

Hexham Wind Farm

FACT SHEET

Flora and fauna



The proposed Hexham Wind Farm is located between Hexham, Caramut and Ellerslie in the Moyne Shire in south-west Victoria. If approved, the Project would incorporate up to 106 wind turbines with an approximate height of up to 260 metres from ground to blade tip. The proposed Project also includes an on-site terminal station and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and other associated infrastructure.

As part of the Victorian Government's planning and approvals process for major projects, Wind Prospect is preparing an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the proposed Hexham Wind Farm. An EES is a requirement under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* and includes a detailed assessment of a wide range of environmental and social assessments such as biodiversity, ecology, historical heritage, Aboriginal cultural heritage, landscape and visual amenity, traffic and transport, noise, socioeconomic and surface and groundwater.

To complete the assessments, considerable research and consultation is being undertaken to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects on the environment and the social fabric of the community during construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed Project. Wind Prospect recognises the value of the natural and built environment in which the proposed Project is based and understands and respects the community's desire to protect both the environmental and social landscape that has existed for many years.



Assessment

As part of the EES, a Flora and Fauna Impact Assessment is being finalised in accordance with the Victorian Government Planning Minister's scoping requirements for the assessment of environmental effects, the *Commonwealth Environment and Protection Act 1999* (EPBC Act), the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act), and a number of other legislative and regulatory frameworks. The aim of the Flora and Fauna Assessment is to provide information on plant and animal life within the Project area, identify any potential adverse effects on these ecological communities, and to avoid or, where avoidance is not possible, minimise these effects.

How the assessment has been carried out

The risk to birds, other animals, and plants is carefully considered during the rigorous environmental planning and assessment process.

A range of biodiversity investigations and assessment methods have been undertaken to identify existing flora and fauna in the Project area and to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are adopted to avoid or minimise any potential adverse effects. The assessment includes completing regular database searches of threatened species from the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas and Protected Matters Search Tool to ensure that the assessment considers the most up-to-date information.

Separate reports have been undertaken to assess any potential effects of the Project on bat species, including the Southern Bent-Wing Bat and the state-threatened Brolga.

For more information on Brolga, please see our:

[Brolga Fact Sheet](#) →

▶ The assessment covers an area of **16,104 hectares** using methods, including:

- › Reviewing existing reports, databases, guidelines and documentation, including a Detailed Flora and Fauna Investigation of the site undertaken for the Project in 2014.
- › Determining the presence or likelihood of species listed under the EPBC Act and the FFG Act within the Project area.
- › Assessing and surveying a range of biodiversity topics, such as vegetation and flora, Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems, fauna, birds and migratory birds, migratory birds assessment, Growling Grass Frog, and Matters of National Environmental Significance.
- › Undertaking a number of field studies and surveys since 2011, with targeted surveying for species listed under the EPBC Act or FFG Act that have the potential to be present in the study area.
- › Evaluating the Project's potential to affect ecological communities, including the potential cumulative effects of the proposed Project and other existing or approved developments in the area, and proposing mitigation measures.





Preliminary findings

The preliminary findings of the Flora and Fauna Impact Assessment identified a number of species of flora and fauna that exist within the Project area and immediate surrounds. These findings included:

- One flora species, Purple Blown-grass, listed as threatened under the FFG Act, was identified within the survey area. Three EPBC Act listed ecological communities were recorded during surveys.
- Over 90% of bird sightings occurred below rotor swept height (area under which the wind turbine blades rotate). No birds were observed during surveys flying above rotor swept height. Additional surveys will be completed to provide up to date information.
- The only threatened species of bird observed was the Brolga (see our Brolga fact sheet for more information). No adverse effects were identified for migratory shorebirds and fish.
- Growling Grass Frog (GGF) potential habitats have been mapped. If known sites for the frog are avoided and minimal habitat is altered at creek crossing points, there should be minimal impact on the local population of GGF.
- All threatened flora and fauna species listed under the EPBC Act are unlikely to be adversely affected by the Project. Two ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act have the potential to be adversely affected, with further assessment required once the site layout has been finalised.
- Of the bird species recorded during field work at the Project area, the Brolga was the only species listed as vulnerable in Victoria under the *Advisory List of Threatened Vertebrates Fauna in Victoria* (DSE 2013) and is also protected under the state *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. A separate study has been completed on the Brolga.
- Potential impacts will continue to be assessed in detail as the Project planning progresses with Wind Prospect working to avoid or minimise any potential adverse impacts.

Managing adverse effects

Based on the assessment findings to date, mitigation measures are proposed to ensure adverse effects on biodiversity are avoided or, where avoidance is not possible, minimised during the planning, construction and operation of the proposed Project. This includes:



Submission of a draft Bat and Avifauna Management Plan as part of the EES. This plan will outline a proposed regime for monitoring bird and bat strikes during the operation phase and our adaptive management response.



Preparation of and adherence to an approved Environmental Management Plan during construction. This will include defined routes for machinery, decontamination procedures to prevent the spread of weeds, and management methods to avoid and minimise impacts to waterways.



Avoiding the placement of infrastructure within 100-meters of wetlands and watercourses and minimising waterways crossings.



Designing the project to avoid and limit impacts on threatened species habitat such as the Growling Grass Frog.



Re-alignment and careful design and location of all Project infrastructure to avoid native vegetation as much as possible.



Ensuring that the appropriate approvals and permits are sought from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) if removal of native flora is required and agreed mitigation plans in place.



If required, offsetting any impacts under the EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy.

Next steps

The final Flora and Fauna Impact Assessment will be submitted as part of the EES documentation for review and assessment by the Planning Minister. The Minister will place the EES and all technical assessments on public exhibition for a period of 30 days. Feedback received from the community during the public review period will be summarised in a Submissions Report and considered as part of the Minister's Assessment of the Project.

Have your say

The environmental, social and economic technical studies are being finalised and we welcome you to have your say on the proposed Project. You will be provided with advance notice of the EES exhibition and the formal opportunity to submit a submission, however you can provide feedback at any time by getting in touch with the Project team by email, phone or mail.

We will be out in the community in the lead up to and during the public exhibition period to answer questions about the proposed Project, the EES, technical studies and any other queries you may have.

Visit the Project website for more information on our upcoming in-region engagement activities.

Wind Prospect respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our office and each of our projects are located. We also acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to the land and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Contact

If you need an interpreter, please call 13 14 50. If you are deaf and/or find hearing or speaking with people on the phone difficult, please contact the National Relay Service on voice relay number 1300 555 727, TTY number 133 677 or SMS relay number 0423 677 767.

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