

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**To:** Mayor Andrew McKibbin and Councillors, Oberon Council  
**From:** Matthew Parton, Project Sponsor, The Pines Wind Farm

**Subject:** Acknowledgement of Issues Raised at 9 September Council Meeting

Dear Mayor McKibbin and Councillors,

On behalf of the Pines Wind Farm project team, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present to Council on 9 September 2025 and for the constructive discussion that followed. We greatly value the frank input from Councillors. Below we set out a list of issues raised which we will be sure to consider carefully and track as the project progresses.

**1. Safety and Public Discourse**

The Pines Wind Farm team spoke to safety concerns arising from recent incidents involving firearms and noted that intemperate language in public discourse, in particular that used by the group OAWT, risks escalating tensions and increasing risk to worker safety. A call was made for respectful debate and shared responsibility for community safety. The Safety Share transcript is provided as an attachment to this letter for Council's further consideration.

**2. Prematurity of Economic Figures**

It was noted that the social and economic impact assessments have not yet been started for the Project's planning process.

**3. Roads, Traffic and Materials**

Councillors emphasised that:

- Road upgrade and maintenance costs could be substantial,
- Any agreement should include bank guarantees or bonds to protect against road damage, including to other roads used in "rat runs",
- Quarrying for gravel, sourcing water and concrete, and increased haulage traffic must be carefully managed to avoid adverse impacts on local resources. Early engagement with Council staff would be appreciated,
- Transport routes, including O'Connell and Paling Yards. It would be helpful if The Pines Wind Farm could provide early clarity on transport routes.
- Waste management is an important topic to be understood by Council as waste created by the project is unlikely to be accommodated in existing facilities.

**4. Housing and Sewage Infrastructure**

Council highlighted Oberon's current housing shortage and the potential for impact of Airbnbs on rental availability. Councillors requested that the project consider how to improve affordable housing solutions and support upgrades to the local sewage treatment plant to accommodate additional housing needs.

**5. Community and Tourism Impacts**

Concerns were expressed that impacts extend beyond immediate project neighbours. Tourism

assets such as Mayfield Garden, Jenolan Caves, and local accommodation providers could be affected by visual change, amenity impacts, and construction activity.

**6. Transparency and Consultation**

Council asked for:

- Early release of draft reports as a gesture of goodwill prior to them being formally released as part of the planning process,
- A government-funded social and economic analysis,
- Greater disclosure of lease arrangements with Forestry Corporation,
- Continued dialogue on transport, supply chains, and cumulative impacts.

**7. Anzac Memorial Avenue**

The potential impact of turbine transport on the O'Connell Anzac Memorial Avenue was raised as an issue of deep community significance and heritage value. The Pines Wind Farm team noted that it understood the issues, but had not yet finalised the route it would be taking components to site.

**8. Bushfire Risk**

Council requested that the Central West Forestry Hub be involved in discussion around bushfire risks and whether turbines might hinder firefighting efforts.

**9. Decommissioning and Bonds**

Council requested clarity and assurance that decommissioning obligations will be backed by appropriate financial bonds or insurance so that sufficient funds will be available when the project reaches the end of its life.

We thank Council for bringing these issues to our attention in such a direct and constructive manner. Each of these matters will be carefully addressed through ongoing technical studies, consultation, and planning processes. We will continue to provide updates and look forward to working with Council to ensure that the Pines Wind Farm delivers benefits while managing impacts responsibly.

Yours sincerely,

*Matthew Parton*

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## **Attachment - Safety Share from The Pines Wind Farm**

Andrew Riggs, Managing Partner Australia, TagEnergy

### ***“Concerns regarding inciteful language and tone used by Oberon Against Wind Turbines”***

9-Sept-25

Councillors,

With your permission, I would like to conduct a “safety share”.

In workplace safety, we will all be aware that one of the most effective safety controls is “early identification and open discussion” of risks and near misses. When combined with other safeguards, this can prevent accidents and protect people.

I know you are deeply familiar with such risk management, using a risk matrix in your own Council deliberations. Council’s recent list of concerns about renewable projects in the region is a good example of an early risk control in action – it surfaces potential risks for discussion early so they can be addressed responsibly.

So, within this framework, I would like to talk openly about safety risks that have emerged in our community engagement to date. In the past 12 months, there have been two near-misses involving firearms. One was a threatened use of firearms towards our team, which was immediately reported to police, and advised to the former Mayor at the time. The second incident involves a person well-known to this Council, who on one occasion physically threatened our team, and only recently pled guilty to deliberately pointing a firearm at an electricity industry worker. These near-miss incidents are unacceptable in our society, and give rise to the need for increased risk management controls.

One such control is to identify and call out risky behaviours early. We consider the inciteful and intemperate language being utilised by the OAWT group and its followers posts on social media to be an unacceptable safety risk that should concern us all. Official posts by the group utilise language that is designed to incite emotion : “greedy”, “invading our community”, “slam the door in their face”, “despise and disrespect”, “desecrate”. Others call our team “bumbling, insincere fools who cannot be trusted,” even singling out individuals by name and saying “do not come to Oberon ever again... go and laugh in another community’s face”. It frankly shocked me when this organisation was awarded a community prize recently. When such language, including replies by followers, is allowed to go unchecked, it does more than inflame tensions – it creates a culture that is completely un-Australian - where intimidation is normalised, where disrespect is encouraged, and the risk to worker safety rises. These workers are our fellow citizens, someone’s partner, parent, child, friend, loved one. They always conduct themselves within the law and to the highest standards of behaviour in public engagement. If anyone thinks otherwise, please inform me directly.

Safety is never the responsibility of one group alone. It is a shared responsibility – for employers, for employees, for community groups, and for leaders such as this Council, and in particular those who belong to OAWT. Just as we all have a duty to prevent bushfires or road accidents, we also have a duty to prevent harm caused by divisive rhetoric. Whatever our views on renewable energy, none of us should condone words, actions or inactions that could endanger others. As the near miss examples I mentioned illustrate, not all in our community can process these differences of opinion peacefully. Think about how you would feel if these intemperate words contributed to a tragic incident, one that you could have acted to help prevent.

I therefore respectfully ask this Council to also take a clear stand. One simple safety control that Council could implement is to add a preamble to all its communications on renewable energy projects in the region. Council can lead and remind everyone that while debate is welcome, incitement is not. That simple step would set the expectation that safety, civility, and respect are shared values, and that anything else is not acceptable.

Thank you.