



# Valley of the Winds (SSD-10461)

Independent Planning Commission

Public Meeting

10<sup>th</sup> April 2025

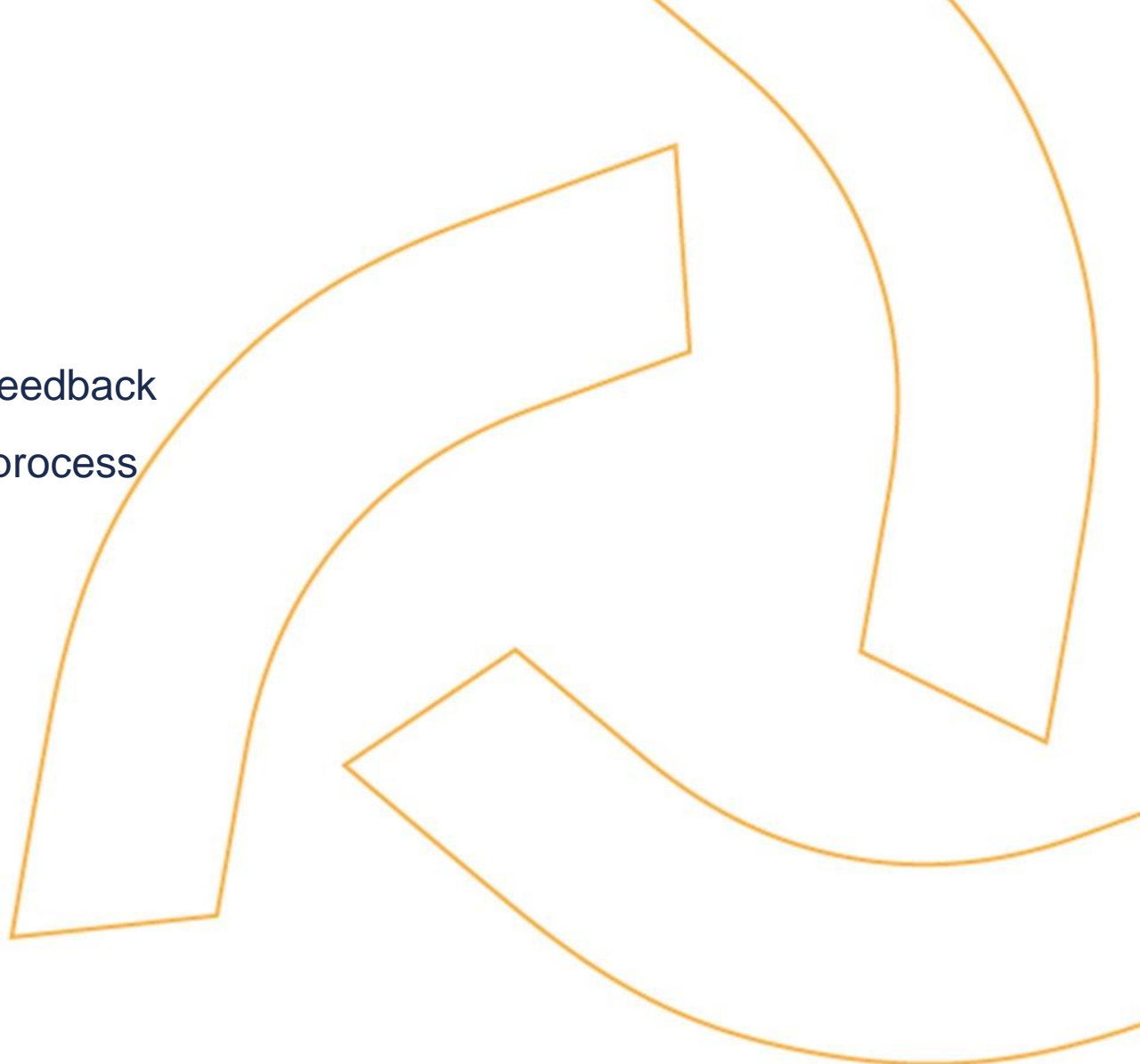
# Acknowledgement of Country

ACEN Australia acknowledges the Gomeroi people and the Wiradjuri people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which our Valley of the Winds project is proposed to be located.

We pay our respects to elders, past and present, and emerging, and to those that continue to care for Country.

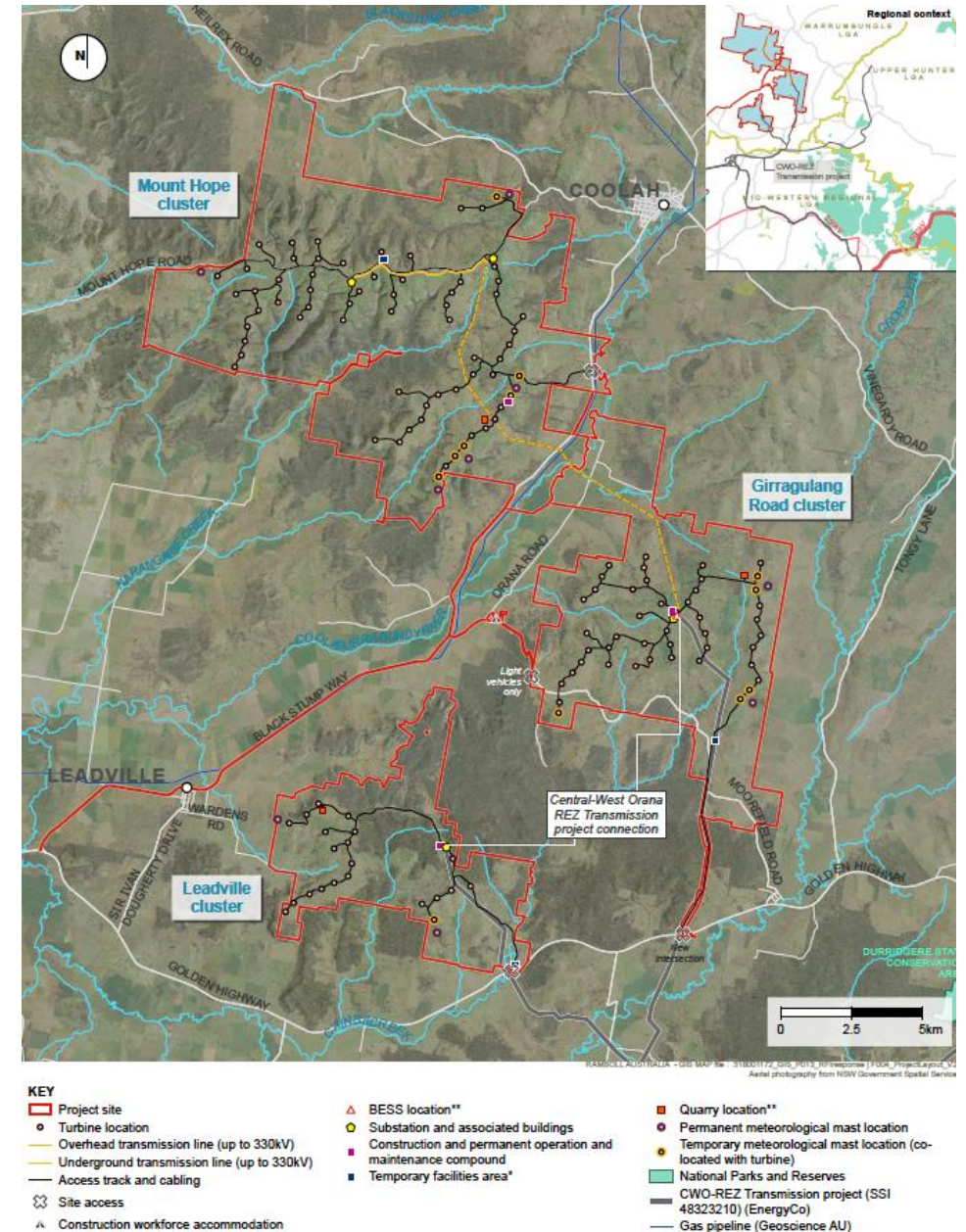
# Presentation Overview

- Project summary
- Response to community concerns and stakeholder feedback
- Key design changes made throughout the planning process
- ACEN's commitments in managing key issues
- Conclusion



# Project Summary

- **Location:** near Leadville, Coolah and Uarbry in Warrumbungle Shire Council LGA
- **Size:** up to 131 wind turbines and 320 MW/ 640 MWh BESS
- **Maximum turbine tip height:** up to 250m
- **Landowners:** 20 host landowners; 26 associated neighbours
- **Existing land use:** agriculture, primarily grazing
- **Ancillary Infrastructure:** Temporary Workforce Accommodation Facility, quarries and laydown areas for construction, electrical high voltage infrastructure and other ancillary infrastructure
- **Connection:** Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWO-REZ) Transmission Network via two dedicated 330kV transmission lines to Merotherie Hub
- **Direct benefits:** Planning Agreement with WSC of \$1,050/MW, CWO REZ Access Fees of \$2,300/MW per annum for community and employment purposes
- **Intended construction start date:** late 2026 - early 2027





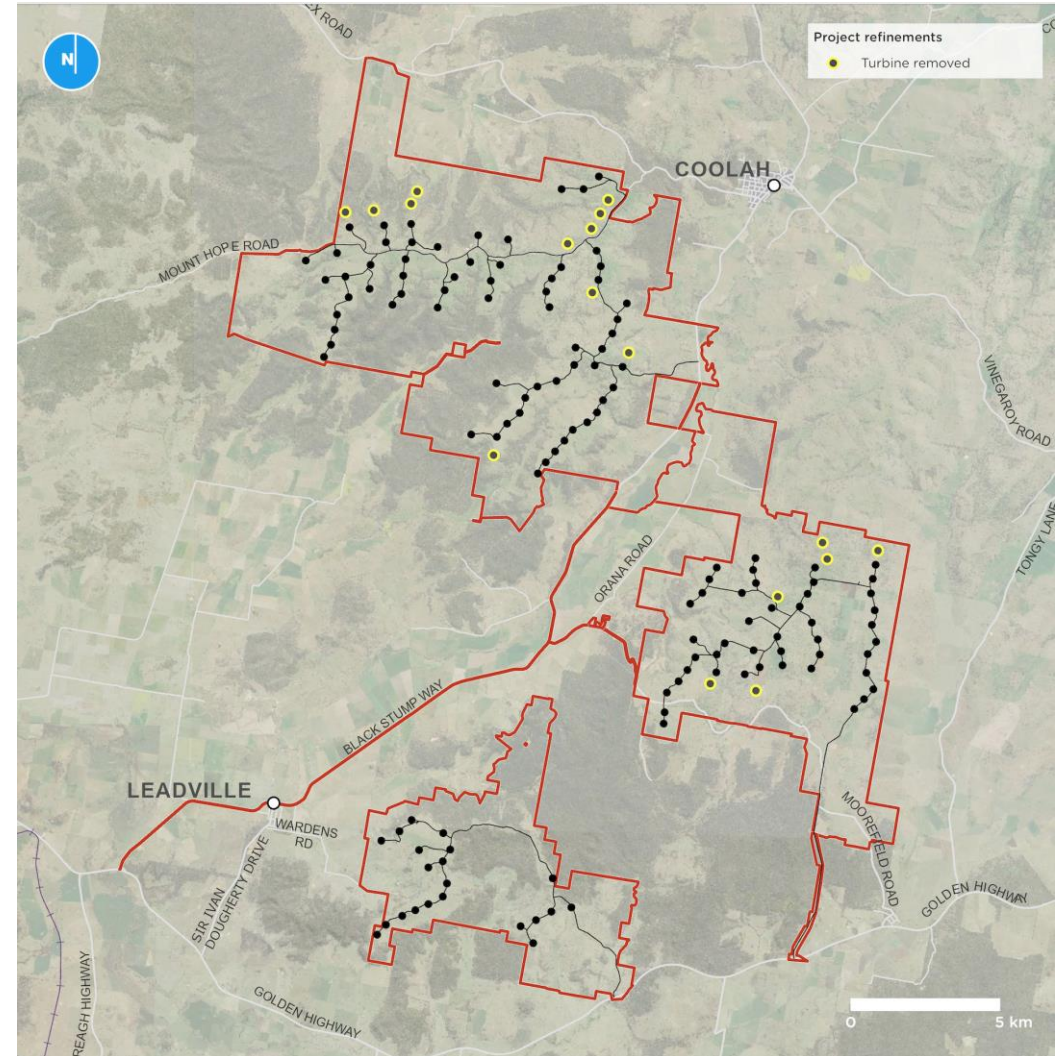
# Key themes from community & stakeholder consultation

- Landscape and visual
- Traffic and transport
- Biodiversity
- Aviation safety
- Bushfire risk
- Cumulative impacts



# Project design changes

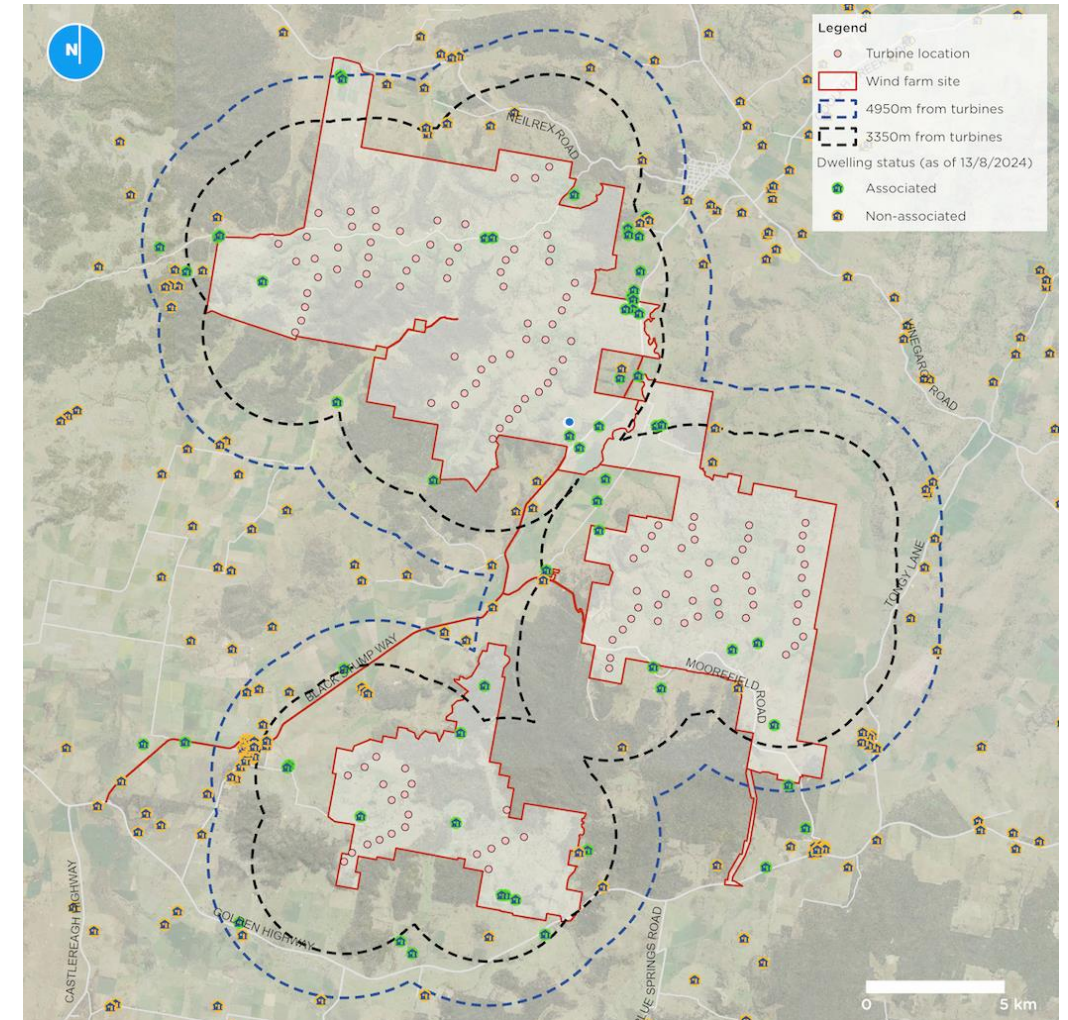
- **Key design changes made in response to stakeholder feedback**
  - ✓ Removal of 17 wind turbines & associated access tracks
  - ✓ Removal of 4 met masts. Relocation of 7 met masts
  - ✓ Moved access to the Girragulang cluster 3km away from Uarbry
  - ✓ Removal of light vehicle access routes via Neilrex Road, Leadville stock route and Warden's Rd
  - ✓ Extensive consultation and detailed assessment of upgrade works to Black Stump Way and Moorefield Rd (west)
- **Other design changes made at Amendment Report stage**
  - ✓ Revision of project boundary to include Black Stump Way and Moorefield Rd and to exclude unutilised land
  - ✓ Removal of 330kV overhead transmission line - now being delivered by EnergyCo/ ACE-REZ





# Landscape and Visual

- ACEN has consulted extensively with the community on visual impact and followed the relevant planning guidelines
  - Wind turbine numbers reduced from 175 at scoping stage to 131
  - Reduced non-associated dwellings from 112 at scoping to 87
- DPHI assessment concludes the project meets all visual performance objectives of the planning regulations and potential impacts are within acceptable limits
- **Mitigation commitments:**
  - Screening offered to all residents within 4.95km of turbines
  - Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program open to all residents within 5km of turbines
  - Minimisation of impacts from lighting (if required)
  - Shadow flicker not to exceed 30 hours at any residence



# Traffic and Transport

- Feedback from community and consultation with WSC has informed changes to our planned use of local roads
- Agreed road upgrades include:
  - Mount Hope Rd
  - Moorefield Rd (west)
  - Black Stump Way
  - Associated intersections
- **Mitigation commitments:**
  - Upgrades to be implemented in accordance with the relevant timings to satisfaction of Roads Authorities
  - Pre- and post-construction dilapidation surveys/make good obligation
  - Traffic Management Plan (TMP) to minimise local disruption
  - OSOM and heavy vehicle deliveries only to use approved Port to REZ route being upgraded by EnergyCo





# Biodiversity

- The project is designed to avoid impacts to native vegetation & protected species where possible
  - Reduction in turbine numbers
  - Avoiding TEC, threatened species and areas of high conservation
  - Locating turbines 200m away from cliff lines - for bats
  - Reducing project footprint by 44% - for box gum woodland (BGW) and derived native grassland

## **Mitigation commitments:**

- Opportunities to avoid clearing during detailed design phase
- Retirement of biodiversity offsets prior to construction
- ACEN will secure 282 ha of BGW land in perpetuity for the purpose of restoring, enhancing and protecting vegetation
- Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan (BBAMP)
- Biodiversity Management Plan



# Aviation safety and bushfire risk

## Aviation safety

- Concerns raised regarding potential for wake turbulence and obstacle impacts at two airstrips located approx. 3.2 km to the East of turbines in the Girragulang cluster
- Risks for planes landing/taking off at Turee and Tongy air strips were considered in detail
- Aviation Projects (ACEN advisor), To70 (DPHI advisor) and the Department concluded any potential risks to air safety would be very low and can be effectively managed
- **Mitigation commitments:**
  - Aviation Management Plan developed in consultation with the operators of Tongy and Turee aerodromes
  - Carry out the development in accordance with: *National Airports Safeguarding Framework Guideline D: Managing the Risk to Aviation Safety of Wind Turbine Installations (Wind Farms)/Wind Monitoring Towers*
  - Notify relevant aviation organisations prior to construction
  - Bushfire and Emergency Response Plan to include aviation related operational procedures in the event of a bushfire

## Bushfire risk

- Bushfire Risk Report completed at EIS stage – recommendations supported by RFS
- We will establish Asset Protection Zones around key project infrastructure
- Develop and implement a comprehensive Bushfire and Emergency Response Plan and detailed emergency procedures for the development
- We have also committed to specific mitigation measures including the provision of on-site firefighting water supply

# Cumulative impacts

- ACEN acknowledges that cumulative impacts within the CWO REZ need to be carefully managed
- The Project's potential to contribute to cumulative impacts for noise, visual amenity, traffic and roads were assessed as part of the EIS
- The assessment, and the Department in its recommendation, concluded the project's contribution to cumulative impacts on these issues is negligible or manageable
- EnergyCo has a key role to play in managing the risk of several key cumulative impacts and is now coordinating across the REZ e.g. OSOM deliveries





# Conclusion

- The Valley of the Winds project was developed in accordance with the EP&A Act and NSW Wind Energy Guidelines.
- ACEN agrees with DPHI's assessment that this is an approvable project.
- We have made significant changes to the project design as a direct result of community and stakeholder feedback.
- We are committed to ongoing engagement through the life of the project.



