging sustainable uses of the area. Organic waste material from site clearing and preparation will be reused where possible in the rehabilitation of local mines and quarries.

Currently up to 85% of wind turbines can be recycled or re-used. The challenge lies largely in the recycling of wind turbine blades with the industry working to enhance opportunities to reuse, repair, remanufacture or recycle, without recourse to incineration or landfilling.

In addition to responsible waste management, the Delburn Wind Farm's Environmental Management Plan will minimise any amenity and environmental impacts of the construction and decommissioning of the facility. A Construction Environment Management Plan will outline procedures to manage dust and noise emissions, erosion, mud and stormwater runoff, sediment control to treat and manage runoff along with a monitoring program.

A circular materials management plan is being developed which will inform a decommissioning and resource recovery plan required at the end-of-life stage of the wind farm. This will include the details of materials that can be recovered, for re-use and recycling, from all infrastructure associated with the wind farm facility.



This report prepared by
OSMI Australia

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