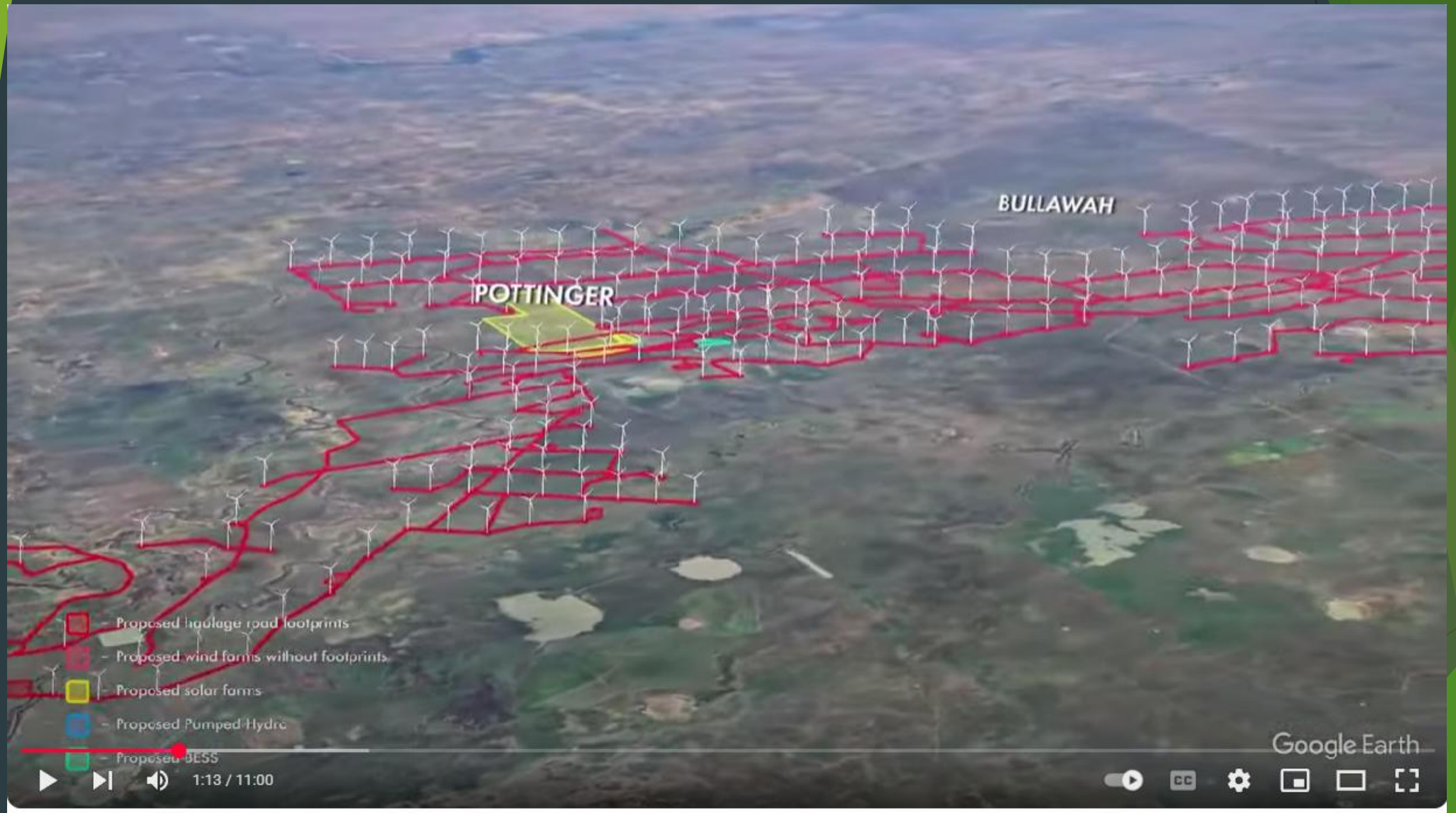
POTTINGER ENERGY TALK - Rainforest Reserves Australia



3d animation mapping of all proposed renewable energy projects in NSW.

Rainforest Reserves Australia
1.17K subscribers

Subscribed | 94 | Share | Download | Clip | Save

POTTINGER RENEWABLE ENERGY Rainforest Reserves Australia

– Australian Painted Snipe Rostratula australis

- Barking Owl Ninox connivens

- Black Falcon Falco subniger

Blue-billed Duck Oxyura australis

- Brolga Grus rubicunda

- Brown Treecreeper (eastern subspecies) Climacteris picumnus victoriae

* Diamond Firetail

Dusky Woodswallow Artamus cyanopterus cyanopterus

Freckled Duck Stictonetta naevosa

- Gilbert's Whistler Pachycephala inornata

- Grey Falcon Falco hypoleucos

- Grey-crowned Babbler (eastern subspecies) Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis

Inland Forest Bat Vespadelus baverstocki

We thought the transition to renewable electricity would benefit Australia…

- …until we discovered the amount of critical habitat destruction required to make way for industrial-scale wind developments.

CHALUMBIN WAS REFUSED due to community backlash, and environmental harm.

Proposed Chalumbin/ Wooroora Station wind farm habitat, FNQ, 2022

Jirrbal Elder says of Kaban wind farm:

- "It's a sorry, saddest sight you could see…I'd prefer to have looking at tallest trees and plants and animals.

- Anything but a wind turbine."

- – Trish Mitchell, Jirrbal Elder

A male Sea Eagle and his mate, documented sitting on eggs in the nest. What will happen when the blades start to turn? Image taken at Kaban wind farm site, 2022

Habitat destruction at Kaban wind farm, 2022: the turbines and haulage roads dwarf the tall remnant growth forest around them.

- **“This is a massive area of disruption. It’s bigger than most mines and it’s permanent. Once you start destroying that sort of habitat, it’s gone. You can’t replace it, no matter how you feel. You may want to offset it, it’s irreplaceable.**
- **The turbines dwarf Sydney Harbour Bridge. They’re not little things. These are massive. And we don’t actually know what the long-term ecological consequences are of the turbines themselves, let alone the land clearing.”**

- - Adjunct Professor Tim Nevard on Chalumbin/ Wooroora station wind farm proposal FNQ, now withdrawn by proponent Ark Energy

- *Image: Kaban wind development FNQ, under construction*

Kaban wind farm FNQ

- Proponent is French-owned NEOEN
- 28 wind turbines
- 129 ha of critical habitat cleared
- Only 5 permanent jobs created

2018: Wet season
68 species of bird observed across site

2019: No bird and bat studies conducted

Red Goshawks, Endangered and Masked Owls, Vulnerable, likely to inhabit or forage in the site

2020: Dry season
58 species of bird observed

May 2021: Construction starts

2021: Dry season pre-commissioning survey
18 - 21 October
59 species of bird observed across site

2021: 199 wildlife relocations - no indication which species are relocated. No ongoing monitoring

2022, wet season:
4-11 March
50 bird species observed across site

4 Feb 2022: Sediment potentially enters Magnificent Brood Frog habitat

2023, wet season post commissioning survey:
Only 39 bird species detected

Jan - March 2023 Incidental Carcasses found near operational wind turbines

2 Migratory Fork-tailed swifts
1 Vulnerable White-throated Needletail
1 Rufous Fantail
2 Endangered Spectacled Flying Foxes

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024

2022: An active Wedge-tailed eagle nest including juvenile is found onsite

Wedge tailed eagles are observed during every bird and bat survey flying at Rotar Sweep Area height. They are at high risk of death by turbine strike

2021: Deaths during construction:
Carpet Python
Brown Quail,
Zig zag velvet gecko,
Burton's snake lizard
Squirrel Glider
Bearded Dragon

2021: An Endangered Northern Quoll is killed during construction . 100 ha of Northern Quoll habitat cleared

June 2021: A compliance breach occurred with clearing outside approved footprint

16 wildlife relocations - no indication which species are relocated.

August 2022: First turbine installed

Vulnerable Greater Gliders lose 61.2 ha of habitat

January 2023: Turbines 1 to 17 operational

Turbines for carcass monitoring have increased from 15 to 24 out of 28 due to unexpected bat and bird deaths.

Mid June 2023: Two fires burn uncontrollably

May 2023 WIND FARM OPERATIONAL: Last 11 turbines operational. 28 turbines in total now operational

Kaban wind farm mortality: Sept 2022 - Aug 2023

Kaban wind farm is killing more threatened species then anticipated. 2 Trigger events have already occurred.

2 dead Endangered Spectacled Flying Fox found near turbines.
3 Spectacled Flying Foxes estimated killed.

98 dead bats found near turbines in the first year. Approx 338 bats estimated to have been killed in first year of operations - the numbers may be higher.

5 Vulnerable White-throated Needletails, 9 Fork-Tailed Swifts , 3 Rufous Fantails, 3 Black-Faced Monarchs estimated to have been killed.

81 birds estimated to have been killed by Kaban turbines in 1st year of operation.

1 Wedge-Tailed Eagle carcass found. How many were really killed?
An active nest of Wedge Tailed Eagles exists onsite.

2024: The Department notified of a potential trigger event (July 24, 2024) , re Spectacled Flying Fox and White-throated Needetail deaths.

2024: A Trigger event occurred with a Controlled Burn impacting Magnificent Brood Frog habitat.

2022: An increase in cane toad breeding habitat within the construction footprint.

2022: Two uncontrolled fires destroy Vulnerable Magnificent Brood Frog sites

Carcass surveys at Kaban 2022 - 2023

28 turbines x 226 metres high.

79 metre blades colonising aerial habitat and annihilating bat, bird and insect life.

There is no reprieve for the aerial wildlife of Kaban. "Sacrifices must be made" proponents say.

Why should wildlife pay with their lives?

* Wind turbine carcass surveys are not comprehensive. Not every turbine is searched. There is no 24/7 monitoring of turbines. Many carcasses are either eaten by wildlife or missed entirely. **Most importantly, there is no transparency or independancy in the carcass survey process as wind proponents pay the ecologists to conduct the searches. Surveys are conducted behind "closed doors" - paid for by the wind farm operator.**

Kaban Wind Farm Mortality Estimate - Year 1

Table 13: Percentiles of mortalities for species of interest (total losses).

Species	0%	50% (median)	90%	95%
Spectacled Flying-fox	1	3	9	11
Rufous Fantail	1	3	8	10
White-throated Needletail	1	5	11	14
Fork-tailed Swift	2	9	18	21
Black-faced Monarch	1	3	8	10

Table 2: Carcasses found during formal surveys over the first year of survey. Key species highlighted.

Species	Bat	Bird
Brown Quail		2
Fork-tailed Swift		**2**
Laughing Kookaburra		2
Magpie Goose		1
Magpie-lark		1
Noisy Miner		2
Pale-vented Bush-hen		1
Peaceful Dove		4
Rainbow Lorikeet		1
Sacred Kingfisher		1
Superb Fruit-Dove		1
Unidentified Bird		4
Wedge-tailed Eagle		1
White-throated Needletail		**1**
Eastern Freetail Bat	8	
Hoary Wattled Bat	17	
Little Red Flying-fox	1	
Northern Freetail Bat	27	
Troughton's Sheathtail Bat	1	
Unidentified Bat	26	
White-striped Freetail Bat	6	
Yellow-bellied Sheathtail Bat	8	

Table 3: Incidental finds. Key species highlighted.

Species	Number found
Blue-winged Kookaburra	2
Brown Quail	4
Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher	1
Fork-tailed Swift	**3**
Little Red Flying-fox	1
Rufous Fantail	**1**
Rufous Songlark	1
Sacred Kingfisher	1
Spectacled Flying-fox	**2**
Squatter Pigeon	1
Superb Fruit-Dove	2
Unidentified Bat	10
White-striped Freetail Bat	4
White-throated Needletail	**1**

Source:https://kabangreenpowerhub.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Kaban_EPBC-Act-Compliance-Report_2024_Final-Redacted-1.pdf

Bountiful jobs at Kaban wind complex a fiction

- There are only 5 permanent positions at Kaban wind farm, despite promises of jobs and prosperity for the community. There is no clarity on the nature of these positions, whether they are fulltime, part time or casual.

See this quote from a Media Statement issued by Qld State gov in 2021 regarding the jobs Kaban wind farm would provide:

> The Premier said this would allow Neoen to forge ahead with its $373 million, 157-megawatt Kaban wind farm, creat another 250 jobs for locals.

Source: https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/92154

- Do any journalists ever follow up to see just how many ongoing full-time jobs a wind farm provides? We've never seen any media investigation into claims of the many job opportunities.

- The reality is, once construction is complete within 2 years, there are few long-term jobs for locals to be had at a wind farm. FIFO and some local workers build the wind farm, meanwhile the entire community is left with the baggage with few permanent jobs to be had.

Kaban Wind: The Implications of Industrial Land Use vs. Pastoral Leases

- Kaban wind farm FNQ was built on intact landscape that supports thriving biodiversity. The landscape supported threatened species who lived peacefully alongside cattle.
- There is a common misconception that land that supports cattle-grazing is ruined and disposable. This is untrue. Cattle farms in Queensland are located on remnant or intact habitat that supports much wildlife, including endangered species.
- Some cattle stations have now become National Parks. For example, Vergemont Station near Longreach, was recently purchased to become a National Park.

- *Left: top, Kaban wind farm lights at night, near Ravenshoe, FNQ*
- *Below, intact forest cleared for Kaban wind farm*

Where it started: Mount Emerald wind complex, the first industrial-scale wind farm in tropical QLD

- Mount Emerald wind development, opened in 2018, is killing hundreds of bats per year, some critically Endangered, as well as raptors and other birdlife.
- Once a thriving intact wilderness, it is now an industrial energy zone, inaccessible to the public. Valuable Northern Quoll habitat has been destroyed.

Before: Mount Emerald was once a stunning wilderness area accessible to all.

Now: Mount Emerald is now
An industrial energy zone consisting of 53 wind turbines, extensive haulage roads and infrastructure.

Mount Emerald wind development: from stunning wilderness to inaccessible industrial electricity zone

Table 2. Incidental records of carcasses obtained from 2018 to 2019 prior to the studies

Common name	Scientific name	No.
Northern freetail bat	*Chaerephon jobensis*	36
Black-shouldered kite	*Elanus axillaris*	1
Nankeen Kestrel	*Falco cenchroides*	2
Flying-fox	*Pteropus sp.*	1
White-throated needletail	*Hirundapus cuadacutus*	1
Microbat sp.	*Unidentified.*	7
Black kite	*Milvus migrans*	1

7

Northern myotis	*Myotis moluccarum*	1
Spectacled flying fox	*Pteropus conspicillatus*	6
Little red flying fox	*Pteropus scapulatus*	15
Unidentified flying fox	*Pteropus sp.*	1
Yellow-bellied sheath-tail bat	*Saccolaimus flaviventris*	1
Forest Kingfisher	*Todiramphus macleayii*	3
Total		**76**

Table 3 Carcasses found during formal surveys over year one

Species	Bat	Bird
Northern Freetail Bat *Chaerephon jobensis*	78	
Little Red Flying Fox *Pteropus scapulatus*	19	
White-striped Freetail Bat *Tadarida australis*	6	
Bent-winged bat *Miniopterus sp,*	5	
Spectacled Flying Fox *Pteroptus conspicillatus*	3	
Yellow-bellied Sheathtail-Bat *Saccolaimus flaviventris*	1	
Unidentified microbat species	3	
Freetail bat sp.	2	
Wedge-tailed eagle *Aquila audax*		3
Australian bustard *Ardeotis australis*		1
Brown falcon *Falco berigora*		1
White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*		1
Nankeen kestrel – *Falco cenchroides*		1
Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*		1
Unidentified bird species.		1

Mount Emerald at the outset: Carcasses found during 2018-2019 and 2020 at Mount Emerald wind farm. How many carcasses were missed?

Source: http://mtemeraldwindfarm.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/MEWF-EPBC-Compliance-Report-Year-4-compressed_Part1.pdf

Mount Emerald 2022: Further carcass surveys further reveal the extent of bat and birdlife killed by the wind turbines.

Cumulative impacts of Mount Emerald, Windy Hill, Kaban and potentially Wooroora Station and High Road wind farms – should they be approved - will lead to hundreds of bat and bird deaths per annum.

Source:
http://mtemeraldwindfarm.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/MEWF-EPBC-Compliance-Report-Year-5.pdf

Table 3 Carcasses found during formal surveys (year two)

Species	Bat	Bird
Northern freetail bat *Chaerephon jobensis*	105	
Little red flying fox *Pteropus scapulatus*	29	
White-striped freetail bat *Tadarida australis*	7	
Bent-winged bat *Miniopterus sp,*	9	
Spectacled flying fox *Pteroptus conspicillatus*	1	
Unidentifiable flying fox	1	
Yellow-bellied sheathtail-Bat *Saccolaimus flaviventris*	6	
Unidentified microbat species	6	
Little bent-wing bat *Miniopterus australis*	2	
Bat fragments	1	
Troughton's sheathtail bat *Taphizous troughtoni*	1	
Wedge-tailed eagle *Aquila audax*		4
Brown falcon *Falco berigora*		6
Magpie lark *Grallina cyanoleuca*		1
Australian magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*		1
Fork-tailed swift *Apus pacificus*		1
Laughing kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*		1
Peaceful dove *Geopelia placida*		1
White-throated needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*		1
Nankeen kestrel – *Falco cenchroides*		1
Pale-headed rosella *Platycercus adscitus*		2
Tawny frogmouth *Podargus strigoides*		1
Rufous fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*		1
Pied currawong *Strepera graculina*		1
Forest kingfisher *Todiramphus macleayii*		1
Sacred kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus*		1
Superb fruit-dove *Ptilinopus superbus*		1
Rainbow lorikeet *Trichoglossus moluccanus*		1
Unidentified bird species.		2

A voyage into the unknown

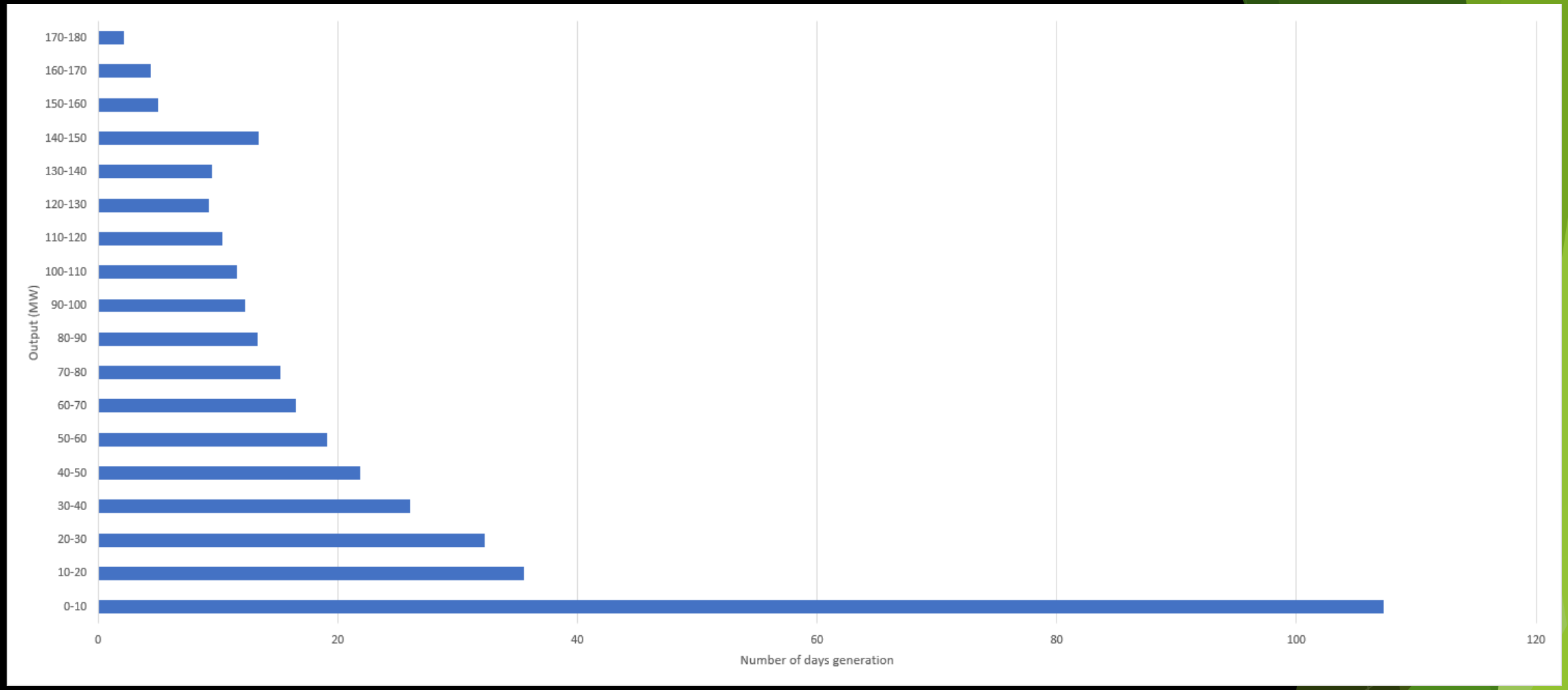
- Dr Kevin You, Senior Research Fellow and Morgan Begg, Director of Research at the IPA, have released research that indicates if energy from coal, oil and gas is replaced by an equal amount of wind and solar (equal distribution), an anticipated total of 118,860,350 hectares (more than the size of South Australia) will be required.
- This is equivalent to 15.45 per cent of Australia's landmass and approximately one-third (32.21 per cent) of all Australia's agricultural land, or an area larger than the size of South Australia.
- While the parameters of Blakers and You and Begg's modelling may be different, how can they end up with such vastly different figures?
- We won't know the true environmental impacts of attempting to get to NetZero until the damage has been done.
- We need to "pump the brakes" on the transition to ensure no critical habitat is lost.

How much land will "NetZero" take?

- There is a lack of clarity and consistent information around exactly how much land will be used for renewables infrastructure in Australia by the year 2050.
- In April 2024, Andrew Blakers, Professor of Engineering at Australian National University, states "All we need is 1,200 square kilometres." He argues agricultural land will barely be affected by renewables, with livestock being able to graze around infrastructure and crops continuing to be produced. Unsurprisingly he concludes: "In short, Australia has far more than enough land to host the solar farms and wind farms required for the renewable energy revolution."
- THE PROBLEM: He mentions no impacts to critical habitat, threatened species and aerial life. Nor does he mention edge-effects or overall drying effect of clearing and fragmenting vegetation. He hasn't totalled up the change of land-use parcels of the whole sites which will be fragmented to become industrial and sterile energy zones.
- Blakers research seems to assume that regional Australian landscape is simply cleared farmland, without any threatened species whatsoever. Or maybe he considers threatened species and critical habitat dispensable for the cause of climate change.
- Source: https://theconversation.com/no-threat-to-farm-land-just-1-200-square-kilometres-can-fulfil-australias-solar-and-wind-energy-needs-223183?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=bylinetwitterbutton
- Left: Boobook Owl by Martin Willis

Mount Emerald wind farm, FNQ: *a failed wind farm*

- Max capacity : 180MW
- Actual 2022 average output : 48.3MW (26.8% Capacity factor)
- Median:32.6MW (18.1% capacity factor)
- 50% of the time (182 days) the generators produced this or less output
- For 63 days Mount Emerald produced 0 MW (0% capacity factor)
- For 107 days Mount Emerald produced less than 10MW (<5.5% capacity factor)



Mount Emerald actual output 2022

Tracked output sourced from National Energy Market logs

for Mount Emerald wind farm during 2022 by Steven Nowakowski.

- “That landscape will never come back. It’s now basically a quarry site.”
  - Steven Nowakowski on Mount Emerald wind farm.

Mount Emerald, FNQ: intact wilderness irreversibly destroyed for a poorly performing wind farm

Cumulative impacts

- The EPBC legislation does not factor in the cumulative impacts of habitat destruction for so many renewable developments.
- Australia has the worst mammal extinction rate of any country in the world. We will drive more species to extinction with poorly considered wind farm siting.
- Raptors and bats are particularly vulnerable to turbine strike. Even if only a few breeding adult raptors are killed by wind turbines a year, that is enough to impact a regional population. Raptors are slow-breeding and healthy adults are critical to a population.
- In VIC, survey data suggests thousands of bats die annually due to wind farms. One expert estimates 12,000 to 40,000 bats are killed from wind farms per year. (source: https://www.thecitizen.org.au/articles/wind-energy-in-australia-is-killing-thousands-of-bats-but-there-is-a-solution)
- We are home to many species of bat in QLD – they won't fare well with so many wind farms in critical aerial habitat.
- Once old growth habitat is cleared for big wind developments, weeds are introduced. Feral pests gain easy access to the site with newly created haulage roads.
- Wildlife can exhibit unusual behaviour around cleared margins of formerly intact habitat, known as the "edge-effect". This edge-effect can impact breeding patterns and other wildlife behaviour in unforeseen ways. Connectivity shrinks and the health of individual biomes is impacted.
- The infrasound of wind turbines may mask mating calls of Koalas – no research has been conducted on this potential impact.
- The fragmentation of habitat for wind farm haulage roads exposes smaller species to increased aerial predation, impacting the ecological health of the landscape.
- The siting of a wind farm is critical. They should not be sited on high quality remnant forest as this poses too great a risk to biodiversity. The precautionary principle must apply.

Stop the greenwash

- **Noise Pollution:** The operation of wind turbines will generate continuous noise, particularly low-frequency noise, which can disturb local fauna.

- **Increased Ground Temperature:** The infrastructure can lead to localized warming or the "heat island effect". Research on microclimatic changes induced by wind farms has found that this warming can negatively impact species adapted to cooler conditions, leading to heat stress, dehydration, and higher mortality rates.

- **Vibrations and Subterranean Disturbance:** Construction activities, such as piling and drilling, create ground vibrations that can affect burrowing species like Vombatus ursinus (Common Wombat) and reptiles. Vibrations may cause these animals to abandon their burrows, leading to increased predation and mortality.

- **Avian Collisions:** The turbines pose a collision risk to birds, particularly raptors like the Aquila audax (Wedge-tailed Eagle) and migratory species such as Polytelis swainsonii (Superb Parrot). A case study from the Capital Wind Farm (NSW) estimated an average of 10 bird fatalities per turbine per year, which poses a significant threat to local bird populations

Something is wrong here

The focus on biodiversity has been lost in the rush to renewables.

Discover more about our work

- Go to www.rainforestreserves.org.au
- Check out our videos here: Rainforest Reserves Australia
- Contact us at info@rainforestreserves.org.au

The Hon Jarrod Bleijie MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning
Minister for Industrial Relations

1 William Street
Brisbane Queensland 4000
PO Box 15009
City East Queensland 4002
Telephone: +61 7 3719 7100
Email: deputy.premier@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Email: industrialrelations@ministerial.qld.gov.au

ABN 65 959 415 158

DECISION NOTICE

I refer to my decision made on 8 April 2025 to exercise my ministerial powers and call in the development application by Moonlight Range Wind Farm Pty Ltd as trustee for Moonlight Range Trust 3, a wholly owned subsidiary of Greenleaf Renewables Pty Ltd for a Wind farm (up to 88 wind turbine generators and ancillary infrastructure including a battery energy storage system (BESS)) and Clearing native vegetation on land at Morinish and Morinish South.

Please be advised that on 22 May 2025, I decided to **refuse** the development application under the *Planning Act 2016* (the Planning Act).

Ministerial call in details

Date call in notice given:	8 April 2025
Date of decision:	22 May 2025
Details of decision:	**Refuse** the development application for a development permit for: • Material Change of Use – for a wind farm (up to 88 wind turbine generators and ancillary infrastructure including a battery energy storage system (BESS)) • Operational work – Clearing native vegetation
Reasons for decision:	See schedule 1 to this Decision Notice

Matters considered

The following matters were considered in making my decision:

- Ministerial Briefing Note (MBN25/620) and attachments, including
  - Planning Assessment Report, prepared by officers of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (DSDIP) and attachments including a human rights assessment
  - Draft decision notice.

Property details

Street address:	317 Connor Road; 3242, 4099 & 4407 Rosewood Road; 520 Donovan Road, Morinish South, QLD, 4702 4099 Rosewood Road; Rosewood Road; 541 A Pierce Road,

	Morinish, QLD, 4702
Real property description:	Lot 18 on LN1841; Lot 4363 on SP271515; Lot 23 on P4090; Lot 8 on PN191; Lot 10 & 24 on PN244; Lot 12 on PN256; Lot 4 on PAK40203; Lot 21 on PN53; Lot 13 on PN382; Lot 2 & 16 on PN218; Lot 2229 on PAK40117; Lot 99 on PN260; Lot 11 & 28 on PN244; Lot 1917 on PAK40156; Lot 2 on RP618120; Lot 9 on PN191; Lot 1 on PN214; Lot 15, 16 & Lot 17 on PAK40179;Lot 2228 on PAK40116.

Application details

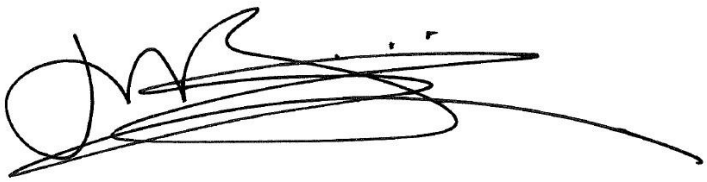
Original assessment manager:	Chief Executive administering the Planning Act
Date application properly made:	1 May 2024
Level of assessment:	Code assessment

Appeal rights

A person may not appeal against the Minister's decision on a call in under the Planning Act.

If you require any further assistance, please email ministerial.callin@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



JARROD BLEIJIE MP
DEPUTY PREMIER
Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning
Minister for Industrial Relations

Schedule 1

Reasons for decision

The reasons for the decision are:

1. This development application called in under the *Planning Act 2016* (Planning Act) is for the following aspects of development:
    a. Material Change of Use for a for a wind farm (up to 88 wind turbine generators and ancillary infrastructure including a battery energy storage system (BESS))
    b. Operational Work for the clearing of native vegetation.
2. Based on the assessment carried out in the planning assessment report, I consider the whole of the development application should be refused.
3. The development proposal is for:
    a. A wind farm comprised of 88 wind turbine generators up to 280 metres in height with ancillary infrastructure including a BESS, five collector and one main substations, overhead transmission lines and access tracks.
    b. The wind farm would result in a construction workforce of 300 workers (over 2 – 3 years) and ongoing workforce of 10 workers (although does not propose on-site workforce accommodation).
    c. The wind farm is expected to generate 450 megawatts of electricity per annum.
    d. The subject site is comprised of 22 freehold and two leasehold premises located in Morinish and Morinish South, 40km west of Rockhampton, with a total site area of 22,232.2 hectares and approximate development footprint of 1,269 hectares.
    e. The application includes a total disturbance footprint of 1,263 ha (approximately 5.8% of the total site area) which includes the clearing of 434.1 ha of regulated vegetation.
4. On a call in I may consider any matter I consider relevant in deciding the application pursuant to section 105 of the Planning Act.
5. DSDIP's assessment informs the following which I accept:
    a. Wind farm development is of importance to the State. Providing safe, reliable and affordable energy is vital to the needs of communities and the development and supply of renewable energy provides an opportunity to minimise greenhouse gas emissions.
    b. However, the nature of development for a wind farm means it has the potential for adverse impacts on individuals, communities and the natural environment.
    c. Mitigating and managing the potential for adverse impacts is of importance to the State, and wind farm development will only be considered appropriate where unacceptable adverse impacts on individuals, communities and the environment do not arise from the development.
    d. Accordingly, comprehensive assessment of wind farm proposals is required in order to ensure the design, siting, construction, operation and decommission of wind farms do not result in unacceptable impacts.
    e. Furthermore, wind farm developments must identify and quantify the social impacts of a project, both positive and negative, and ensure plans are in place to manage these impacts.
    f. Given the nature of the potential impacts, wind farm development must be informed by community and local government engagement.
6. Having regard to these matters, it is my view that ensuring community and local government engagement in wind farm assessment and early identification and

management of social and community impacts are of key importance in the assessment of wind farm development in the State.

7. I therefore consider I should be satisfied that these matters have been addressed before wind farm development can be approved to proceed.

8. DSDIP's assessment informs the following, which I accept.

9. The application as lodged with the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) was subject to Code assessment and was subject to assessment against the State Development Assessment Provisions (SDAP) (version 3.0) in effect at the date the application was properly made. In particular SDAP State Code 16: Native vegetation clearing and State Code 23: Wind farm development applied to the development.

10. On 5 December 2024, SARA approved the application subject to conditions following the code assessment against version 3.0 of SDAP and consideration of version 3.1 of SDAP which came into effect prior to the decision. The decision notice issued by SARA approving the development subject to conditions records that the proposed development complies (with the imposition of conditions) with the relevant assessment benchmarks in SDAP.

11. DSDIP's assessment provided to me for the purposes of this decision informs that the proposal complies subject to conditions, with the assessment benchmarks in SDAP versions 3.0 and 3.1. However I consider these assessment benchmarks are outdated and do not take account of broader matters of interest for the State and therefore I consider this assessment against SDAP versions 3.0 and 3.1 should be given limited weight.

12. Since the SARA assessment was undertaken the following changes have been introduced to the framework for assessing wind farm development in Queensland:

    a. On 3 February 2025 the *Planning Regulation 2017* (Planning Regulation) was amended to prescribe that wind farm development is subject to impact assessment, enabling public input into the assessment process;

    b. On 3 February 2025 the new SDAP State code 23 for wind farm development (version 3.2) commenced. The new State code:

        i. Confirms that wind farm development will only be appropriate where unacceptable adverse impacts on individuals, communities and the environment do not arise;

        ii. Prescribes new performance outcomes (POs) to require specific assessment of the following in wind farm development:

            - The impacts of off-site workforce accommodation on surrounding communities and townships including on services, housing supply and community facilities (PO17)
            - The impacts of the development on infrastructure and services including social infrastructure, communications networks and essential infrastructure (PO23)
            - The impacts of the wind farm on communities and individuals (PO26)
            - Enhanced requirements for decommissioning (PO27 – PO30).

    c. On 1 May 2025 the *Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025* (the Social Impacts Bill) was introduced into Parliament to require major renewable programs to build social licence by demonstrating how projects will deliver long-term benefits for affected communities. The changes seek to ensure that local governments are supportive of the development proposal and provide agreement that the community impacts have been addressed prior to lodgement of the application.

13. DSDIP has further identified and I accept:

    a. Advancing the purpose of the Planning Act requires taking account of short and long-term environmental effects of development (including social, economic, aesthetic and cultural conditions) and providing opportunities for community involvement in decision making.

    b. The following relevant State interests under the State Planning Policy 2017 (SPP):

        i. Planning for liveable communities and housing, specifically the State interests in Housing supply and diversity and Liveable communities which requires that planning ensures that decisions about appropriate development support the housing, employment, education, infrastructure, and other needs of the community. Planning should support positive and innovative responses to current and future challenges, and ensure development outcomes will benefit Queensland's communities in the long-term;

        ii. Planning for infrastructure, specifically energy and water supply which requires consideration of broad matters with respect to the location and delivery of renewable energy infrastructure.

    c. The *Central Queensland Regional Plan 2013* (Regional Plan) which identifies the following relevant matters for the region:

        i. Strong growth in the region and increases in a non-resident workforce population drives demand for housing and construction, retail trade, and services and utilities, including education, health care, electricity and water (Chapter 3 – Overview (Regional Economy)).

        ii. Specifically, the number of non-resident workers in the region contribute significantly to the impacts of population growth overall including pressure on housing and amenities, as well as commercial and social services to maintain liveable communities (Chapter 4 – Providing certainty for the future of towns).

        iii. Growing and fluctuating non-resident workforces across the region are putting pressure on all spheres of community infrastructure in the Central Queensland region which in turn is impacting on the liveability of local communities. The priority outcomes for community infrastructure in the regional plan are to support community infrastructure needs including optimising the use of existing assets to improve community liveability (Chapter 5 – Community infrastructure).

        iv. The regional plan identifies that an uptake of short-term tourist accommodation by temporary and non-resident workers can create issues regarding availability and price of accommodation and deterring tourism (Chapter 6 – Economic Growth – Tourism).

14. The assessment undertaken by DSDIP informs the following, which I accept:

    a. I received 554 representations in response to the proposed call in notice, of which 508 representations were received from individuals (rather than companies or organisations). Of these 508 representations, a total of 142 representations were received from local residents in vicinity to the site the subject of the application including Gracemere and Rockhampton (being the towns proposed for the applicant's associated workforce accommodation).

    b. 88 percent of the local resident representations (i.e. 88% of the 142 received) objected to the proposal and supported the call in.

    c. The objections to the proposal raised concerns about matters including:

i. Community and social impacts, as the workforce will strain the existing housing and short-term accommodation supply, impacts of fly-in/fly-out workers on regional towns and minimal community benefit of the project;

ii. Lack of consultation, as the application did not undertake sufficient community consultation prior to lodgement;

iii. Environmental interests related to impact on the matters of national and state environmental significance, being impact to fauna and flora habitats; contamination impacts; bushfire hazard; and amenity impacts, specifically noise, vibration and shadow flicker impacts.

15. The assessment by DSDIP concludes the application is not supported by appropriate strategies to address workforce accommodation and impacts and other community and social impacts arising or that may arise from the development having regard to the following matters which I adopt:

    a. The applicant states the region is facing a critical housing shortage and specific workforce accommodation is required to be delivered to accommodate the construction and operational workforce for the project. The applicant has developed a preliminary construction workers' accommodation strategy that identifies potential workforce accommodation opportunities and the applicant has been pursuing third party provider delivery of two accommodation sites in Rockhampton and Gracemere.

    b. However the applicant's material confirms there is no certainty that the proposed workforce accommodation can be delivered at sites in Rockhampton and Gracemere and be available for the construction and operation workforce generated by the development. Accordingly the applicant has not demonstrated that appropriate accommodation can be provided to support the project.

    c. Where no off-site workforce accommodation is delivered, reliance on existing housing in nearby regional centres would be required, however I accept the applicant's submission that there is insufficient capacity in the existing accommodation available in the region. I therefore consider the application has not adequately sought to mitigate against the adverse impact on housing supply for the region.

    d. The applicant's material identifies that the project workforce can increase the demand for local services including clinics, hospitals, police and emergency service. However the representation material has not substantiated the increase in demand with an assessment of the existing capacity in the health care and emergency services network in Rockhampton and Gracemere where the workforce accommodation is proposed.

    e. Furthermore, any strategies proposed in the application to be implemented rely on matters to be addressed post approval of the application. As the proposed policies and procedures are not clearly identified as part of the application and representation material, there is no certainty for DSDIP that the potential community impacts the representation material identified will be appropriately mitigated or remediated.

16. Further, DSDIP's assessment concludes that the wind farm proposal cannot be supported on the basis of the following matters which I adopt and which I accept are of key importance to establishing wind farm development and therefore must be demonstrated before an approval can issue:

    a. The applicant states it has undertaken a range of stakeholder engagement including with host landowners, adjoining landowners, traditional owners, the local government, special interest groups, community stakeholders and the Federal and State Governments. However I consider the community engagement undertaken by the applicant has been minimal and insufficient to understand and address any community feedback. It is noted that the community feedback was predominately

neutral or negative, however there has been no evidence or information from the applicant to identify concerns raised and how these have been addressed in the proposal.

b. Instead the representations that I received evidence that the project has not acquired overriding community acceptance. The representations evidence concerns relating to community impacts including the impact of insufficient workforce accommodation, increased pressure on community infrastructure (schools, childcare providers and health care providers) and that there is no infrastructure upgrades proposed to be delivered by the applicant.

c. Further, the application does not provide evidence of local government agreement on the measures and commitments to manage and counterbalance social impacts including workforce management, housing and accommodation, local business and industry procurement, as well as health and community wellbeing.

d. Specifically, the Rockhampton Regional Council (the Council) identified in third party advice comments during the SARA assessment that further information is required to understand the impacts of construction workers residing in existing accommodation options in townships across the region.

e. The applicant has not sufficiently demonstrated the commitment to the stated community benefits, including the establishment of a community benefits fund of at least $100,000 annually throughout the 35 year project life. Notably, the applicant has identified that agreement with the Council on long term community impacts and benefits for the project will only be sought pre-construction.

17. For the reasons above, I consider that the application fails to demonstrate compliance with SDAP State code 23 version 3.2 namely the Purpose, PO17, PO23 and PO26.

18. I consider that the nature of the matters of non-compliance are not such that conditions may be imposed to remedy the non-compliance.

19. Accordingly, the application should be refused to the extent it is for a material change of use for a wind farm.

20. I am of the view that refusal of the application is consistent with the purpose of the Planning Act, the SPP and the regional plan, as well as the intent of the Bill.

21. I consider the balance of the application relating to operational works for the clearing of native vegetation should also be refused.

22. DSDIP's assessment which I accept, concludes that the proposed operational works for native vegetation clearing complies with SDAP State code 16 (version 3.2). However, the application provides that the clearing was not intended as a standalone activity and was to facilitate components of the wind farm development including the turbine generators, access tracks and electrical infrastructure.

23. In these circumstances, as the wind farm development component is recommended for refusal, I do not support any proposed clearing of native vegetation on the premises and the operational works component should also be refused.

24. A human rights assessment has been undertaken for the recommended decision. I am satisfied that the decision is compatible with human rights under the *Human Rights Act 2019* because it only limits any relevant human rights to the extent that is reasonable and demonstrably justifiable in accordance with section 13 of that Act.

25. The reasons for my decision, including the findings on material questions of fact are based upon the matters and evidence contained within the MBN25/620 and all attachments including the assessment report prepared by DSDIP.

Matters considered in making the decision

Prior to making my decision on the development application, I was provided with:

- a Briefing Note (MBN25/620) and attachments, including:
  - Planning Assessment Report, prepared by officers of DSDIP and attachments
  - Human rights assessment.

I am informed that the following matters were considered in undertaking the assessment of the development application in the Planning Assessment Report:

- *Planning Act 2016*
- *Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*
- State Planning Policy 2017 (SPP)
- Central Queensland Regional Plan 2013 (regional plan)
- SDAP, version 3.0 (State codes 16: Native vegetation clearing and 23: Wind farm development)
- SDAP, version 3.2 (State code 23: Wind farm development)
- Representations on the proposed call in of the application.