

FINAL MEETING NOTES – Issued 29 August 2025.

Tallawarra Community Liaison Group Meeting 31 July 2025	
Time	5.00 – 6.30 pm
Date	31/07/2025
Attendees	<p>Community members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gleniss Wellings National Parks Association Ian Fitzgibbon Business Dapto <p>Energy Australia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ivan Currie Dave Simpfendorfer <p>Chair: Brendan Blakeley</p>
Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michelle Rower Illawarra Birders Ron Cooper Neighbourhood 8 Forum
Meeting location	Tallawarra Site Offices

Item	Discussion Summary
1. Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm. The Chair welcomed all and acknowledged Country. The Chair noted apologies as above.
2. Minutes and Matters Arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no comments on the previous minutes.
3. Station Operations Update	<p><u>Overall operations</u></p> <p>Ivan noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been no injuries onsite over the past 233 days. There have been 3 reportable environmental incidents since the last meeting. These were primarily administrative matters relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an intermittent failure of a data logger at the weather station which has since been repaired a request for a reporting extension for Tallawarra B repairs to the Wollingurru buoy which broke its moorings in a storm event. The buoy is now fully operational. It is used to measure water temperature at the point where the station water outlet channel enters the lake. No community complaints have been received since the last meeting. <p><u>Market context</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ivan presented a graph showing the overall generation profile in NSW for the previous week. He noted the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coal contributed around 55% of power to the grid. Wind, hydro and solar collectively contributed around 40% of generation capacity. Solar typically contributes substantial energy during the middle of the day, however on some days if there is widespread rain, its contribution drops significantly.

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- Gas-fired stations such as Tallawarra A and B play a complementary role to renewables particularly across peak demand periods in the morning and evenings.
- Gas-powered stations are very flexible and seamlessly bridge generation gaps when there is no wind or solar fades.
- Both stations are running reliably with a high level of generation since April 2025.

Tallawarra A

- The High Efficiency upgrade was completed in January 2025.
- This included installing some of the latest technology to enable more power to be generated from the existing plant.
- EnergyAustralia undertook optimisation work to ensure that, with the increased power output, they could connect safely to the grid under a range of different scenarios.
- Following this, EnergyAustralia tested the system and is pleased to have received approvals from AEMO and Endeavour Energy for an increased output of up to 460 MW.
- The team is now planning for a short outage in September. This will impact both Tallawarra A and B. The outage will allow work to take place on some common equipment where the gas pipeline comes into the stations.
- EnergyAustralia is keen to get the work done before summer demand kicks in.
- The outage for Tallawarra A is expected to last for 6 days and for Tallawarra B around 10 days as some warranty work will also be undertaken while the new station is temporarily out of action.
- September is typically a low demand period. With forward planning, other stations can readily fill any generation gaps while the Tallawarra stations are not available.

Tallawarra B

- Tallawarra B is also operating very reliably and performing better than expected.
- While Tallawarra B can operate across a longer duration, it/s being operated like a peak power station. If generation is needed across a longer period, then Tallawarra A is used.

CLG members' questions and comments:

Gleniss noted it was good that the new station was performing better than expected. She asked about the status of the proposal to run Tallawarra B on a hydrogen mix.

Ivan responded that EnergyAustralia is still hoping to run Tallawarra B on a 5% mix and engineering work to enable this is ongoing. Securing a steady supply of hydrogen will be the challenge.

Gleniss asked if diesel was used at all in Tallawarra B.

Ivan noted that neither unit uses diesel to generate power. EnergyAustralia has back up diesel generators on site to supply power to station IT and safety systems during blackouts.

Ian asked for an update on how the plume dispersal device was working.

Ivan noted that it was performing as anticipated and complying with all conditions. CASA has been kept updated and agree that the conditions are being met. Pilots also seem to be satisfied with the arrangements.

Environmental update

Ivan and David presented a map to show how the station interacts with the surrounding community. They noted the following:

- Currently there are around 140 residences at Yallah (currently the closest residential area to the station).
- The nearest home is around 700 metres away.
- The imminent development of Tallawarra North and Central will see homes within 400 metres of the station.
- As noted by EnergyAustralia there are no plans to develop the land south of Yallah Bay Road around the wetlands.
- Presently, annual noise monitoring is undertaken when the stations are at full operation.
- A biodiversity offset planting area just to the north of the station is growing well.
- EnergyAustralia is required to take certain monitoring and maintenance actions in relation managing to dam safety and ensuring any risks remain at an acceptable level.
- In response to some concerns about the last set of maintenance works around the dams, EnergyAustralia has committed to communicating with bird groups before any works are undertaken.
- Ivan showed a photo of biodiversity offsets planting to the north of the station. He noted the work was done in conjunction with Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Illawarra Botanic Gardens. He noted both organisations were very good to work with and forthcoming in sharing knowledge and expertise.

CLG members' questions and comments:

Gleniss asked, given dams are small and aren't holding back large amounts of water, why such onerous dam safety actions are required.

Ivan noted that the dams come under the oversight of the regulator and EnergyAustralia is obliged to comply with their requirements.

Gleniss asked if the maintenance works were contracted out.

Ivan responded that maintenance, vegetation management and pest control works are all contracted out and undertaken under close EnergyAustralia supervision.

Gleniss noted the Illawarra Native Plant Society has taken great deal of interest in the southern area of Tallawarra and they were also a good source of information about local plant ecology.

On 17 July Gleniss accompanied members of the society to do a survey of the southern area. They pointed out some pioneer rainforest species along the creek and around the dam edges. Gleniss asked if she could tag these plants so that they could be avoided in any future dam maintenance works.

Ivan asked if Gleniss could take a photo of the plants, note their location on a map and with GPS as well as mark them with survey tape. He would talk with the environment team and look at if it was possible to avoid these plants in future works, noting that EnergyAustralia had to conform with dam safety requirements. If these plants can be avoided, the team will do all they can to do so.

Gleniss also commented that weeds were building up around the ash dams, and on a recent visit a gate was unlocked and there was a camera near the bridge. She added that another birder had seen crude graffiti sprayed on the road.

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Ivan responded that EnergyAustralia does not have any cameras operating on the site and he would follow up with lessees. He also noted that EnergyAustralia was currently reviewing security arrangements and fencing across the border lands. At the right time, EnergyAustralia will consult with birders around access and internal fencing. Maintaining fencing was an ongoing problem due to dirt bike riders breaking through the fences. It is difficult to catch dirt bikers as they worked together to get around any surveillance.

Gleniss noted some members had seen deer and foxes on the lands when they were out observing birds.

Ivan responded that the next round of pest management was due to begin soon.

Gleniss noted that recent EDNA surveys conducted in Macquarie rivulet and Mullet Creek have indicated the presence of platypus in these creeks. She also provided an update on the latest bird surveys of the wetlands with around 60-70 different birds species identified. The high number of raptors counted is encouraging as they are an important indicator species for the quality of the wetlands.

Gleniss also mentioned that Beth Mott at DPI was doing survey work on the status of Illawarra Lowland Grassy Woodland in the area which is also found on parts of the western boundary of the Tallawarra lands.

Ivan said he would check if Amanda has had any contact with Beth.

Community Update

- Dave noted the next round of community grants will be open across September.
- Round 1 of 2025 was successful and funds were distributed to 4 recipients:
 - Wollongong Volunteer Rescue Association
 - Windang Surf Lifesaving Association
 - Helping Hearts Foundation – an education organisation that has equipped students at 3 local primary schools with lifesaving skills including CPR and first aid.
 - 1st Austinmer Scouts.
- Dave asked how the grants program could be better promoted and asked members to get back to him with any suggestions.
- Dave noted:
 - The next round of community grants will open in September.
 - They allow for funding up to \$10,000 per project/organisation with a total of \$30,000 available in this round.
 - Brendan will advise CLG members when they are advertised.
 - Members are encouraged to get information about the grants out via their networks.
 - A newsletter will soon be distributed to residents in surrounding suburbs. This will contain information about the grants as well.

CLG members' questions and comments:

Ian asked if EnergyAustralia was open to presenting to the Business Chamber and Rotary to increase community awareness about the station and its operations.

Dave said that now he was on board, increasing community engagement was a key focus of his work. He noted he would give Ian a call to talk further about this matter.

Gleniss queried if EnergyAustralia was aware of the Illawarra Ramblers proposal for a continuous track around the lake. She noted that while she was supportive of being able to walk around the lake, she was not supportive of this track going through the wetlands

Ian asked about the status of the Bridgehill development of the central and northern lands.

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	<p><i>Ivan noted that some final administrative steps were being resolved with council. Once these were complete, Bridgehill would have title to the northern and central lands. He was unable to give a timeframe for when works would commence.</i></p> <p>He welcomed any suggestions as to what could be done to increase interest in the CLG and promote attendance by members</p>
4. Next meeting	<p>Dave Simpfendorfer from EnergyAustralia noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The next CLG meeting is likely to occur toward the end of November 2025.- EnergyAustralia would stay in touch with CLG members via the CLG Chair. <p>Brendan's contact for CLG members is brendan@elumni.au</p>
5. Meeting close	<p>Brendan thanked Glennis and Ian for attending the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 6.30 pm.</p>