

## Balala Wind Farm community newsletter - December 2025

Hello everyone,

Thank you for your interest in the Balala Wind Farm project and for taking the time to stay informed. We know there is a lot happening in the New England region and that people have many questions and concerns about renewable energy projects.

This newsletter is to:

- Let you know the status of Scoping Report for the Balala Wind Farm
- Share some of the main themes we heard at the community information session in Uralla on 29 October 2025
- Let you know how you can keep in touch with us and get involved as things progress

### Scoping Report Update

EDF power solutions Australia (EDFA) has prepared the Scoping Report for the Balala Wind Farm. We intend to submit this report to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) in the first half of 2026.

We had announced in the community information session in October that we would submit the Scoping Report before Christmas. However, we have decided that prior to submitting we want to reach out to more members of the community that may have not been in contact with us yet to ensure that we better understand local views and concerns and answer any questions people may have at this early stage. Before lodging the Scoping Report, our team will be in the area in the new year to meet with near neighbours that we have not talked to yet and other community members who may wish to talk with us.

Please feel free to pass our details onto to neighbours and community members and contact us at any time.

We will be back in touch when the Scoping Report is published and also let you know when the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) - the documents that set out what we must address throughout the Environmental Impact Statement - are available on the Major Projects Portal.

In short, the Scoping Report:

- Describes the current project concept, including a starting point for turbines and other infrastructure
- Identifies the environmental, social, cultural and economic issues that need more detailed work in the next stage, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Outlines how we plan to study and manage these issues as part of the EIS

There will be quite a few ways to be involved, both before and during exhibition of the EIS, including:

- Community information sessions and drop in events

- Smaller meetings with neighbours and other groups
- One on one catch ups with landholders, neighbours and other residents
- A possible Community Reference Group, if there is interest
- Written feedback by email or through the Major Projects Portal once the EIS is on exhibition

You do not have to wait for a formal stage to talk with us. Questions, ideas and concerns at this early stage help us understand what matters most to you.

## **Community information session, Uralla, 29 October 2025**

Thank you to everyone who came to the Uralla community information sessions on 29 October and to those who have been in touch before and since. We really appreciate you taking the time to share your views and ask direct questions.

One of the main things we took from the sessions is that people want to help shape how we stay in touch and share information as this work progresses. On our next visit in Q1 2026, we would like to talk together about what good engagement looks like from here. Options include regular email and newsletter updates, community information sessions and drop in events, small group meetings, one on one chats, and possibly a community dialogue group or community reference group that meets more often.

We would really value your thoughts on what mix of these works best for you. We are keen to talk about this more when we are next in the area, or you can contact Hannah at any time to discuss.

Below is our understanding of some of the key themes raised. If you feel we have missed something or misunderstood anything, please let us know. These topics will be studied in detail as part of the EIS.

### *1. Clearing and construction impacts*

*We heard that many people are worried about:*

- *How much native bushland may need to be cleared for turbines, roads, hardstands and crane pads*
- *What this could mean for wildlife, especially koalas, Bell's turtles and birds*
- *Where gravel will come from, how many truck movements there may be and how much water will be needed for construction*

*It was very clear that water, and environmental and biodiversity issues more broadly, are very important in this area, especially given past droughts and local experience.*

*Regarding biodiversity, EDF will undertake detailed site surveys to understand the extent of flora and fauna and how the project may have an impact on species that inhabit the site. The impacts, which are to be quantified and avoided where possible, are to be reported on and may come with an offset liability.*

*Water and gravel sourcing are also to be reported on the EIS, including the impacts that come with their transportation.*

## *2. Cumulative impacts and project saturation*

*There was a strong feeling that the New England Renewable Energy Zone already has many projects proposed or underway. Some people described the region as “overrun” or “full”.*

*Questions included:*

- How all these projects together may affect the region, not just the Balala Wind Farm on its own*
- How EDFA intends to recognise, explain and manage those cumulative impacts*

*The EIS will include a cumulative impact assessment in accordance with the Cumulative impact assessment guidelines for State significant projects (DPIE 2022b). This will include matters like visual and social impacts, noise, traffic and biodiversity.*

## *3. Decommissioning and long-term responsibility*

*We also heard concern about what happens at the end of the project’s life, including:*

- Whether there are financial guarantees to make sure turbines are removed and the site is made safe*
- Who carries responsibility if the project changes hands in the future*
- How turbine components, including blades, will be recycled or otherwise managed*

*EDFA will decommission the project at their own expense. There will be financial bonds put in place during the operation of the project to ensure that funds are available. This is an obligation that would be inherited if the project changed hands.*

*Turbine materials are becoming increasingly recyclable. This now includes turbine blades, where significant progress has been made and more manufacturers are now producing recyclable blades.*

## *4. Fire management and local safety*

*People raised questions about firefighting logistics, including the use of water bombing aircraft and how turbines and other infrastructure would be handled in a fire.*

*Key points we shared were:*

- The Balala Wind Farm will need a bushfire management plan, which must be reviewed and approved by the relevant authorities*
- We plan to work closely with local RFS brigades and other local stakeholders to shape that plan*
- The EDFA team has experience with emergency drills and fire preparedness at other wind farms, and we would bring that experience to Balala*
- We will keep fire management as a standing topic as the project progresses and will look to sit down specifically with RFS brigades and Council.*

## *5. Community and neighbour benefits, and expectations around engagement*

*We heard that people want to see real, local benefits from the project, especially for neighbours who are most affected. Topics raised included:*

- *Why neighbours cannot receive cheaper electricity*
- *Interest in local road and communications upgrades*
- *The importance of working closely with Council so any benefits are fair and useful*
- *Support for setting up a Community Reference Group*
- *Interest in understanding neighbour benefit schemes that line up with the NSW Government's Benefit Sharing Guide*

*There were also questions about how engagement will run over time, including:*

- *Concern about confidentiality clauses in landholder deeds*
- *The need for clear, transparent communication so neighbours feel able to speak openly with each other*

*Our next steps on this will include:*

- *Continuing to explore options for local benefits, for neighbours and the wider community, in line with national and state guidelines*
- *Speaking with Council and other local groups about priorities such as roads and connectivity*
- *Checking interest in a Community Reference Group and, if there is support, working with you to design how it could operate*

## **Staying in touch and meeting up**

Rafael (Project Manager) and Hannah (Stakeholder Engagement) will be visiting the area regularly as the project moves through its studies and approvals.

We are happy to meet in whatever way works best for you, including:

- Community information sessions
- Smaller meetings with neighbours or community groups
- One on one conversations

We will be back in touch early in the new year to start planning our next visit. If you already know you would like to meet or have a preference for how you would like that to happen, please let Hannah know.

## **Contact details**

Hannah Coffey  
Stakeholder Engagement, Balala Wind Farm  
Email: [hannah@taylorconnect.org](mailto:hannah@taylorconnect.org)  
Phone: 0418 656 583



Rafael Velazquez Pena  
Project Manager, Balala Wind Farm  
Email: [rafael.velazquezpena@edf-power.com](mailto:rafael.velazquezpena@edf-power.com)  
Phone: 0435 067 863

Please feel free to pass our contact details on to anyone you think may be interested in the project or who would like to talk with us directly.

### **About this mailing list**

This newsletter has been sent to people we have met through early engagement and to those who wrote their names down at the Uralla community information sessions. We know we do not yet have everyone on the list yet and we will keep working to make sure our list captures all who would like to be included.

- If you have received this in error, or no longer wish to receive updates, please contact Hannah and we will remove you from the list
- If you know of neighbours or other community members who might like to receive updates, you are very welcome to forward this on and encourage them to get in touch so we can add them

### **Season's Greetings**

Thank you again to everyone who has taken the time to speak with us so far, at the Uralla sessions, on the phone, by email or in person. Your views are really important in helping us understand local priorities and in shaping what we do next.

If you have questions, concerns or suggestions at any time, please reach out to Hannah or Rafael. There is no need to wait for an event or a formal stage in the process.

From all of us on the Balala Wind Farm project team at EDFA, we wish you and your families a merry and safe Christmas and a relaxing holiday season.