

# Fact sheet:

## The Environment Effects Statement

### What is an EES?

In Victoria, assessment of the potential environmental impacts or effects of a proposed development may be required under the Environment Effects Act 1978. This process is called the Environment Effects Statement (EES), and it is not an approval itself rather, a detailed assessment that assists statutory decision-makers to make decisions about whether a project should proceed and under what conditions.

The EES process is managed by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on behalf of the Minister for Planning. It is a rigorous and robust process that can take a developer several years to complete, during which time members of the community have opportunities to provide input and feedback into the process.

### Environmental Effects Statement Process



#### \*REFERRAL

Victorian Government EES Referral determination



#### \*^SCOPING

EES Scoping Phase including publication of Draft EES Scoping Requirements for public submissions and issuing the Final Scoping Requirements



#### \* PREPARING THE EES

Preparation and submission of the EES (~12months)



#### \*^ PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Public review of EES including exhibition, submissions and public inquiry



#### \*^ PLANNING APPROVAL

Decision makers consider the assessment

#### \* Ongoing consultation opportunities

A planned engagement program delivered by Hexham Wind Farm will provide ongoing opportunities for stakeholders to access information and share feedback that informs project design and development. The proposed program is included in this Plan.

#### ^ Formal consultation opportunities

Members of the public can also participate in the EES process by providing written comments on the draft scoping requirements and exhibited EES.

**Referral:** A developer (proponent) refers a project to the Minister for Planning.

**Referral decision:** The Minister decides on the need for an EES.

**Scoping:** The matters to be investigated and documented in the EES are set out in the scoping requirements issued by the Minister. Draft scoping requirements are prepared and released publicly for comment and then finalised.

**Preparing the EES:** The developer prepares the EES and consults with stakeholders during the process. A study program and consultation plan are prepared, along with a schedule. A Technical Reference Group (TRG) is appointed to provide technical advice to both the DTP and the proponent on preparing a quality EES.

**Public review:** The completed EES is released for public comment by the Minister for Planning for a period of 20 to 30 business days. Members of the public, and organisations, can make submissions. The Minister may appoint an inquiry to consider the effects of the project. The inquiry provides a report to the Minister for assessment.

**Making an assessment:** The Minister considers relevant information including the EES, public submissions, the proponent's response to the submissions and any inquiry report in order to make an assessment.

**Informing decisions:** Statutory decision-makers must consider the Minister's assessment.

## Does this project require an EES?

In early 2022, Wind Prospect submitted an EES Referral and the Victorian Minister for Planning decided that an EES was required for the proposed Hexham Wind Farm. The Minister's decision determined the project has the potential for significant effects on:

- Significant biodiversity values, including threatened species and communities listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 and Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999;
- Native vegetation and ecology of the area's terrestrial environments and freshwater environments, including wetlands and creeks;
- Aboriginal cultural heritage; and Landscape and visual amenity;

The Minister also determined that further assessment of effects on historic heritage, traffic, shadow flicker, soils, groundwater, electromagnetic interference, aviation, amenity, socioeconomic values and cumulative effects in the context of other existing and proposed projects within the region would be required.

## How to be involved in the EES process

Wind Prospect recognises that this proposed project is a major development and relevant to the whole community. As the team prepares the EES, we will keep people informed and involved in the process and invite feedback and input.

A project website, project hotline and email will be available at all times and a project newsletter will be published to share updates, milestones and details on information sessions. There are also formal opportunities provided by the DTP for community and stakeholder to input into the EES process. These are via submissions during the exhibition period for the EES scoping requirements and the EES itself once all the assessments have been completed.

