

Baldon Wind Farm

State Significant Development Assessment Report (SSD-40138508)

September 2026





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and show our respect for Elders past and present through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Preface

This assessment report provides a record of the Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure's (the Department) assessment and evaluation of the State significant development (SSD) application for the Baldon Wind Farm (the project) located approximately 64 kilometres (km) south-west of Hay, near the township of Moulamein, lodged by Baldon Wind Farm Pty Ltd on behalf of Goldwind Capital (Australia) Pty Ltd (Goldwind).

This assessment report includes:

- an explanation of why the project is considered SSD and who the consent authority is;
- an assessment of the project against government policy and statutory requirements, including mandatory considerations;
- a demonstration of how matters raised by the community and other stakeholders have been considered;
- an explanation of any changes made to the project during the assessment process;
- an assessment of the likely environmental, social and economic impacts of the project;
- an evaluation which weighs up the likely impacts and benefits of the project, having regard to the proposed mitigations, offsets, community views and expert advice;
- provides a view on whether the impacts are on balance, acceptable; and
- an opinion on whether the project is approvable or not, along with the reasons, to assist the Independent Planning Commission (the Commission) in making an informed decision about whether development consent for the project can be granted and any conditions that should be imposed.

Executive Summary

Baldon Wind Farm Pty Ltd, on behalf of Goldwind Capital (Australia) Pty Ltd (Goldwind), proposes to develop a wind farm with a capacity of up to around 1,400 megawatts (MW), located in the South West Renewable Energy Zone (South West REZ) at a site around 13 kilometres (km) north of Moulamein (the project). The majority of the project is within the Murray River local government area (LGA), and the northern section of the project is within the Hay Shire LGA. Edward River Council LGA is adjacent to the east of the project.

The project involves the development of up to 175 turbines across two stages (Stage 1: 46 turbines and Stage 2: 129 turbines) with a maximum tip height of 300 metres (m), a 200 MW / 400 MWh battery energy storage facility, and other ancillary infrastructure.

The project is within the South West REZ, which has good wind resource potential, and opportunities for connection to the existing electricity grid (Stage 1), and opportunities for connection to an augmented electricity grid (Stage 2).

The project has a capital investment value of approximately \$2.8 billion and is expected to generate 400 construction jobs and 35 operational jobs. If approved, construction of the project would take 42 months (assuming Stage 1 and 2 are constructed consecutively).

Over the next decade, three of the four remaining coal fired generators in NSW are scheduled to retire, removing around 8.3 gigawatts (GW) of dispatchable electricity generation from the system. The NSW Government's *Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap* (the Roadmap) provides a plan to coordinate investment in new generation and supports the delivery of 12 GW of new renewable electricity generation and 2 GW of long-duration storage in NSW by 2030.

The project is classified as State significant development (SSD) under section 4.36 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). The Independent Planning Commission (the Commission) is the consent authority for the project as Goldwind disclosed a reportable political donation under section 10.4 of the EP&A Act. The application is permissible with consent.

The Department publicly exhibited the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from 14 August 2024 until 10 September 2024. During the exhibition period, the Department received 77 unique submissions, including 73 objections, one in support and three comments. Notably, 81% of the objections received on the project came from people living further than 50 km from the site. Key reasons for objections included the impact and need for renewable energy projects, resource usage, waste and decommissioning, impacts to biodiversity and, contamination and pollution.

The Department received advice from 16 government agencies. Hay Shire Council (host council), Murray River Council (host council), and Edward River Council provided comment on the project.

After the exhibition period, the Department received feedback from Balranald Shire Council. The Department engaged with local councils and relevant government agencies throughout the assessment and they each recommended the implementation of appropriate mitigation and management measures. The Department also visited the project site and surrounding area on 30 June 2025 and 1 July 2025.

Goldwind amended the project in January 2026 to refine its layout and construction assumptions, including removal of five turbines and removal of one of the transport route options for wind turbine components.

The key assessment considerations were related to energy transition, biodiversity, visual and transport impacts. The Department has also undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the full range of other potential impacts and recommended a range of detailed conditions, developed in conjunction with agencies and councils, to effectively minimise, manage or offset potential impacts.

The project would have the capacity to generate up to around 1,400 MW of renewable energy, sufficient to power around 639,000 homes per year. It would also save up to around 2,452,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year and would make a material contribution towards the State meeting its net zero targets and the renewable energy objectives of the Roadmap.

The project is located in an area of strong wind resource potential, on land where wind development is permissible with consent. The project has not been granted Access Rights under the South West REZ Access Scheme but may either seek to connect in the event that one of the access right holders cannot meet its obligations or seek to connect an initial stage of the project to the existing transmission network.

The project has been designed and refined to avoid and minimise biodiversity impacts to high value vegetation. The majority of the project area is comprised of native vegetation in the form of native grasslands, shrublands or remnant woodlands. The project would impact one Threatened Ecological Community listed under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), 1.12 ha of Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains listed as a critically endangered ecological community under the BC Act and EPBC Act. The Department considers that the vegetation clearing impacts of the project would not be significant, subject to the implementation of mitigation and adaptive management measures, the recommended conditions (developed in consultation with the Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation Group of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water) and through offsetting biodiversity impacts.

The project has the potential to result in impacts to bats and avifauna, due to the removal of native vegetation and the risk of collision with turbines. The Department considers that Goldwind has made efforts to avoid or minimise these potential impacts through turbine removal, and

development corridor refinements. The Department has recommended a condition requiring adaptive management in a Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan including detailed monitoring and a trigger action response plan to minimise potential impacts of the project and the implementation of measures to reduce the mortality of those species or populations.

Goldwind reduced the number of proposed turbines from the early conceptual layout before lodging the EIS and then again in the amendment report. There are four non-associated receivers located within 5.9 km of the nearest proposed turbine and two of these are within 4 km i.e. the distance within which turbines of this size may potentially have visual magnitude impacts under the Wind Energy Guideline's Visual Assessment Bulletin (Visual Bulletin). Goldwind conducted detailed dwelling assessments and provided photomontages and wireframes for these residences. Generally, most dwellings benefit from distance, intervening topography and screening from existing mature vegetation and additional vegetation committed to by Goldwind between viewpoints and the project. The visual performance objectives set out in Visual Bulletin can be achieved at all receivers. The Department is satisfied that the project would not fundamentally change the broader landscape characteristics of the area or result in any significant visual impacts on the surrounding non-associated residences.

The construction of the project would involve the delivery of plant, equipment, and materials by heavy vehicles and oversized and over-mass vehicles, with some being 'high-risk' due to vehicle/load dimensions and/or weight. These vehicle movements have the potential to impact on the State and local road network. Large equipment, such as wind turbine components, substation, BESS, batching plant equipment and water tanks, is proposed to be transported via OSOM to the project site.

The Department considers the project would not result in unacceptable impacts on the capacity, efficiency or safety of the road network. Potential impacts would be largely restricted to the 42 month construction period (assuming Stage 1 and 2 are constructed consecutively) and would be suitably managed through road upgrades, restricting vehicles to approved routes, road maintenance and the implementation of a Traffic Management Plan.

The Department has carefully considered the likely environmental, social, and economic impacts of the project in accordance with the requirements of section 4.15 of the EP&A Act. Overall, the Department's assessment concludes that the project would result in benefits to the State of NSW including providing renewable energy in the South West REZ and in an area that has available network capacity.

The Department has not provided an overall recommendation but rather has undertaken a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the project to inform the Commission's decision on whether the project is in the public interest. Should the Commission determine to approve the project, the Department has provided recommended conditions.

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1 Introduction

1. Baldon Wind Farm Pty Ltd, on behalf of Goldwind Capital (Australia) Pty Ltd (Goldwind), proposes to develop the Baldon Wind Farm (the project) in the South West REZ, approximately 64 kilometres (km) south-west of Hay, near the township of Moulamein (see Figure 1). The project is predominantly located in the Murray River Council local government area (LGA), with the northern portion of the project within the Hay Shire LGA.

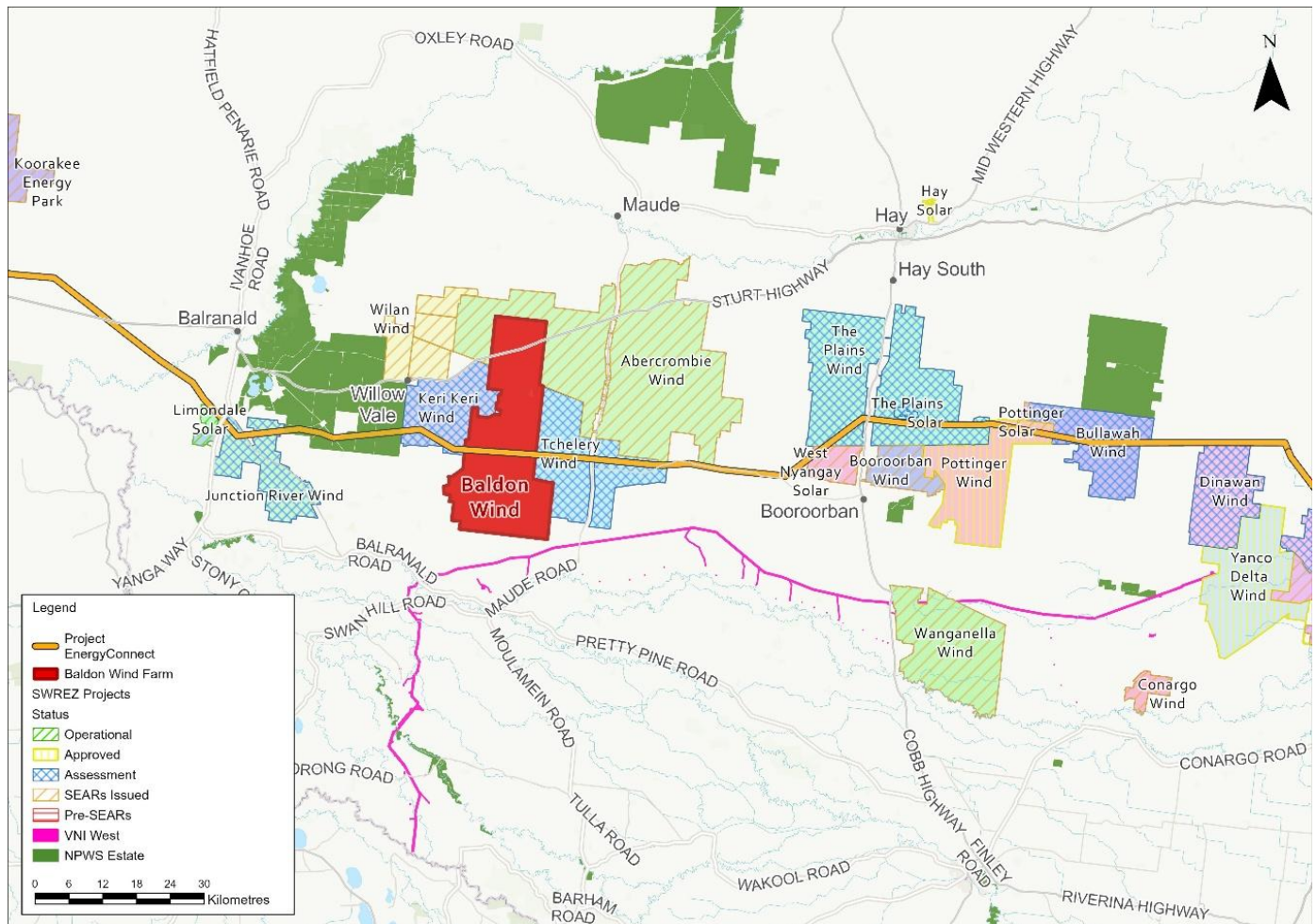


Figure 1 | Regional context map

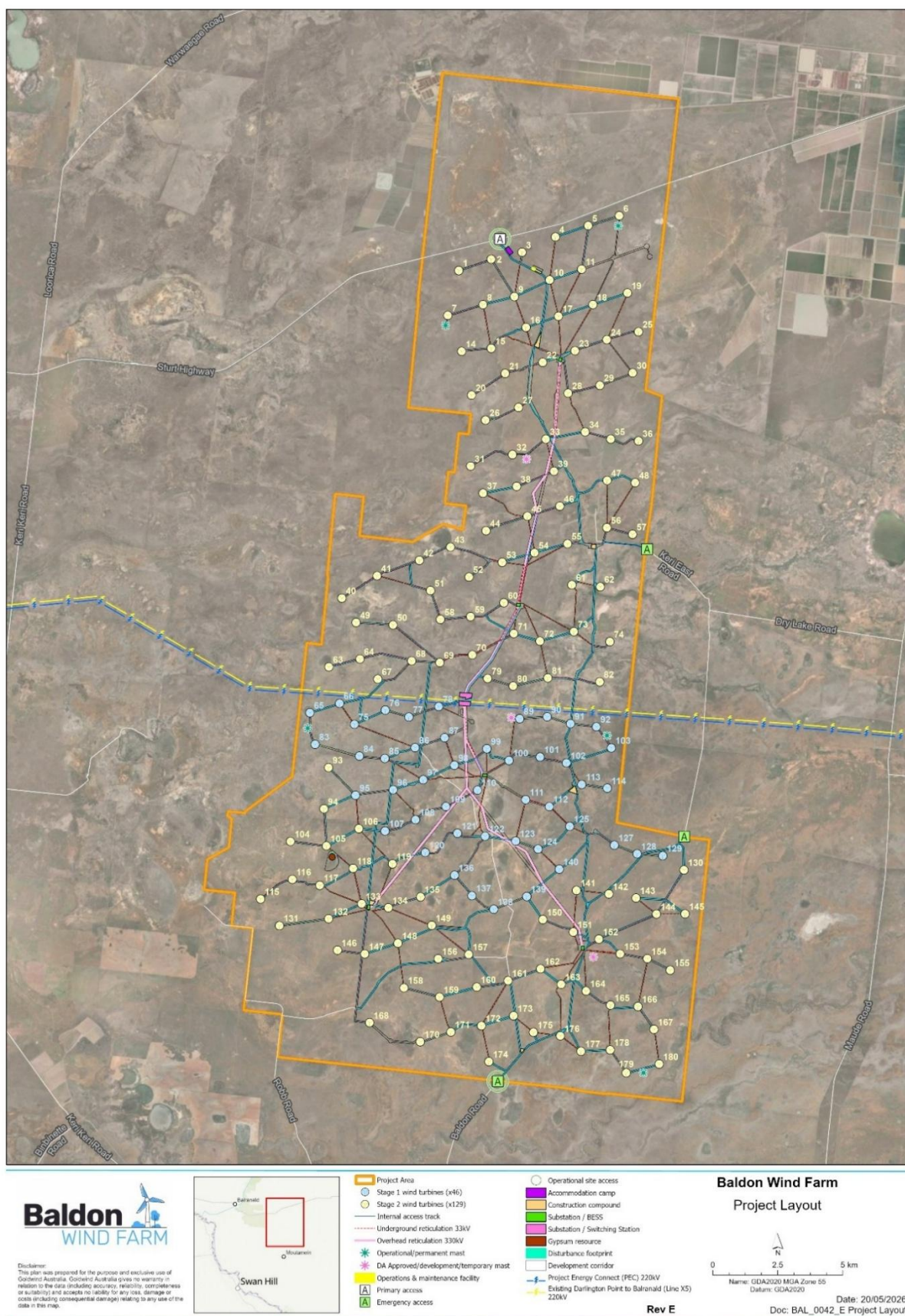
2 Project

2. Goldwind is proposing to develop a wind farm with up to 175 turbines, with a maximum tip height of 300 metres (m). The project would have a nameplate capacity of around 1,400 megawatts (MW), generating up to 4,538 gigawatt hours of electricity annually.
3. The project also includes a centralised and/or distributed battery energy storage system (BESS) with a capacity of up to 200 MW / 400 megawatt hours (MWh), two central switching stations and seven substations.
4. The project is proposed to be constructed and commissioned in two stages – Stage 1 including 46 turbines, grid connection works and associated infrastructure, an onsite accommodation camp (if this option is progressed) and gypsum extraction area. Stage 2 would include 129 turbines and associated infrastructure.
5. The wind farm would connect to the national electricity grid via Transgrid’s existing 220kV transmission line (Stage 1, subject to a connection agreement) and/or the Project Energy Connect 330kV transmission line (South West REZ transmission line) via direct connection to onsite substations (Stage 2, subject to further network capacity).
6. The project would be constructed within a development corridor that includes a 15 to 80 m radius around all infrastructure. The development corridor would allow for micro-siting of wind turbines (80 m radius) and other project infrastructure (15 to 50 m). Goldwind has also assessed a disturbance footprint within the development corridor.
7. Goldwind assessed a blade length of 120 m and a maximum tip height of 300 m for all components of the assessment, except for the transport of wind turbines from the Port of Adelaide to site, which assumed a maximum blade length of 90.2 m. Should a larger blade be used, a further route assessment would be required to demonstrate that the dimensions of vehicles can be accommodated on the road network (refer to Section 6.5).
8. Goldwind has assessed constructing an onsite accommodation camp with up to 400-beds, and/or utilising existing accommodation options located in Balranald.
9. The key components of the project are summarised in Table 1, shown in Figure 2, and described in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (see Appendix A), submissions report (see Appendix C), amendment report (Section 5.4 and Appendix D), and additional information provided during the Department’s assessment of the project (see Appendix E).

Table 1 | Key components of the project

Aspect	Description
Project summary	- Up to 175 turbines and associated infrastructure (around 1,400 MW capacity): - Stage 1: 46 turbines (368 MW) - Stage 2: 129 turbines (1,032 MW) - A centralised BESS located at the grid point of connection, and/or distributed BESS units connected to each wind turbine generator with a total capacity of up to 200 MW / 400 MWh
Project area	- Site: 46,259 ha - Development corridor: 2,847 ha - Development footprint: 795 ha
Wind turbine dimensions	- Maximum tip height of 300 m - Turbine hub height of 180 m - Maximum blade length of 120 m (90.2 m for Stage 1)
Ancillary infrastructure	- Potential connection to the existing 220 kV transmission line (Stage 1), or Project EnergyConnect (NSW Eastern Section) transmission line (Stage 2, subject to further network augmentation) - Two central switching stations, two primary substations and seven collector substations 33 km of overhead transmission line and underground reticulation connecting all turbines to the central substation, operation and maintenance facility, utility services and signage - Temporary facilities including at least one construction compound, three concrete batching plants, up to three materials storage and laydown areas and one 400-bed construction workforce onsite accommodation camp (if this option is progressed) - Up to 179 ha of new internal access tracks and one primary site access point - Up to eight temporary and eight permanent monitoring masts up to 180 m in height
Gypsum extraction area	One on-site gypsum extraction area located in the southwest portion of project site. A total of up to 50,000 m³ of material would be extracted
Access route	- During construction: - Heavy vehicles requiring escort (OSOM): would travel from the Port of Adelaide to the NSW border, and then via the Murray Valley Highway and Sturt Highway into the project site - Heavy and light vehicles: would access the project site via a primary access point off the Sturt Highway. There are three emergency access points, one off Keri East Road and two off Baldon Road. These would be used during emergencies only - During operation: two site access points, one off the Sturt Highway (all vehicles) and one off Baldon Road (for light vehicles only)
Road upgrades	Upgrades to three intersections along the transport route and local roads within the project site.

Aspect	Description
	- Intersection upgrades include the following: - Murray Valley Highway/Sturt Highway intersection (Euston) - Sturt Highway (Market Street)/Sturt Highway intersection (Balranald); and - Sturt Highway into the site entrance - Local road upgrades within the project site include the following: - Baldon Road to be upgraded to allow for construction vehicles and the use of OSOM vehicles; and - Section of Keri East Road to be upgraded to allow for construction vehicles
Construction	- Construction would last for approximately 42 months, with a 15 month peak construction period, assuming Stage 1 and 2 are constructed consecutively - Should construction be split into Stage 1 and Stage 2, each stage would be approximately 24 months - Construction hours from Monday to Sunday 6 am to 6 pm
Operation	Approximately 30 years. However, the project may involve infrastructure upgrades that could extend its operation
Decommissioning and rehabilitation	The project includes decommissioning at the end of the project life, which would involve removing all above ground infrastructure
Subdivision	Subdivision of Lot 28 DP756595 into two new lots
Employment	Up to 400 construction jobs and 35 operation jobs
Estimated Development Cost	\$2.8 billion
Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA)	- Benefit sharing would be undertaken at a rate of \$1,100 per MW generated. - A total of 85% (\$935/MW) would be provided under VPA to two Councils and the remaining 15% would be allocated to a Community Benefit Fund to be administered by Goldwind, with the VPA amounts, provided to: - Murray River Council (80%) - an upfront payment of \$4,188,800 and an annual contribution of up to around \$1,047,200 per year (excl. GST and indexed to CPI; dependent on the final size of the project) paid over the operational life of development. - Hay Shire Council (20%) - an upfront payment of \$1,047,200 and an annual contribution of up to around \$261,800 per year (excl. GST and indexed to CPI; dependent on the final size of the project) paid over the operational life of development



3 Strategic context

3.1 Site and surrounds

10. The project is located in the South West REZ, an area identified as strategically advantageous with strong renewable energy resource potential, proximity to high voltage transmission, and relatively few land-use conflicts.
11. The region is dominated by agricultural land uses (broadacre farming, including cropping and livestock grazing). There is no mapped Biophysical Strategic Land (BSAL) within the project site.
12. The area surrounding the project site is sparsely populated, with limited neighbours located on large land holdings. There are two non-associated receivers located within 4 km of a proposed turbine location.
13. The three closest population centres are Moulamein, located 13 km to the south, Balranald located 44 km to the west and Hay located 64 km to the northeast of the project site, with populations of around 490, 1,065 and 2,210 respectively (based on the 2021 Census).
14. The project site is zoned RU1 – Primary Production and has been subject to extensive historical land clearing for agricultural purposes and is predominantly dedicated to low density agricultural sheep and cattle grazing.
15. The project site is located on the Riverine Plain, the eastern geomorphic subdivision of the Murray Basin, and is characterised by almost flat topography with extremely low gradients dominated by the open plains of native grasslands and semi-arid shrublands.
16. The project site is located between the major waterways of the Murrumbidgee River to the north and the Edward River to the south. The most significant surface water feature is Abercrombie Creek (Strahler 9th order) which passes through the middle of the project site.

3.2 Other energy projects

17. There are four State significant renewable energy, storage and transmission projects within approximately 25 km of the project site, consistent with the location of the project within a REZ, as described in Table 2.

Table 2 | Nearby renewable energy projects

Project	Capacity	Status	Distance from the project
Project Energy Connect (NSW Eastern Section) transmission line		Construction	Intersects the project site
Keri Keri Wind Farm	884 MW	Under Assessment	Adjacent western boundary
Tchelery Wind Farm	800 MW	Under Assessment	Adjacent eastern boundary
Wilan Wind Farm	800 MW	Preparing EIS	15 km north west
Abercrombie Wind Farm	2,500 MW	Preparing EIS	Adjacent to the southern boundary

3.3 Energy policy context

18. In 2025, it is estimated that NSW derived approximately 41% of its energy from renewable sources, the remainder being from fossil fuels, including 55% from coal and 4% from gas and oil. NSW is one of the nation's leaders in large-scale renewables, with 47 major operational projects (wind and solar).
19. The Commonwealth and State energy context is described in Table 3.

Table 3 | Energy Context

Policy/Year	Summary
<i>Australia's Long Term Emissions Reduction Plan (2021) and Nationally Determined Contribution (2025)</i>	Sets a pathway to net zero emissions by 2050 and affirms Australia's commitment to meeting its revised 2030 target (43% below 2005 levels)
<i>Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023</i>	Legislates a whole-of-government climate action to deliver net zero by 2050.
<i>Australian Energy Market Operator's 2026 Integrated System Plan (ISP)</i>	Notes that as coal-fired generation retires, significant investment will be required to meet growing electricity demand, including large-scale variable renewable energy generation, particularly wind and solar which offer complementary daily and seasonal profiles.
<i>NSW: Climate Change Policy Framework (2016); Transmission Infrastructure Strategy (2018); Electricity Strategy (2019); Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap (2020); Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020 – 2030 (2020) and Implementation update (2022); Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041 (2023)</i>	Relevant aspects of these policy documents include: • aim to achieve net zero emissions in NSW by 2050; • note that all coal fired power plants in NSW are scheduled for closure within the next twenty years; • identifies Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) across NSW, including in the South West REZ, aimed at encouraging investment in electricity infrastructure and unlocking additional generation capacity in order to ensure secure and reliable energy in NSW • notes the need to expand transmission infrastructure into REZs to open new parts of the grid for renewable energy projects; and

Policy/Year	Summary
	unlock regional investment and new energy generation infrastructure; support well located renewable energy projects and the consequent transition away from fossil fuels.

20. The project’s alignment with existing Commonwealth and State policies and strategies is considered in Section 6.2.

3.4 NSW Wind Energy Framework

21. In December 2016, the Department released the *NSW Wind Energy Framework* (the Framework). The Framework seeks to provide greater clarity, consistency and transparency for industry and the community regarding assessment and decision-making on wind energy projects.
22. The Framework provides a merit-based approach to the assessment of wind energy projects, which is focused on the issues unique to wind energy, particularly visual and noise impacts. The key documents comprising the Framework include, *Wind Energy Guideline*; *Visual Assessment Bulletin*; and *Noise Assessment Bulletin*.
23. The Department’s assessment of the project against the requirements of the Framework is detailed in Section 6.
24. The Department is implementing a new Renewable Energy Planning Framework to help achieve the transition to renewable energy, reduce emissions and secure an affordable supply of electricity for the people of NSW. The Renewable Energy Planning Framework includes a new Wind Energy Guideline, which includes updates to the existing wind energy guideline. However, the new Renewable Energy Planning Framework does not apply to the assessment of this project as the EIS was lodged prior to its finalisation in November 2024.
25. While the new Renewable Energy Planning Framework does not strictly apply to this project as the application was lodged prior to the guideline being in place, the Department has considered the approach prescribed in the *Wind Energy Visual Technical Supplement (2024)* in regard to visual magnitude in its assessment of the project against the visual performance objectives set out in the *Wind Energy: Visual Assessment Bulletin (2016)*.

4 Statutory context

4.1 State significant development

26. The project is classified as State significant development under section 4.36 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). This is because it satisfies the criteria under section 20 of Schedule 1 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021* (Planning Systems SEPP), as it is development for the purpose of electricity generating works with a capital investment value of more than \$30 million.
27. The Independent Planning Commission (the Commission) is the consent authority under section 4.5(a) of the EP&A Act and section 2.7 of the Planning Systems SEPP as Goldwind disclosed a reportable political donation under section 10.4 of the EP&A Act.

4.2 Permissibility

28. The project site is primarily located within land zoned RU1 Primary Production under the *Wakool Local Environment Plan 2013* (Wakool LEP) and the *Hay Local Environment Plan 2011* (Hay LEP).
29. The RU1 zone includes various land uses that are permitted with and without consent. Under both the Hay LEP and Wakool LEP, electricity generating works are not expressly listed as permitted with or without consent, and is therefore a prohibited land use.
30. However, electricity generating works are permissible with consent on any land in a prescribed non-residential zone, including land zoned RU1, under clause 2.36 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021* (Transport and Infrastructure SEPP).
31. The proposed subdivision would result in up to two lots below the minimum lot size of 200 ha and would be prohibited under the Hay LEP and Wakool LEP. Section 4.38(3) of the EP&A Act allows development consent to be granted for SSD applications where the development is partially prohibited. While the consent authority can override a partial prohibition for a SSD, it must assess the merits of such a decision. The Department has considered the merits of the subdivision as follows:
 - the subdivisions are necessary for the ongoing operation of the wind farm as they are required for the transfer of the substation and switching station to the network operator;
 - the subdivisions would not result in the addition of any dwelling entitlements on the subdivided land;

- the subdivisions are consistent with the key objectives of the RU1 zone as it would encourage diversity in primary industry enterprises and minimise conflict between land uses;
- the subdivisions are necessary for the operation of the wind farm as they are required to register the leases with the Office of the Registrar-General; and
- the subdivisions would be administrative in nature and do not result in any additional environmental impacts.

32. Based on the above assessment, and via section 4.38(3) of the EP&A Act, the Department is satisfied that the proposed development, including the subdivision of the site, is permissible with consent on the site.

4.3 Integrated and other approvals

33. Under section 4.41 of the EP&A Act, several other approvals are integrated into the SSD approval process and consequently are not required to be separately obtained for the proposal.
34. Under section 4.42 of the EP&A Act, several further approvals are required, but must be substantially consistent with any development consent for the proposal (e.g. approvals for any works under the *Roads Act 1993*).
35. As the project traverses Crown land, authority to use Crown land is required separately under the *Crown Land Management Act 2016* prior to its use.
36. The Department has consulted with the relevant government agencies responsible for these integrated approvals in its assessment of the project (see **Section 5.3**), considered their advice in its assessment of the merits of the project and included suitable conditions in the recommended conditions of consent to address these matters (see **Appendix F**).

4.4 Commonwealth matters

37. Under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), assessment and approval are required from the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (AG DCCEEW) if a project is likely to impact on a Matter of National Environmental Significance (MNES), as it is considered to be a “controlled action”.
38. On 24 May 2024, a delegate of the Commonwealth Minister for the then Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (now the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (AG DCCEEW)) determined the project (EPBC 2024/9772) to be a ‘controlled action’ in accordance with section 75 of the

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) based on likely significant impacts to listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A).

39. The NSW assessment process under the EP&A Act has been accredited under a Bilateral Agreement with the AG DCCEEW under Chapter 3 of the EPBC Act. Accordingly, the NSW Government has undertaken the assessment of MNES on behalf of the AG DCCEEW.
40. The Department's assessment of the potential impacts of the project on controlling provisions under the EPBC Act relating to biodiversity is provided in **Section 6.3**. Further information on the matters that the Commonwealth Minister must consider under the EPBC Act is provided in **Appendix I**.
41. The Department consulted with the AG DCCEEW in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement and provided draft copies of this assessment report and the recommended conditions of consent to the AG DCCEEW for comment. Advice provided by AG DCCEEW on potential impacts to listed threatened species and communities and listed migratory species has been incorporated into this assessment report.

4.1 Renewable Energy Zone

42. The *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020* (EII Act) coordinates investment in transmission, generation, storage and firming infrastructure in NSW and gives effect to the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. Under Section 19 of the EII Act, the Minister for Energy may declare a renewable energy zone comprising a specified geographical area of the State, and specified generation, storage or network infrastructure.
43. This project is in the geographical area specified in the South West REZ declaration which would comprise all planned, new and existing network infrastructure, with an intended network capacity of up to 2.5 gigawatts.
44. NSW Energy Corporation (EnergyCo) were consulted for comment on the submissions report and draft conditions and responded confirming it has no comments.

4.2 Mandatory matters for consideration

45. Section 4.15 of the EP&A Act outlines the matters that a consent authority must take into consideration when determining development applications. The Department has considered these matters in its assessment of the project in **Section 6** of this report. The Department has also considered relevant provisions of the environmental planning instruments as presented in **Appendix G**.

4.2.1 Objects of the EP&A Act

46. In determining the application, the consent authority should consider whether the project is consistent with ecologically sustainable development (ESD). Consideration of these factors is described in **Appendix G**. The Department is satisfied that the development is consistent with the objectives of the EP&A Act and the principles of ESD.
47. The Department notes that the objects and requirements for evaluation (section 4.15) in the EP&A Act were changed in recent reforms. While those changes came into effect on 15 December 2025, they do not apply to projects that were lodged before this date and therefore do not apply to this project.

4.2.2 Biodiversity Development Assessment Report

48. Section 7.9(2) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) requires all SSD applications to be accompanied by a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) unless it is determined that the project is not likely to have any significant impact on biodiversity values. The impact of the project on biodiversity values is assessed in **Section 6.3**.
49. The EIS included a BDAR which was prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Methodology (BAM). The BDAR was updated to address comments raised in submissions on the project and to account for project amendments. A revised BDAR was provided to the Department on 9 September 2025. The Department has considered the findings of the revised BDAR and the advice from the Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation Group (CPHR) of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (NSW DCCEEW) in its assessment.

4.2.3 Concurrence

50. Concurrence from the NSW Minister for the Environment is required in accordance with section 7.14 of the BC Act for State significant projects where a consent authority decides to grant development consent with a condition other than to retire the number and class of biodiversity offset credits detailed in the final BDAR.
51. The Department has recommended conditions that require the retirement of the number and class of biodiversity offset credits detailed in the final BDAR but allowing Goldwind to reduce the total biodiversity credit liability post approval. It is intended that this may be achieved through the following:
 - further avoidance of impacts to biodiversity values as a result of detailed design works and micro siting wind turbines and ancillary infrastructure; and
 - undertaking additional ecological surveys for species that were assumed present.

52. This approach to conditions is intended to provide an incentive to Goldwind to reduce the biodiversity impact of the project reflecting the avoid, minimise and offset hierarchy set out as the purpose of the BC Act.
53. This approach to conditions will require concurrence from the NSW Minister for the Environment should the Commission decide to grant development consent with this approach to conditions.

4.2.4 Draft Development Consent

54. The Department has included discretion in a small number of the draft conditions as a mechanism for an applicant to seek approval from the Planning Secretary for minor matters that do not warrant a modification application. Such matters include timing of road upgrades, timing of management plans and improvements to battery technology that have no additional environmental impact.
55. This discretion is subject to the same level of scrutiny and assessment as any modification, against applicable legislation, policies and guidelines. Importantly, consultation is undertaken with all stakeholders relevant to any particular request, including councils, agencies, roads authorities and the public.
56. NSW has an urgent need for renewable energy generation and technologies are rapidly advancing. Some detailed design factors are only known upon financial close or execution of contracts with contractors, which occurs post development approval.
57. This discretion is a crucial tool in providing an avenue to achieve outcomes and resolutions for progressed projects that are working towards construction, or are under construction.
58. In summary, the Department provides Planning Secretary's discretion provisions to:
- account for updated technology at the time of construction from the time of approval, allowing applicants to construct and utilise technologies which would not result in additional impacts;
 - account for changes required when an applicant receives financial investment and can appoint contractors. The appointment of these contractors often necessitates some project refinements as project details are finalised;
 - provide scope for applicants where changes would not be sufficient enough to warrant a modification; and
 - account for works already undertaken, for example should the required road upgrades be delivered by another party (including roads authorities) as part of broad network upgrades.
59. Significantly, any discretion is only ever granted following the Department's assessment of the request, which is undertaken in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

5 Engagement

60. The Department publicly exhibited the EIS from 14 August 2024 until 10 September 2024 (28 days) on the NSW Planning Portal.
61. The exhibition was advertised in *The Australian*, the *Hay Riverine Grazier*, the *Swan Hill Guardian* and the *Deniliquin Pastoral Times*, and the Department wrote directly to landowners up to 5 km from the project site, notifying them of the project and exhibition dates. The Department visited the site and surrounds on 30 June 2025 and 1 July 2025.
62. The Department also consulted with Council and government agencies during its assessment of the project. The Department notified and sought comment from EnergyCo, Transgrid and Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) in accordance with the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP, as discussed further in Section 5.3.

5.1 Summary of public submissions

63. During exhibition, the Department received 77 unique¹ public submissions (73 objecting to the project, one in support and three comments). A summary of the proximity of submitters to the project is provided in Table 4. A link to all submissions is provided in Appendix B. The Department has carefully considered the submissions as part of its assessment presented within Section 6.
64. While the majority of public submissions (about 94%) objected to the project, most objections (64 submissions, 88% of the objections) came from people living further than 50 km from the project site, including 25 from interstate. Eight objections came from people residing within 15 km of the project site.

Table 4 | Summary of submitter distances

Submitter	Object	Support	Comment	Total
<5 km	0	0	0	0
5–15 km	8	0	1	9
15–50 km	1	0	1	2
> 50 km *	64	1	1	66
Total	73	1	3	77

Note: * Includes 25 interstate submissions

¹ Each petition or submission that contains the same or substantially the same text is counted as one submission in accordance with section 2.7(6) of the Planning System SEPP.

5.1.1 Submissions in objection

65. The most common matters raised in submissions objecting to the project included:
- socio-economic factors including property devaluation, division in the community resulting from the project, adverse impacts on health and wellbeing of neighbouring residents, decreased availability and access to public services, reduced housing affordability and the lack of community benefit;
 - soil, water and land use;
 - biodiversity impacts, particularly vegetation clearing and bird and bat strike;
 - resource usage, waste and decommissioning;
 - contamination and pollution;
 - general objections to the project and renewable energy projects more broadly;
 - visual impacts on the surrounding landscape and residences, including impacts to the landscape character of the surrounding area and obstacle lighting;
 - hazards / bushfire risk, including concerns that the project could increase the risk of bushfires in the area;
 - cumulative impacts of proposed projects;
 - construction traffic and transport impacts, particularly regarding increased traffic numbers and the proposed transport route and associated road upgrade / widening; and
 - construction and operational noise, including construction traffic noise, and low frequency operational noise, particularly in the context of low background noise of the existing environment.
66. Other issues raised in submissions included uncertainty about the project's connection to the grid, and criticism of the adequacy and accuracy of the EIS and the level of consultation undertaken by Goldwind with some members of the community. The key issues raised in public submissions on the project are summarised in **Figure 3**.

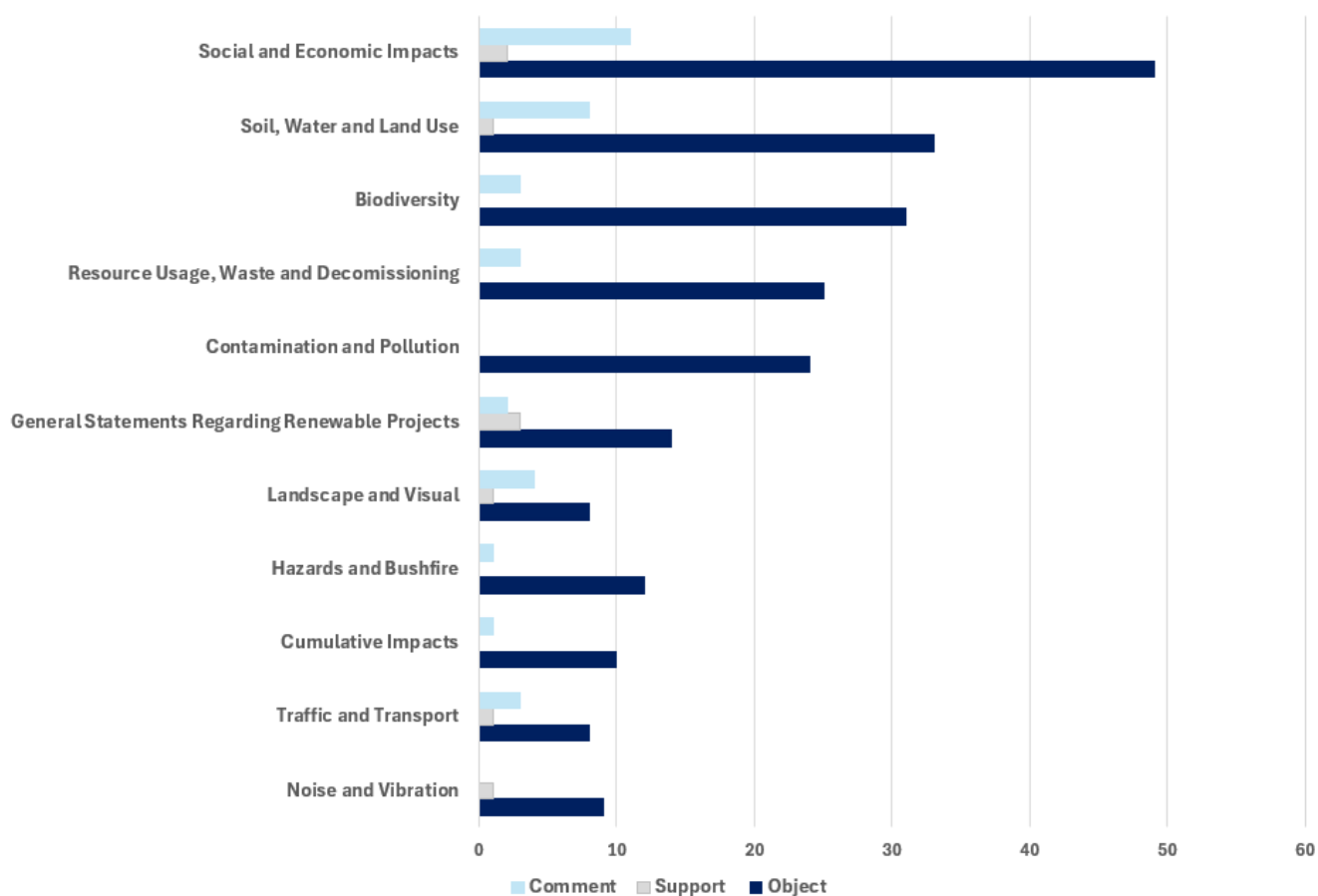


Figure 3 | Key issues raised in public submissions

5.1.2 Submissions in support and comments

67. Submissions in support of the project noted the impacts of climate change, the importance of transitioning generation away from fossil fuels, the appropriateness of the project site and the high level of misinformation used to object to wind farms.
68. Submissions commenting on the project raised queries regarding the level of assessment provided for infrasound impacts and statements regarding public consultation in assessment processes.

5.1.3 Special interest groups

69. Ten submissions on the project were from special interest groups with matters raised summarised in Table 5. Three of the ten submissions appear to be local action groups, two submissions are interstate, and four appear to be from other areas of New South Wales. The Department has carefully considered the submissions provided by the community, as described throughout Section 6.

Table 5 | Summary of matters raised in special interest group submissions

Position	Groups	Key Issues
Object (10)	Yass Landscape Guardians National Rationale Energy Network Inc Saving Our Surroundings Barham Rainforest Reserves Australia Saving Our Surroundings Riverina Saving Our Surroundings Murrumbidgee Saving Our Surroundings Moulamein CWO REZist Inc Saving Our Surroundings Gulgong Saving Our Surroundings Romsey	Perceived issues with the reliability of wind generation, ineffectiveness of batteries storage, uncertainty regarding project decommissioning, high cost of increasing transmission capabilities, agricultural impacts, the NSW planning system, and the adequacy of consultation undertaken.

5.2 Summary of council submissions

70. Hay Shire Council, Murray River Council and Edward River Council provided comment. No host councils objected to the project. A summary of the issues raised by each council is provided in Table 6 below, and a link to the submissions in full is provided in **Appendix B**.
71. Following the completion of exhibition, the Department received feedback from Balranald Shire Council, which has also been considered in the Department's assessment.

Table 6 | Summary of issues raised by councils

Council	Key issues raised
Hay Shire Council (host council)	- Following review of the EIS: - noted that consideration should be given to traffic, decommissioning, biosecurity, aviation safety, social impacts, local road upgrades, transport route, surface water and waste management; - requested further clarification on the Traffic Assessment; and - requested further clarification on the Aviation Assessment. - Following the review of the submissions report and amendment report: - noted their support for the project and satisfaction with the project refinements, flood study, hydrology assessment, social impact mitigation measures, aviation adjustments and lighting, and waste management agreement; - raised concerns with the traffic, transport and cumulative impacts, engagement with Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs), local road upgrades and maintenance responsibilities, and noted that further cumulative impact studies should be required; and - disagreed with the wording related to the obstacle lighting requirements.

Council	Key issues raised
Murray River Council (host council)	- Following review of the EIS: - provided comment regarding the distribution of community benefits, waste and resource management, impacts to community infrastructure and services, traffic impacts, workforce accommodation, continuing community consultation, opportunities for local employment, and cumulative impacts. - Following review of the submissions report and amendment report: - noted their overall support of the project subject to the comments provided; - noted that their concerns had been addressed to councils' satisfaction; and - requested that if any changes occur to the construction and operation of the project, Council should be consulted.
Edward River Council	- Following review of the EIS, raised concerns regarding workforce accommodation, bushfire risk, biodiversity impacts, biodiversity, cultural heritage impacts and landscape and visual impacts. - Following review of the submissions report and amendment report, acknowledged that all the matters they raised had been addressed.
Balranald Shire Council	- Following review of the EIS: - raised concerns regarding the OSOM transport routes, proposed intersection upgrades and impacts to the local road network and community benefits. - Following review of the submission report and amendment report: - noted that the key impact in the Balranald LGA would be the road upgrade on the OSOM transport route (Market and McCabe Street intersection at Balranald); - requested that Goldwind consult with them on any proposed intersection alterations including parking lands, kerb and gutter, foot pathing and vegetation areas; and - requested to be included in the Community Benefit Scheme due to the number of traffic movements through the LGA.

5.3 Summary of agency advice

72. The Department received advice from 16 government agencies. A summary of the agency advice is provided in Table 7. A link to the full copy of the advice is provided in Appendix B.

Table 7 | Summary of agency advice

Agency	Advice summary
CPHR	- Following review of the EIS: - requested additional information regarding the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR), including impacts to entities at risk of serious and irreversible impact (SAIL), the development of the Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan, and bird and bat utilisation surveys.

Agency	Advice summary
	- Follow review of the submission report and amendment report: - requested a Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan; - requested a Plains-Wanderer Management Plan outlining long term commitments; - requested further assessment for the Southern Bell Frog regarding vehicle strike impacts including a Southern Bell Frog Adaptive Management Plan; - requested updating the mitigation measures in the BDAR to demonstrate effective management of impacts regarding Bindweed (<i>Convolvulus tedmoorei</i>) and the pre-construction surveys; - requested further information on the potential SAIL to the Plains-wanderer including justification of habitat mapping methodology and species credits; and - provided recommendations to be included in the Plains-Wanderer Management Plan.
TfNSW	- Following review of the EIS, requested further or updated information including: - traffic volumes, concept designs for the road upgrades, and refinement of the OSOM vehicle route assessment. - Following review of the submission report and amendment report: - requested strategic concept designs for works along the state road network; - requested further information on the Murray Valley Highway / Sturt Highway intersection; - requested a Road Occupancy License and a Section 138 be sought through council; and - requested all pavement that would accommodate project traffic consists of permanent pavement treatments that are consistent with the existing state road pavement.
Environment Protection Authority (EPA)	Following review of the EIS, recommended conditions of consent and mitigation strategies for out of hours work and noise requirements for construction and operation.
Heritage NSW (HNSW)	- Following review of the EIS: - requested clarifications on the assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage, including the approach to conducting test excavations, the identification of “Higher Sensitivity Areas”, assessment of impacts to sites adjacent to the development corridor, and proposed mitigation and management measures; and - requested additional assessment to ensure adequate coverage of the transport route upgrades. - Following review of the submission report and amendment report, provided no further comments.

Agency	Advice summary
Crown Lands	Following review of the EIS, provided recommendations regarding authorisations required under the <i>Crown Land Management Act 2016</i>.
NSW DCCEEW - Water Group	Following review of the EIS, provided recommendations regarding water supply, take, licensing, sewerage management, high priority Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs), and groundwater impacts.
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) – Agriculture	- Following review of the EIS: - requested a Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) for the proposed worker accommodation, and confirmation that the proposed subdivision would not result in new dwelling entitlements; and - provided a recommendation that an agricultural biosecurity management plan should be developed.
DPIRD – Fisheries	Following review of the EIS, provided recommendations regarding the design and management of watercourse crossings.
Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)	- Following review of the EIS: - provided comments on the risk to aviation safety, including aircraft collision, with turbines infringing navigable airspace; and - provided recommendations regarding lighting of turbines to avoid aircraft collisions.
Airservices Australia (ASA)	- Following review of the EIS: - identified that the height of turbines would impact overhead air routes, W762 & H247; - identified other impacts to airspace procedures at Hay aerodrome and that further consultation with aerodrome operators was required.
Australian Government Department of Defence	Following review of the EIS, requested the provision of obstacle lighting and ‘as constructed’ details of tall structures to ASA.
NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)	Following review of the EIS, recommended the development of a fire safety study, an emergency plan and an emergency services information package.
Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW)	Following review of the EIS, recommended the implementation of a Fire Safety Study and Emergency Response Plan.
Transgrid	Following review of the EIS, provided recommendations regarding cumulative impacts, protection of transmission line infrastructure and minimum setback distances to the transmission line easement.
NSW Health	- Following review of the EIS, requested Goldwind provide adequate on-site health care and implement preventative measures to reduce the spread of illness. - Following review of the submission report and amendment report, provided further advice regarding the workforce accommodation which would reduce the impact on already in demand health services.
NSW State Emergency Service (SES)	Following review of the EIS, recommended that the flood impact assessment should be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of

Agency	Advice summary
	NSW Government's Flood Prone Land Policy as set out in the Flood Risk Management Manual 2023 (the Manual) and supporting guidelines. Following review of the submission report and amendment report, provided flood evacuation recommendations, including monitoring severe weather warnings, flood impacted areas beyond the site, flood resilience of the infrastructure, site design and stormwater management.
DPIRD Resources, WaterNSW, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Telecommunications Authority and EnergyCo	Raised no concerns or provided no comment.

5.4 Response to submissions and amendment report

73. Following exhibition, the Department asked Goldwind to respond to the issues raised in submissions and the advice received from government agencies. Goldwind provided a submissions report addressing the issues raised in agency advice and in submissions by the community and Council (see **Appendix C**).
74. The Department also sought additional information from Goldwind in May, September and October 2025 regarding contamination, worker accommodation, onsite quarry impacts, noise, transport related matters and the Voluntary Planning Agreement. Goldwind provided a response to each of these requests for additional information (see **Appendix E**).
75. The Department requested advice from the Independent Expert Advisory Panel for Energy Transition in October 2025 regarding biodiversity matters. The Panel provided a response on 11 December 2025 (see **Appendix B**).
76. In accordance with section 37 of the EP&A Regulation, a development application can be amended at any time before the application is determined. An application can be amended with the agreement of the consent authority (i.e. the Commission for this development), however, under the delegation dated 14 June 2022, the Director, Energy Assessments can agree to amendments to an application.
77. On 4 March 2026, the Director, Energy Assessments agreed to an amendment of the application involving:
 - removal of five turbines (turbines 12, 13, 88, 126 and 169) and relocating three turbines (turbines 95, 138 and 139);
 - re-alignment of the proposed internal access tracks and electrical reticulation to support the revised turbine layout; and
 - removal of the transport route from Port of Newcastle.

78. As the amendments would not have a material environmental impact beyond the impacts expected by the initially proposed project, the Department did not exhibit the amendment report. The Department published the submissions report and amendment report on the NSW Planning Portal and provided it to government agencies and local councils for comment.

6 Assessment

6.1 Overview

79. The Department has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the merits of the project. This report provides a detailed discussion of the key issues: energy transition, biodiversity, visual amenity, and traffic and transport (see Section 6.2 to Section 6.5).
80. The Department acknowledges that the project has been sited and designed to minimise potential impacts, including locating turbines and associated infrastructure within areas of lower biodiversity values, siting turbines to minimise cultural heritage, flooding and landscape and visual impacts.
81. Further, being located within the South West REZ, the project is likely to contribute to some cumulative impacts in the region. The Department has considered cumulative impacts as well as the full range of potential impacts associated with the project and has included an assessment of these matters in Section 6.6.

6.2 Energy transition

82. The project aligns with a range of national and state policies, which identify the need to diversify the energy generation mix and reduce the carbon emissions intensity of the grid while providing energy security and reliability (see Section 3.3).
83. The project would have the capacity to generate around 1,400 MW of renewable energy, sufficient to power about 639,000 homes per year. The project would save approximately 2,452,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year. This would assist NSW in achieving the targets established by the *Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023*, is consistent with the NSW Climate Change Policy Framework objective of achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and the *Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020 – 2030*.
84. The inclusion of a BESS would enable the project to store energy for dispatch to the grid when the wind isn't blowing and/or during periods of peak demand, increasing grid stability and energy security.
85. The project is located in the South West REZ, which is a declared REZ by the NSW Government and a region which has strong renewable energy resources and is on land

where wind development is permissible with consent under the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP.

86. The project has proposed options to connect to either the existing 220 kV X5 Balranald to Darlington Point Transgrid transmission line which traverses the central part of the project site; and/or the new South West REZ transmission line, 330kV Project EnergyConnect (NSW Eastern Section).
87. The project intends to be developed over two stages to account for timing of the connection option availabilities:
- Stage 1 would include the installation of 46 turbines (capacity 368 MW) – connected to the existing Darlington Point-Balranald 220 kV transmission line (subject to a connection agreement).
 - Stage 2 would include the remaining 129 turbines (capacity 1,032 MW). Connection may be to Project EnergyConnect or a further transmission enhancement in the region.
88. EnergyCo has advised that the project has not been granted access to the electrical grid via the approved Project EnergyConnect Transmission project. Notwithstanding this, there remains potential for the project to secure a network connection for Stage 2 should additional capacity become available. This may occur if:
- one of the projects that was successful with the initial access rights tender is unable to meet the Access Right Project development agreement milestones, or
 - if EnergyCo tenders out additional capacity to the REZ as allowed for in the South West REZ Access Scheme Declaration; or
 - there are future augmentations of the surrounding transmission network, including those identified in the *Network Infrastructure Strategy for NSW* (May 2023) prepared by EnergyCo on behalf of the NSW Government.
89. In light of the above, the Department considers the project is in the public interest as it would play an important role in:
- increasing renewable energy generation and capacity of NSW;
 - firming the grid by including 200 MW / 400 MWh of energy storage; and
 - contributing to the transition to a cleaner energy system as coal fired generators retire.

6.3 Biodiversity

90. Approximately 14% of submissions objecting to the project expressed concerns about the potential impacts on biodiversity, including the clearing of native vegetation, the potential impacts on threatened species, blade strikes to birds and bats, and the adequacy of the biodiversity assessment.

91. Clearing of native vegetation would cause direct and indirect impacts to threatened flora and fauna species and communities, while operation of the wind turbines has the potential to impact flight paths of birds and bats from changes in air pressure (barotrauma) or collision with turbines (bird and bat strike).
92. Goldwind commissioned NGH Australia to prepare a BDAR as part of the EIS.
93. CPHR initially raised concerns on the application of the BAM in the preparation of the project's BDAR, in particular the land categorisation methodology, species polygon approach, assessment of potential serious and irreversible impacts (SAII), targeted surveys for threatened species and requirements for bird and bat utilisation surveys.
94. In order to address concerns raised in public submissions and in response to comments from CPHR, Goldwind provided additional information during the Department's assessment and revised its BDAR. The revised BDAR dated 9 September 2025 supersedes and updates any duplicated or conflicting information presented in the previous versions of the BDAR.
95. Overall, the Department considers that the concerns raised by the public and CPHR have been resolved, either through provision of additional information, including revision to the project layout to further minimise the impacts, or development of consent conditions and management plans, and that the BDAR adequately assesses the potential biodiversity impacts of the project in accordance with the BAM.

6.3.1 Footprint and disturbance

96. The project site is approximately 46,259 ha and is dominated by native vegetation. The development corridor is approximately 2,847 ha.
97. The development footprint (within the development corridor) would be approximately 795 ha, with approximately 769 ha of native vegetation to be cleared. Native vegetation clearing is proposed to be undertaken across two stages:
 - Stage 1: around 211 ha to facilitate the construction of 46 wind turbines and associated infrastructure; and
 - Stage 2: around 558 ha to facilitate the construction of the remaining 129 turbines and associated infrastructure.

6.3.2 Avoidance and mitigation

98. Goldwind focussed on avoiding impacts through site selection and by reducing the number of turbines from 180 in the EIS to 175 turbines in the amendment report, and refinements to the project layout to avoid and minimise impacts on high biodiversity values.

99. In particular, this work has focused largely on avoiding and minimising impacts to threatened entities such as the Plains-wanderer, Mossgiel Daisy, Chariot Wheels, Southern Bell Frog, Little Eagle, and Slender Darling Pea.
100. Goldwind has aimed to avoid and/or minimise impacts on biodiversity values by:
- prioritising site selection that avoids woodland areas to minimise tree clearing;
 - avoiding areas of higher biodiversity value, including habitat for threatened species and ecological communities and limiting fragmentation to connectivity values surrounding the site where possible;
 - locating turbines and ancillary infrastructure in areas with lower ecological value and avoiding higher value areas such as areas and vegetation with potential to belong to threatened ecological communities, key fish habitat and riparian areas;
 - project refinements including the deletion of five turbines, deletion or relocation of cabling and access tracks to avoid impacts to populations of threatened entities, including the avoidance of clearing impacts to densest populations of Mossgiel Daisy (12.1 ha);
 - committing to undertake pre-clearance surveys and to micro-siting of turbines (with an 80 m development corridor area around wind turbines) and ancillary infrastructure during the detailed design stage to further avoid impacts to ecologically sensitive areas, as far as practicable; and
 - committing to develop and implement a Biodiversity Management Plan, Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan; Plains-wanderer Management Plan, and a Southern Bell Frog Adaptive Management Plan.
101. The Department has considered these avoidance and mitigation measures in addition to the findings of the revised BDAR, as well as advice from CPHR in its assessment.

6.3.3 Native vegetation

102. The development footprint (including proposed road upgrade areas) would disturb around 795 ha, which includes approximately 769 ha of native vegetation. Of the native vegetation clearing, 92% (710 ha) comprises non-threatened shrublands, 6% (42 ha) is grassland and 2% (17 ha) is in woodland condition. Only 0.15% of the native vegetation clearing would impact the Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) *Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains*, listed as a critically endangered ecological community (CEEC) under the BC Act and the EPBC Act.
103. Goldwind has committed to minimise clearing of this TEC where feasible via micro-siting at the detailed design stage, and to offset the residual biodiversity impacts of the project in accordance with the requirements of *NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme*. Biodiversity impacts must be offset prior to Goldwind carrying out any development that could directly or

indirectly impact biodiversity values requiring offset in accordance with the requirements of the Biodiversity Offset Scheme.

104. Table 8 provides a summary of the estimated impacts of the project on each vegetation type and the associated ecosystem credit liability under the Biodiversity Offset Scheme. The Department and CPHR consider that all communities including those listed under the EPBC Act, have been correctly identified and assessed.

Table 8 | Ecosystem credit requirements for native vegetation impacts

Plant Community Type (PCT)	Condition	Conservation significance		Impact Area (ha)	Ecosystem Credit Liability
		BC Act	EPBC Act		
PCT 15 Black Box open woodland wetland with chenopod understorey mainly on the outer floodplains in south-western NSW (mainly Riverina Bioregion and Murray Darling Depression Bioregion)	Woodland high	-	-	3.67	101
	Woodland low	-	-	1.78	43
	Derived grassland moderate	-	-	4.84	72
PCT 17 Lignum shrubland wetland of the semi-arid (warm) plains (mainly Riverina Bioregion and Murray Darling Depression Bioregion)	High	-	-	0.57	21
PCT 28 White Cypress Pine open woodland of sand plains, prior streams and dunes mainly of the semi-arid (warm) climate zone	Woodland moderate	-	-	0.98	11
	Derived grassland moderate	-	-	5.19	95
PCT 46 Curly Windmill Grass - speargrass - wallaby grass grassland on alluvial clay and loam on the Hay Plain, Riverina Bioregion	TEC – Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains	-	CEEC	1.12	59
	High (not TEC)	-	-	40.67	145
	Moderate	-	-	1.30	28
PCT 57 Belah/Black Oak - Western Rosewood - Wilga woodland of central NSW including the Cobar Peneplain Bioregion	High	-	-	0.01	1
	Moderate	-	-	0.27	5
PCT 153 Black Bluebush low open shrubland of the alluvial	High	-	-	6.72	250
	Moderate	-	-	60.19	1335

Plant Community Type (PCT)	Condition	Conservation significance		Impact Area (ha)	Ecosystem Credit Liability
		BC Act	EPBC Act		
plains and sandplains of the arid and semi-arid zones	Low	-	-	2.38	38
	Low (Euston Intersection)*	-	-	0.16	5
PCT 159 Old Man Saltbush shrubland mainly of the semi-arid (warm) climate zone (south western NSW)	Planted	-	-	7	403
PCT 160 Nitre Goosefoot shrubland wetland on clays of the inland floodplains	High	-	-	26.71	764
	Moderate	-	-	1.11	19
PCT 163 Dillon Bush (Nitre Bush) shrubland of the semi-arid and arid zones	High	-	-	3.66	122
	Moderate	-	-	5.22	119
PCT 164 Cotton Bush open shrubland of the semi-arid (warm) zone	High	-	-	592.62	21,003
	Moderate	-	-	3.18	61
Total				769.35	26,010

*Note: Impacted area associated with the Euston intersection upgrade

6.3.4 Threatened flora

105. The Project has the potential to impact flora species listed under the BC Act and EPBC Act through direct loss from vegetation clearing, and from indirect impacts.
106. There were 16 candidate threatened flora species identified as potentially occurring on the site and were the subject of targeted surveys. Of these, four species listed as vulnerable under the BC Act and EPBC Act were identified in the development footprint (Mossgiel Daisy, Spike Rush, Slender Darling Pea, and Chariot Wheels). No threatened species were recorded at the site of the proposed road upgrades.
107. One flora species listed as an entity at risk of SAIL, the Bindweed (*Convolvulus tedmoorei*), was assumed to be present as surveys were unable to be undertaken within the survey period for these species (discussed further in Section 6.3.7).
108. Table 9 provides a summary of the species credits required to be offset for the project, including for impacts to threatened flora.

6.3.5 Threatened fauna

109. Under the BAM, impacts to species generate either ecosystem credits or species credits depending on whether the impact is addressed at the ecosystem level or requires species-specific assessment.

Ecosystem Credit Species

110. Vegetation clearing within the development footprint would result in the loss of habitat for 38 species identified or predicted to occur as ecosystem credit species, including Plains-wanderer (endangered under the BC Act, critically endangered under the EPBC Act).
111. Potential impacts on these species would be offset via the ecosystem credit requirements detailed in Table 8.

Species Credit Species

112. Fifteen threatened fauna species listed under the BC Act were identified as potentially occurring on the site and were the subject of targeted surveys. Three species credit species including Southern Myotis (vulnerable under the BC Act), Little Eagle (vulnerable under the BC Act), and the Southern Bell Frog (endangered under the BC Act, vulnerable under the EPBC Act) were recorded. Potential impacts on these species would be offset via species credits detailed in Table 9.

Table 9 | Species credit requirements

Species	Conservation significance		Impact Area (ha)	Species Credit Liability
	BC Act	EPBC Act		
Flora species				
Mossgiel Daisy (<i>Brachyscome papillosa</i>)	V	V	295.41	13,532
Bindweed (<i>Convolvulus tedmoorei</i>)* (SAIL species)	E	-	0.17	5
Spike-Rush (<i>Eleocharis obicis</i>)*	V	V	53.73	1,741
Chariot Wheels (<i>Maireana cheelii</i>)	V	V	62.66	2,881
Slender Darling Pea (<i>Swainsona murrayana</i>)*	V	V	0.38	18
Fauna species				
Southern Bell Frog (<i>Litoria raniformis</i>)	E	V	37.05	1,609

Species	Conservation significance		Impact Area (ha)	Species Credit Liability
	BC Act	EPBC Act		
Little eagle (<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>)	V	-	0.74	23
Southern Myotis (<i>Myotis macropus</i>)	V	-	33.11	1,484
Total			483.25	21,293

*Note: Assumed presence

113. One bird species listed as an entity at risk of SAIL, the Plains-wanderer (endangered under the EPBC Act, critically endangered under the EPBC Act), was recorded on site (discussed further in Section 6.3.7). The project would impact on potential habitat for the Plains-wanderer, however no mapped important habitat for this species would be impacted and as such no species credits would be required.

6.3.6 Prescribed impacts

114. The project has the potential to result in impacts to birds and bats due to changes in air pressure (barotrauma) or collisions with wind turbines (bird and bat strike).
115. The assessment of bird and bat strike is dealt with in a different way to other biodiversity impacts. It is considered a 'prescribed impact', as opposed to a 'direct impact' (like clearing and habitat loss) or an 'indirect impact' (such as impacts of predation, and weed invasion, edge effects in adjacent habitat).
116. Prescribed impacts are impacts on biodiversity values which are not related to, or are in addition to, native vegetation clearing and habitat loss. There is no policy on how to calculate or quantitatively assess prescribed impacts relating to bird and bat strike, and there is no requirement to provide biodiversity offset credits.
117. In that context, the approach that has been adopted for bird and bat strike for all wind farms in NSW is a combination of a risk assessment followed by post-determination adaptive management. This adaptive management approach involves stringent requirements for baseline monitoring, ongoing monitoring of any strike during operation, and triggers for adaptive management measures to avoid or minimise impacts.
118. Following exhibition of the EIS (and BDAR), CPHR requested further information relating to bird and bat strike, and in particular the development of the Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan. Goldwind revised the BDAR, which included a revised assessment of potential impacts of bird and bat strike, and more information on proposed mitigation measures and monitoring. The assessment considered conservation status, flight character, distribution across the site and whether the species is migratory.

119. Of the 50 bird and bat species identified (including 9 threatened species under the BC Act), a high risk of blade strike is anticipated for five species:
- little eagle (*Hieraaetus morphnoides*) - vulnerable
 - pink cockatoo (*Lophochroa leadbeateri*) - vulnerable
 - wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*) – not listed
 - white-striped freetail bat (*Austronomus australis*) – not listed
 - Gould’s wattled bat (*Chalinolobus gouldii*) – not listed
120. A moderate risk of blade strike is anticipated for 12 species:
- white-fronted chat (*Epthianura albifrons*) - vulnerable
 - blue-winged parrot (*Neophema chrysostoma*) – vulnerable
 - plains-wanderer (*Pedionomus torquatus*) – endangered
 - little pied bat (*Chalinolobus picatus*) - vulnerable
 - corben’s long-eared bat (*Nyctophilus corbeni*) - vulnerable
 - yellow-bellied Sheath-tail-bat (*Saccolaimus flaviventris*) - vulnerable
 - inland forest bat (*Vespadelus baverstocki*) – vulnerable
 - chocolate wattled bat (*Chalinolobus morio*) – not listed
 - Australian hobby (*Falco longipennis*) – not listed
 - brown falcon (*Falco berigora*) – not listed
 - nankeen kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*) – not listed
 - black-shouldered kite (*Elanus axillaris*) – not listed
121. CPHR reviewed the additional information provided by Goldwind, including the revised BDAR, and was generally satisfied that the information addressed its concerns. Goldwind also committed to preparing a Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan, in consultation with CPHR, prior to commencing construction to outline the measures that would be implemented to avoid, minimise and adaptively manage bird and bat strike.
122. In consultation with CPHR, the Department has recommended conditions requiring a comprehensive regime of adaptive management to address the risk of bird and bat strike, including:
- the collection of relevant baseline data on threatened and ‘at risk’ bird and bat species and populations that could be affected by the project;

- a detailed description of the measures that would be implemented on site for minimising bird and bat strike during operation of the project, including a wind turbine curtailment strategy (if required);
- identifying trigger levels for further investigation of the potential impacts of the project on particular bird and bat species or populations;
- an adaptive management program that would be implemented if the development is having an adverse impact on a particular threatened or ‘at risk’ bird or bat species or population;
- a detailed program to monitor and report on the effectiveness of these measures and any bird and bat strikes on site; and
- submitting monitoring data to CPHR and the Planning Secretary.

123. The Department considers that the recommended conditions, including the requirement to develop and implement an adaptive management plan in consultation with CPHR would be effective in managing the risk of bird and bat strike.

6.3.7 Serious and Irreversible Impacts

124. Under clause 6.7 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017*, an impact is to be regarded as serious and irreversible if it is “likely to contribute significantly to the risk of extinction of a threatened species or ecological community” on the basis of four principles.
125. The project would have potential impacts on two species at risk of SAll, the Bindweed and the Plains-wanderer. Goldwind identified 0.17 ha of potential habitat for Bindweed near the primary access point. Noting the small area of impact, the Department considers that a SAll to this species is unlikely.
126. The Plains-wanderer has been identified as a species at risk of SAll based on Principle 1 (species in a rapid rate of decline). For the Plains-wanderer, it is important to focus on the impacts of the project on the rate of decline and population size as the relevant principles.
127. Goldwind recorded 21 Plains-wanderer individuals, including 4 juveniles, during the ecological surveys informing the BDAR. During these surveys Plains-wanderer were recorded in PCTs not associated with providing potential habitat (PCT 46, 164 and 164).
128. The Department notes that population size for the Plains-wanderer is known to be small (approximately 700 individuals) and as set out in the listing advice for the species, has been subject to a rapid decline (Significant (>90%) decline of monitored population over 14-year period) due to changes in environmental conditions (floods / droughts), habitat loss / fragmentation through agricultural land use and predation by feral species.

129. CPHR has reviewed the revised BDAR and advised that the proposed extent and nature of impacts are likely to result in a SAI to the Plains-wanderer and requested additional avoidance of impacts to the Plains-wanderer be demonstrated.
130. In NSW, Mapped Important Habitat for the Plains-wanderer is prioritised for conservation and offset requirements. Goldwind identified that no areas of Mapped Important Habitat for the Plains-wanderer would be impacted by the construction of the wind farm and that no Mapped Important Habitat exists on the project site.
131. Noting the presence of the Plains-wanderer at the site (21 individuals sighted during field surveys), Goldwind sought to classify suitable habitat across the project area. The project would impact 647.77 ha of potential habitat as characterised by Goldwind, comprising PCTs 46, 163 and 164 as potential habitat.
132. Goldwind has committed to management and monitoring actions, which would be detailed in a Plains-wanderer Management Plan. These include:
- minimising potential impacts to breeding by conducting pre-clearance surveys and providing a 200 m buffer if nests are identified;
 - undertaking pest management in accordance with a pest management plan;
 - conducting long term monitoring of plains-wanderer for a minimum of 10 years from the commencement of construction; and
 - undertaking landscape management such as grazing, weed control and fire regimes to promote favourable plains-wanderer habitat.
133. CPHR reviewed the revised BDAR and the Draft Plains-wanderer Management Plan and maintained the conclusion that the project would be likely to result in an SAI to the species.
134. Noting the differences in opinion, the Department referred the consideration of SAI to the Plains-wanderer to the Independent Expert Advisory Panel for Energy Transition (the Panel).
135. The Panel considered the impacts on the Plains-wanderer to be complex due to:
- variability of the existing population numbers and where they are found (the extent of occurrence) both in the region and on the site, as well as cyclical changes in population numbers;
 - uncertainties in the potential impacts from a wind farm project on the species including impacts of feral pests, blade strike potential, impacts to habitat, noise and tall tower avoidance; and
 - the need to consider the above scenarios in the context of the corresponding cycles.
136. The Panel advice considered that the specific dynamics of the species and where they are found is variable and influenced by favourable and average climate conditions (being wet and dry climate conditions) and described this as a 'boom or bust' cycle for the species. The

Panel considered both favourable and average climate conditions scenarios. The Panel also considered the uncertainties of potential impacts by considering ‘worst’, ‘likely’ and ‘best case’ scenarios to account for a conservative approach in the case of potential, but not yet known, indirect impacts. The impact of the project on the species was considered by aligning these scenarios for the use of habitat types and the population estimates within the project area with the understanding of the corresponding period of the broader species’ population within a fluctuating boom-bust lifecycle.

137. The Panel noted that the species was previously widely distributed but is now generally limited to two stronghold areas in inland NSW and in Victoria during average and below-average (drier) environmental conditions. The site is located outside the NSW species’ stronghold area, 50 km to the west of the stronghold, and does not contain any Mapped Important Habitat that would otherwise trigger obligations for offsetting of impacts to the species as species credits.
138. The Panel advice concluded that whilst the species has experienced a rapid rate of decline, the scale of the impacts of the project would not be large enough to contribute significantly to the risk of extinction and would not constitute SAIL. In considering through worst-case, likely-case and best-case’ scenarios, the Panel concluded a potential worst case set of impacts is estimated as an impact to 1% of the estimated NSW stronghold population during average conditions, and the likely case was estimated at 0.7%.
139. The advice did note that there are other renewable energy projects proposed within the species stronghold area within the South West REZ and that the potential cumulative impact of all of those proposals could be more serious. The Panel recommend that a concentrated effort is made to provide further information on some of the key scientific unknowns about this species in order to generate enhanced management measures for current and future projects across the region. The Department has considered this matter further in its recommended conditions, discussed below.
140. The Department has carefully considered the five assessment provisions in section 9.1.2 of the BAM 2020, and the *Guidance to assist a decision-maker to determine a serious and irreversible impact* (NSW DPIE – EES, 2019).
141. As part of its assessment, the Department has also considered Goldwind’s assessment, comments from CPHR and the advice of the Panel and considers that the project’s impacts would not contribute significantly to the risk of extinction and would not constitute SAIL, noting there would be significant habitat area remaining at the site and across NSW.
142. Noting the advice of the Panel regarding potential cumulative impacts to this species, the Department has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind to participate in a working group to be established by the Panel to develop and implement a Regional Plains-wanderer Management Strategy jointly with relevant wind farms within the South West REZ. The

Regional Plains-wanderer Management Strategy would support a consistent regional approach to Plains-wanderer monitoring research and adaptive management, including consideration of key research questions and knowledge gaps relating to wind energy development in Plains-wanderer habitats (including noise, tall tower avoidance, effectiveness of feral pest and weed programs, flight height and blade strike potential, habitat clearing restoration and management).

143. The Department's recommended condition has not specified which wind farm operators are to be approached about participation in the working group at this time as the intent is that the Department would identify the relevant wind farms in consultation with EnergyCo and CPHR should this and other projects be determined. This would require the most relevant wind farms are engaged in the working group and there is appropriate sharing of costs.
144. The implementation of the Regional Plains-wanderer Management Strategy may be staged to suit the project outcomes and would provide a framework for coordinating research, monitoring, data review and adaptive management across participating wind farm. Through the working group, monitoring results and mitigation approaches would be reviewed at a regional scale identifying emerging trend and support a consistent and adaptive approach to managing the potential cumulative impacts on Plains-wanderer during operation.
145. Although CPHR considered the potential for SAIL, the Department considered, with further advice of the IEAPET, that the project's impacts would not contribute significantly to the risk of extinction and would not constitute SAIL. In addition, the recommended conditions include participation in the Regional Plains-wanderer Management Strategy to support a consistent regional approach to Plains-wanderer.

6.3.8 Significance of impacts on Commonwealth listed species and ecological communities

146. Goldwind identified and addressed all threatened species and communities included in the Commonwealth Referral Decisions (EPBC 2024/9772) (the Referral Decision).
147. Assessments of Significance were undertaken for threatened species and communities and migratory species that were recorded during field surveys or were considered to have a moderate or higher potential to occur. This included two TEC, nine threatened fauna species, one threatened flora species and no migratory species identified as potentially being significantly impacted by the development and operation of the project.
148. Goldwind concluded there would not likely be a significant impact on any MNES and the project would not have any residual impacts, being adequately offset through meeting any biodiversity offset obligation established under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme.
149. Assessments of significance concluded that the project is unlikely to result in significant impacts to MNES, except for locally significant impacts to the Plains-wanderer. CPHR

concluded that there may be a potential SAI to the Plains-wanderer under the BC Act noting the unknown impacts of construction and operation of the project.

150. Although the Panel concluded that scale of the impacts of the project would not be large enough to contribute significantly to the risk of extinction to be considered SAI under the BC Act, the Department notes that the consideration of SAI is a separate consideration under NSW biodiversity legislation to MNES under the Commonwealth biodiversity legislation.
151. Notwithstanding, CPHR noted the Goldwind's commitment to long-term monitoring and management of the Plains-wanderer and recommended conditions requiring ongoing consultation with CPHR in relation to ongoing management of impacts to the Plains-wanderer.
152. The Department considered Commonwealth matters in consultation with CPHR and AG DCCEEW, including consideration of the Goldwind's assessments of significance and the relevant approved conservation advice, recovery plans and threat abatement plans (TAPs). This assessment is provided in **Appendix I**.
153. The Department concludes that should the Commission determine to approve the project, the impacts to Commonwealth matters as a result of the project would be acceptable, subject to the avoidance, mitigation and offsetting measures described in documentation submitted for the project and the recommended conditions of consent in **Appendix F**.

6.3.9 Biodiversity offsets

154. The project would generate a credit liability of 26,010 ecosystem credits and 21,293 species credits requiring offset under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme for the project.
155. Both the Department and CPHR are satisfied that the offset credit requirements have been correctly calculated. Goldwind would offset the residual biodiversity impacts of the project in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme, which includes the following options:
 - acquiring or retiring like-for-like 'biodiversity credits' within the meaning of the BC Act;
 - making payments into an offset fund that has been developed by the NSW Government;
 - entering into a strategic offset delivery agreement (SODA) with DCCEEW CPHR; or
 - funding a biodiversity conservation action that benefits the entity impacted and is listed in the ancillary rules of the offset scheme.
156. Although the final approach for how the credit liability would be met is still under development, Goldwind has committed to securing offsets required for the project within the local area. Any offsets that cannot be secured through the establishment of local offsets would then be acquitted either through purchase of matching credits from the

market or payment to the Biodiversity Conservation Fund. In accordance with the bilateral agreement, variation rules would not be applied to MNES entities and all credits would be retired on a like-for-like basis.

157. The Department has recommended conditions requiring the Goldwind to retire the required biodiversity offset credits in accordance with the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme prior to carrying out any development that could directly or indirectly impact the biodiversity values requiring offset.
158. The BDAR proposes the staged retirement of biodiversity offset credits. The Department's recommended conditions present the full credit obligation for the project but could be implemented in conjunction with the condition allowing the staging of any aspect of the project. This allows flexibility for Goldwind in the staging of the delivery of the project.
159. The Department notes that with further avoidance measures and ecological surveys during detailed design, the number and class of credits required to be offset could be reduced. The credits would be re-calculated when the final layout design of the project and number of turbines is known to confirm the final number and class of biodiversity credits required to be offset. This approach provides an incentive to Goldwind to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity values through the detailed design process to limit the offset liability for the project. The Department has recommended a condition setting out the requirements and process for recalculation of the biodiversity offset credits.
160. Consistent with statutory amendments to section 7.14 of the BC Act, concurrence would need to be sought from the NSW Minister for the Environment (NSW Environment Minister) to allow the recommended conditions for post-approval changes to credit obligations as outlined above.

6.3.10 Recommended conditions

161. The Department has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind to:
 - minimise the clearing of native vegetation and key fauna habitat, including hollow bearing trees, within the development footprint and protect native vegetation and key fauna habitat outside the approved disturbance area in accordance with limits in the recommended conditions;
 - prepare and implement the Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a description of the measures to:
 - implement clearing and operational management protocols;
 - minimise the impacts of the development on threatened flora and fauna species within the disturbance footprint;

- minimise the potential indirect impacts on threatened flora and fauna species, migratory species and ‘at risk’ species;
 - rehabilitate and revegetate temporary disturbance areas and maximise the salvage of resources within the approved disturbance area for beneficial reuse (such as fauna habitat enhancement) during the rehabilitation and revegetation of the site;
 - control weeds and feral pests; and
 - provide a detailed program to monitor and report on the effectiveness of these measures;
- prepare and implement a Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan in consultation with CPHR to provide a comprehensive regime of adaptive management to address the risk of bird and bat strike;
 - participate in a Regional Plains-wanderer Working Group and contribute to developing and implementing a Regional Plains-wanderer Management Strategy to co-ordinate monitoring and adaptive management of the potential cumulative impacts of wind farms on the Plains-wanderer within the South West REZ;
 - retire the applicable biodiversity offset credits in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme prior to carrying out any development that could directly or indirectly impact biodiversity values requiring offset;
 - allow for a Revised Offset Obligation Report to change the number and class of biodiversity credits required to be retired where there is a change to the impacts on biodiversity values prior to retirement of credits; and
 - if a SODA is entered into, allow for the verification of the offset credits for the development’s actual impact.

6.3.11 Conclusion

162. The Department considers that Goldwind has made an effort to avoid and minimise biodiversity impacts through project design. This has been achieved through measures such as locating infrastructure within areas of non-threatened vegetation, adopting buffers for important habitat features and avoiding threatened species habitat, including areas of high-quality Plains-wanderer habitat. Goldwind has committed to adopt further avoidance wherever practicable as part of the detailed design process.
163. The Department considers that the recommended conditions would drive further avoidance and minimisation of impacts to native vegetation and fauna, including the collision risk to avifauna, while providing a framework that can respond to monitoring outcomes and improvements in best-practice management over time.

164. The Department has considered the potential biodiversity impacts of the project, including concerns of the community, advice from CPHR and independent advice. Should the Commission determine to approve the project, the Department, in consultation with CPHR has recommended strict conditions.

6.4 Visual

165. Although no public objections relating to visual impacts were received from any receiver within 5 km of the project, approximately 10% of public submissions objecting to the project raised concerns about visual impacts. Concerns included the size and scale of the wind farm, views of the project from tourism routes along the Sturt Highway and the cumulative impacts with other wind farms in the REZ.
166. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was prepared in accordance with the *Wind Energy: Visual Assessment Bulletin (2016)* (the Visual Bulletin) as part of the EIS. The Department also visited the project site and its surroundings to assess and better understand visual impacts.

6.4.1 Avoidance and mitigation

167. The Visual Bulletin lists different visual impact mitigation options for consideration, including physical turbine alterations (re-siting and re-colouring), landscape alterations such as vegetation screening, and landowner agreements for significantly affected landowners. The Department considers that re-siting or removing turbines is generally the most effective mitigation measure.
168. The Department notes that there are few non-associated residences in proximity to the project site, and acknowledges efforts from Goldwind to resolve issues through project design. This has reduced the potential for visual impacts such that the two closest non-associated receivers are more than 3.5 km from the closest turbine but within the black line distance described in the Visual Bulletin.
169. Goldwind proposes to address the residual impacts to non-associated receivers by:
- providing vegetation screening and/or supplementary plantings, if requested by landowners;
 - using turbines with a matte white, non-reflective finish, consisting of three blades with uniformity of colour and design;
 - avoiding unnecessary lighting, signage and logos; and applying mitigation measures to lighting (including sensors, directional lighting and shielding); and
 - installing aviation night lighting on 56 turbines only and committing to partial shielding where it does not compromise the operational effectiveness of night lighting.

6.4.2 Impact assessment approach

170. The Department assessed the visual impacts of the project against the Visual Bulletin's visual performance objectives. These consider the visual influence zone (VIZ) of a receiver which is a combination of viewer sensitivity, visibility distance as well as scenic quality class, comprise three zones: high (VIZ1), moderate (VIZ2) and low (VIZ3). The outcomes of the assessment are as follows:
- **visual magnitude** – black (4 km) and blue (5.9 km) distance thresholds based on turbines 300 m tall indicate where turbines may significantly impact a receiver. The Visual Bulletin recommends for residences in:
 - VIZ1 within the blue line: avoid turbines or provide detailed justification for turbines;
 - VIZ2 within the black line: manage impacts as far as practicable and justify residual impacts, describing mitigation measures for turbines;
 - VIZ2 between the blue and black line: consider screening; and
 - VIZ3 within the black line: consider screening.
 - **multiple wind turbine effects** – considers the cumulative landscape and visual impacts. The performance objectives for each receiver are dependent on viewer sensitivity level (rather than VIZ). For level 1 (high sensitivity) receivers, turbines within 8 km should avoid being visible in more than one 60 degree sector, and for level 2 (moderate sensitivity) receivers, turbines within 8 km, should avoid being visible in more than two 60 degree sectors.
 - **landscape scenic integrity** – considers how the project would alter the current landscape character and scenic quality of the visual catchment. For VIZ1, turbines should be very small or faint, or of a colour contrast that would not compete with major elements in the existing visual catchment. For VIZ2, wind turbines may be visually apparent and could become a major element, but not dominate the landscape. For VIZ3, turbines may be visually apparent or significantly modify the visual catchment.
 - **key feature disruption** – describes how likely turbines are to disrupt the central line of sight and/or the central focal viewing fields surrounding identified key features of a landscape. For VIZ1, turbines should not remove, visually alter or disrupt an identified key landscape feature. For VIZ2, these impacts should be minimised. No objective applies to VIZ3.
 - **shadow flicker and blade glint** – for each VIZ, shadow flicker to be limited to 30 hours per year and turbines must be finished with a low reflectivity surface treatment to minimise blade glint.
 - **aviation hazard lighting** – where required, aviation hazard lighting must meet the requirements of Australian Standard AS 4282 - 1997 and any prescribed or notified

CASA requirement. Shield all aviation hazard lighting, within 2 km of a residence and avoid strobe lighting.

6.4.3 Impact assessment

171. There are few non-associated residences in the vicinity of the project, with four non-associated residences located within 5.9 km (the blue line) of the nearest proposed turbine, two of these are within 4.0 km (the black line) (see Figure 4) but these are still more than 3.5 km from the nearest turbine. The landscape is predominantly flat, offering wide, unobstructed views.
172. Goldwind conducted detailed dwelling assessments and provided photomontages and wireframes for these residences.
173. Table 10 presents the Department's assessment of the non-associated residences within the blue and black line.

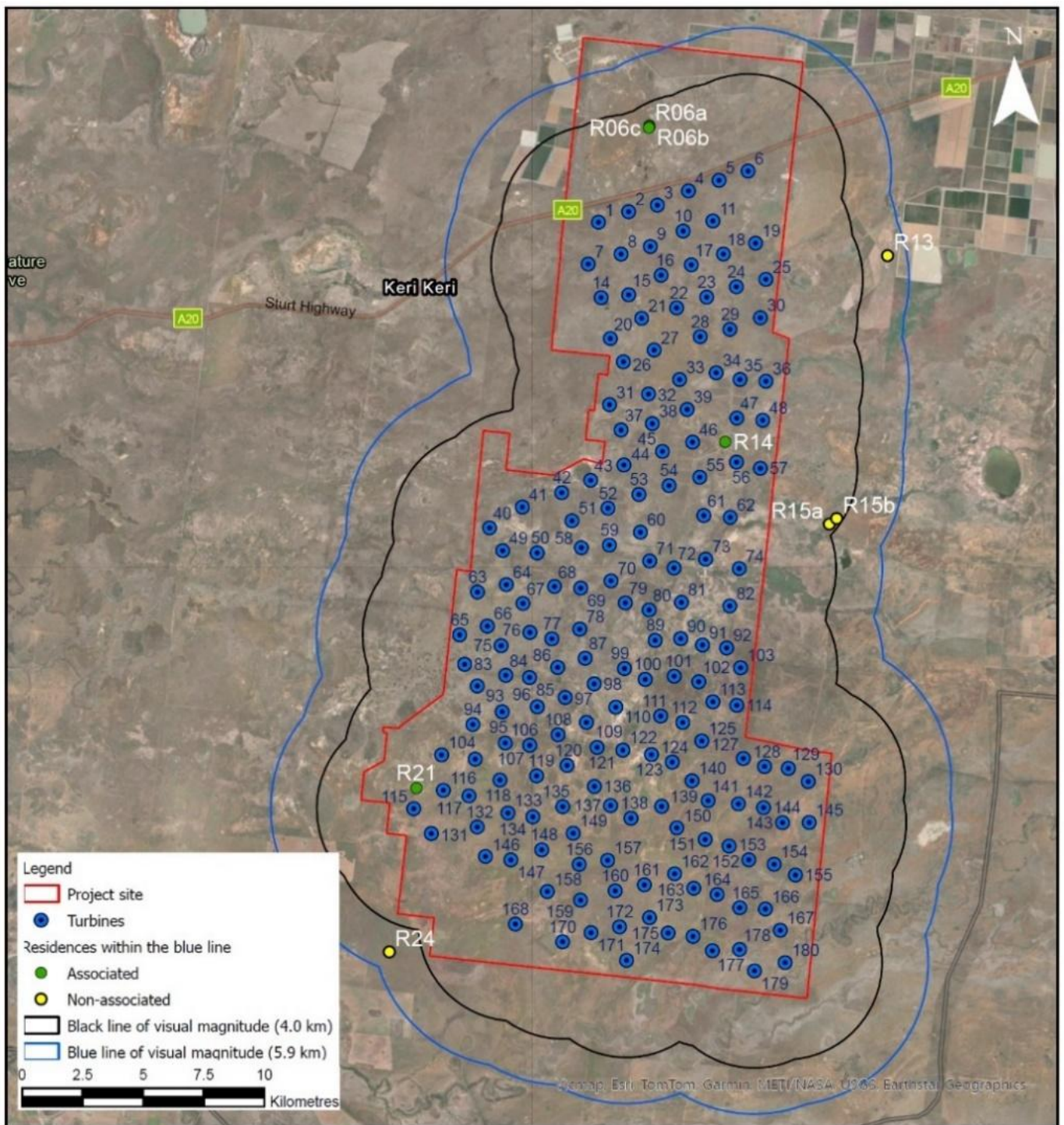
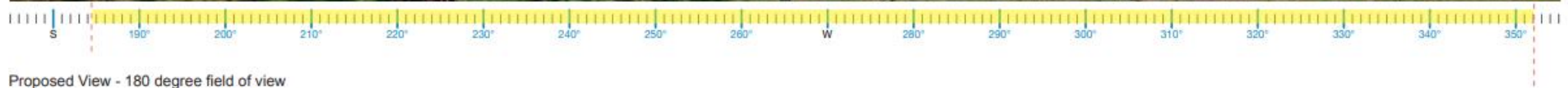


Figure 4 | Non-associated residences within the blue and black line

Table 10 | Visual Impact Assessment – Non-associated residences within the blue line (<5.9 km of the nearest turbine)

Residence	Turbine(s) and distance (km) within black line (<4.0 km)	Number of turbines between the black & blue line	VIZ	Department assessment - aligns with visual performance objective?			Recommended mitigation
				Visual Magnitude	Multiple wind turbine	Landscape scenic integrity / Key feature disruption	
R15a	T57 (3.66)	9 (T47, T48, T55, T56, T61, T62, T73, T74, T82)	VIZ2	Yes - existing dense vegetation that would screen views towards the turbines (see Figure 5)	Yes – turbines potentially visible in three sectors, however existing dense vegetation and topography would screen views of turbines.	Yes	Vegetation screening at the request of the landowner
R15b	T57 (3.77)	8 (T47, T48, T56, T61, T62, T73, T74, T82)	VIZ2	Yes - existing dense vegetation that would screen views towards turbines (see Figure 6)	Yes – turbines potentially visible in three sectors, however existing dense vegetation in the foreground would screen views of the turbines.	Yes	Vegetation screening at the request of the landowner
R13	None	3 (T19, T25, T30)	VIZ3	Yes - Due to flat terrain and open views, residence R13 would have potential to view some turbines. However, additional vegetation screening would assist in fragmenting views towards the project (see Figure 7).	Yes – turbines visible in two sectors	Yes	Vegetation screening at the request of the landowner
R24*	None	3 (T131, T146, T168)	VIZ2	Yes - R24 would benefit from distance and scattered intervening vegetation (see Figure 8).	Yes – turbines visible in two sectors	Yes	Vegetation screening at the request of the landowner

*Note: Although the LVIA identifies that R24 is an unoccupied derelict dwelling, the Department has conservatively considered visual impacts to this dwelling.



Proposed view demonstrates that the Project will be screened by existing vegetation in the foreground.

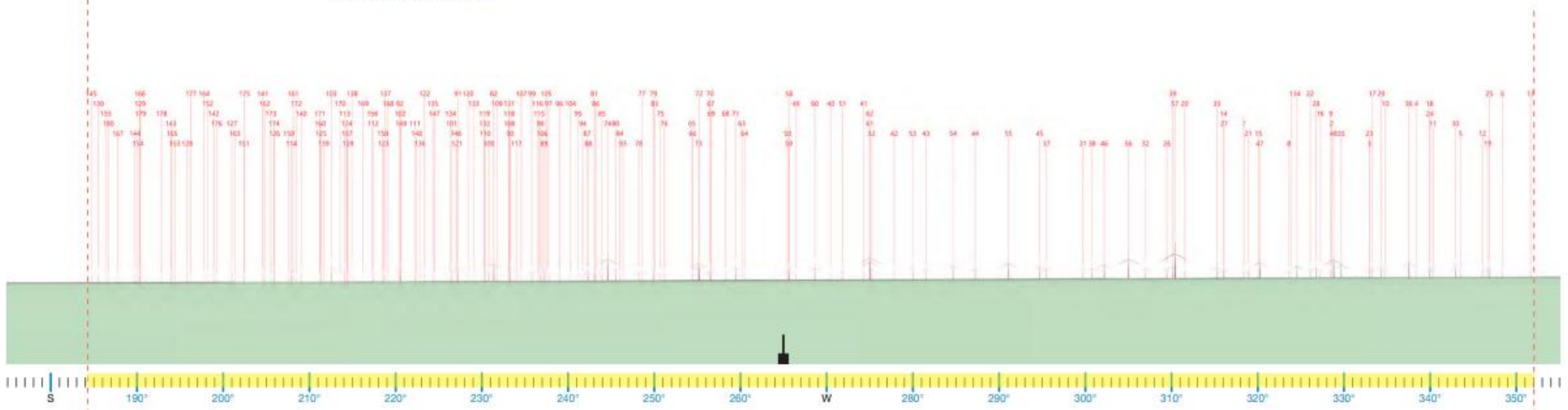


Figure 5 | Wireframe and photomontage for residence R15a



Proposed View - 180 degree field of view

Proposed view demonstrates that the Project will be screened by existing vegetation in the foreground.

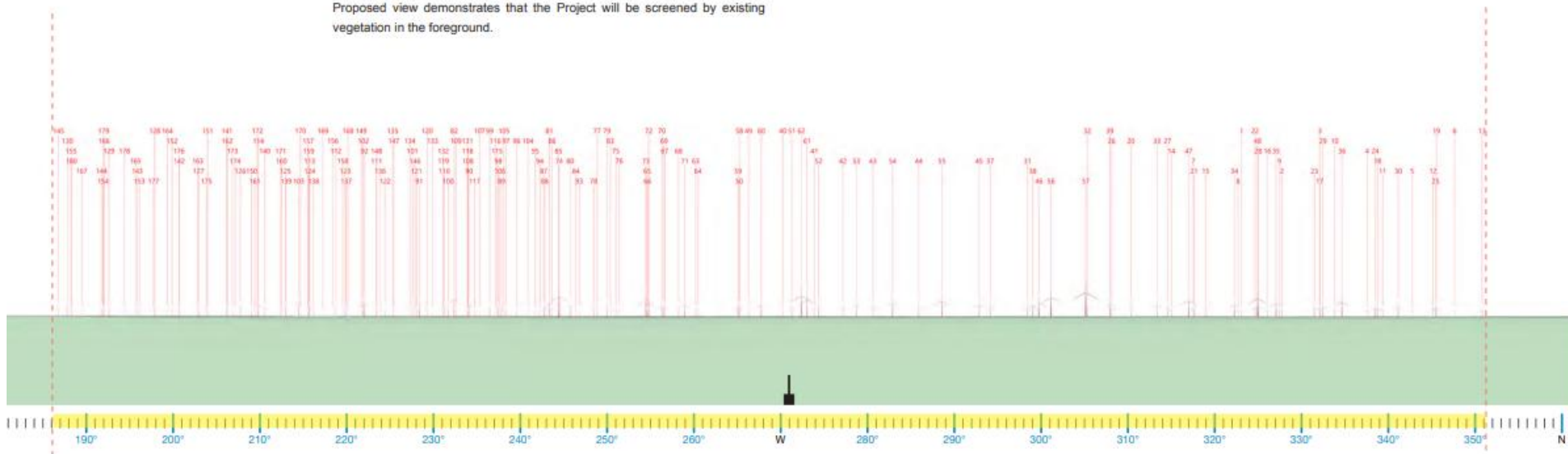


Figure 6 | Wireframe and photomontage for residence R15b



Proposed View - 180 degree field of view

Views of the Project will be partially limited by existing vegetation and a localised rise to the west.

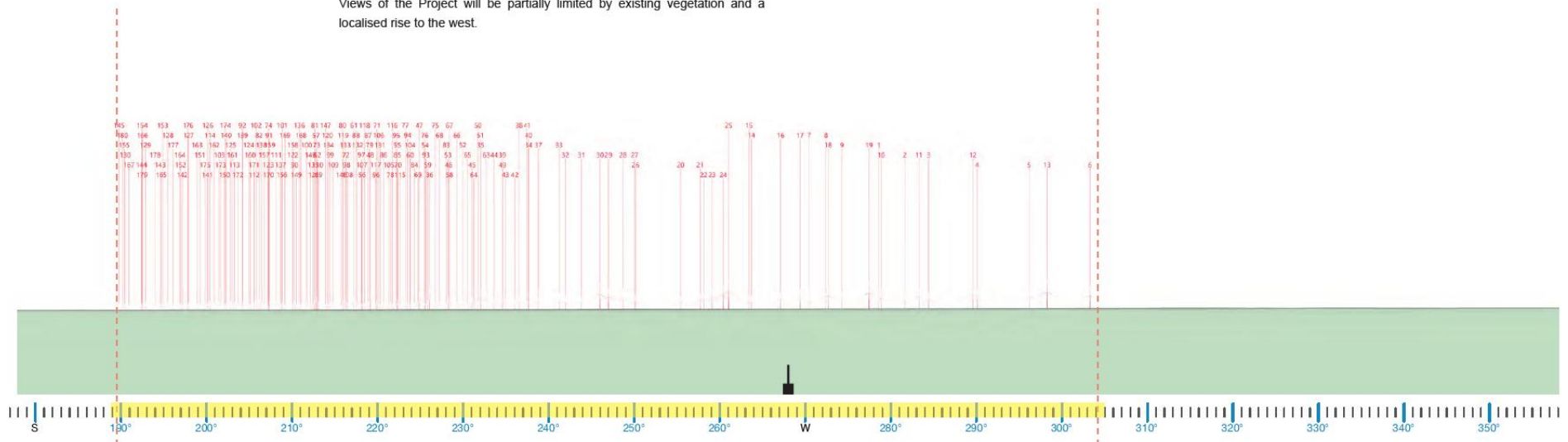
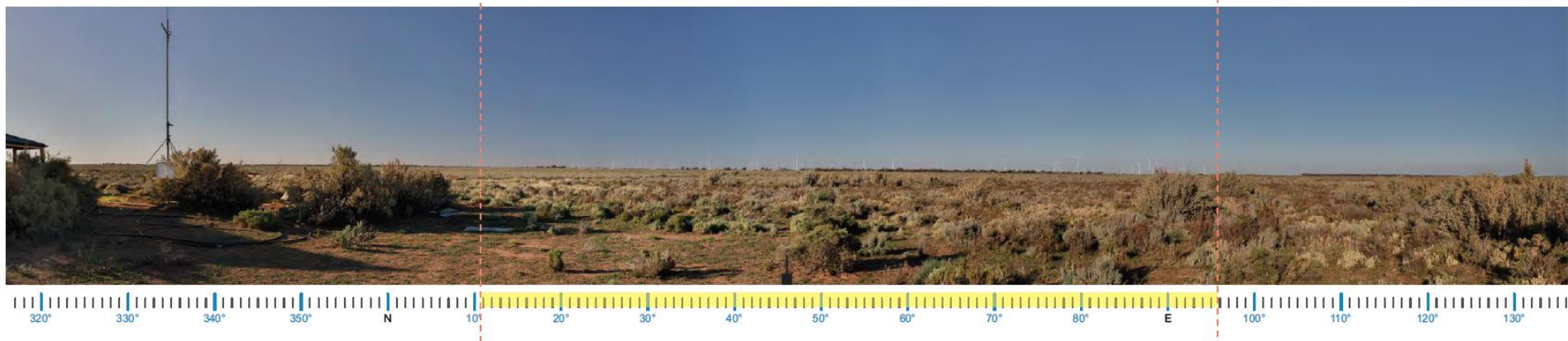


Figure 7 | Wireframe and photomontage for residence R13



Proposed View - 180 degree field of view

Views toward the Project are generally open from this location due to lack of intervening vegetation.

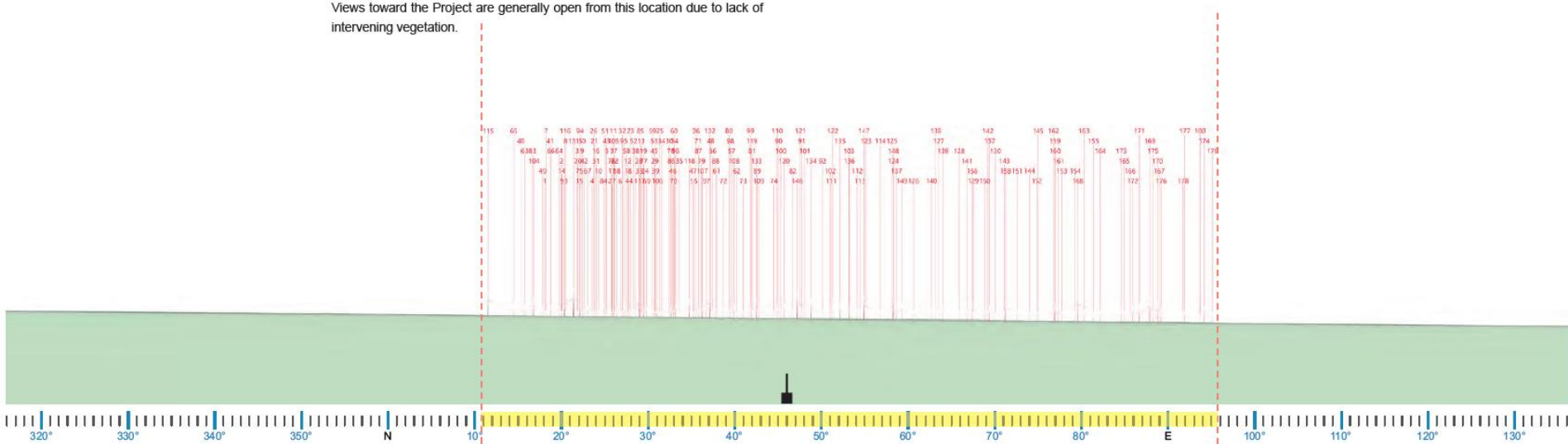


Figure 8 | Wireframe and photomontage for residence R24

174. All receivers located within the blue line are classified as VIZ2, except for R13 which is classified as a VIZ3 receiver (refer to section 6.4.2).
175. At residences R15a and R15b, one turbine (T57) is located within the black line (i.e. 4 km of the nearest turbine). A further nine turbines are located between the black and blue lines at R15a (i.e. between 4 km and 5.9 km of the nearest turbines), while eight turbines are located between the black and blue lines at R15b. The Department considers that visual impacts at these residences would be acceptable, as existing dense vegetation surrounding the dwellings would substantially screen views towards the proposed turbines (see Figure 5 and Figure 6).
176. Two receivers, R13 and R24, are located between the black and blue line. Due to the flat terrain and open outlook, R13 and R24 would have views towards a number of turbines (see Figure 7 and Figure 8).
177. At R13, the nearest proposed turbine (T25) is located 5.11 km away. While 12 turbines would be visible within 8 km of this residence, only three turbines (T19, T25 and T30) are located within the blue line.
178. R24 is an unoccupied derelict dwelling, however the Department has conservatively considered visual impacts to this receiver. There are three proposed turbines within the blue line of R24, with the nearest turbine (T131) located 5.17 km away.
179. Due to the relatively flat terrain and open views from R13 and R24, the LVIA recommends additional vegetation screening to fragment views towards the project. Accordingly, the Department has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind to provide vegetation screening to non-associated residences within the blue line, if requested by the landowner.
180. The Department is satisfied that the project aligns with the Visual Bulletin. Subject to the implementation of recommended conditions, the Department considers that visual impacts to non-associated residences would be acceptable.

6.4.4 Cumulative impacts

181. There are three other wind farm projects located near the project site: Tchelery Wind Farm adjacent to the east, Keri Keri Wind Farm adjacent to the west and Wilan Wind Farm located 9 km to the west (collectively referred to as the nearby projects).
182. The LVIA found that of the 14 non-associated residences located within 8 km of the project, Tchelery Wind Farm and Keri Keri Wind Farm five residences have the potential to view to these projects simultaneously in three or more 60-degree sectors. The remaining nine dwellings had turbines located in up to two 60-degree sectors, which is considered acceptable in accordance with the Visual Bulletin.

183. The LVIA identified:

- two non-associated dwellings (R15a and R15b) with project turbines in up to three 60-degree sectors and up to 6 sectors occupied by proposed Tchelery Wind Farm turbines. It is noted that both residences are associated with Tchelery Wind Farm. Baldon Wind Farm turbines are located over 3.66 km from R15a and over 3.77 km from R15b. Photomontages provided by Goldwind shows that existing vegetation would screen views towards the project (see Figure 5 and Figure 6);
- two non-associated dwellings (R20a and R20b) with turbines in up to four 60-degree sectors, with the nearest project turbine approximately 6.4 km away from both residences. Existing scattered vegetation and buildings would assist in screening views towards the project;
- one non-associated dwelling (R12) with turbines occupying six 60-degree sectors. Only one 60-degree sector would be occupied by the project, with the other sectors occupied by the Keri Keri Wind Farm. The residence would benefit from distance, with the nearest project turbine located over 7 km away; and

184. The Department has not yet received an EIS for the Abercrombie or Wilan Wind Farm projects. As Goldwind lodged the Baldon Wind Farm development application prior to EIS being lodged for the these projects, these applicants would be required to consider the project as part of its cumulative impact assessment.

6.4.5 Key public viewpoints

185. Goldwind identified and assessed the visual impacts of the project from 13 public viewpoints at varying distances surrounding the project in accordance with the visual performance objectives in the Visual Bulletin. These included Moulamein Lakeside Caravan Park, St Pauls Rest Area and Willows Rest Area along the Sturt Highway to the north of the project. All viewpoints were classified as VIZ3 receivers except St Pauls Rest Area and Willows Rest Area, which were classified as VIZ2.

186. The LVIA identifies that the project would be visible from the St Pauls Rest Area and the Willows Rest Area. Goldwind provided photomontages from these locations demonstrating that the proposed turbines have the potential to dominate views due to their proximity to the project. However, these rest areas do not provide views to any key landscape or scenic features. The LVIA also identifies these viewpoints as having a low visual sensitivity. Accordingly, the Department is satisfied that the visual impacts at these locations would not be significant.

187. Moulamein Lakeside Caravan Park was identified as an important viewing location, which is located over 13 km away from the project. Due to the distance and existing intervening

vegetation cover, the Department is satisfied that the project would not be visible from this location.

188. The Department considers that the visual performance objectives would be achieved at all public viewpoint locations and no further mitigation measures are required at these locations.

6.4.6 Ancillary infrastructure

189. The project's ancillary infrastructure includes a BESS, substations and transformers, switchyard and collector station connecting to the existing 220 kV Transgrid transmission line, monitoring masts, internal access roads, construction and operational compounds, and construction-related temporary batching plants, laydown areas, on-site gypsum extraction area, and an onsite accommodation facility (should this option be progressed). Goldwind has sited this infrastructure to minimise visibility from existing residences and publicly accessible viewpoints.
190. The Department undertook an assessment of the visual impacts associated with the project's ancillary infrastructure, and considers the project's ancillary infrastructure is unlikely to have a significant visual impact. This is because there are existing transmission lines and agricultural infrastructure in the area and the ancillary infrastructure is located away from non-associated receivers. Existing vegetation also provides screening of views towards the project.
191. Notwithstanding, the Department has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind to ensure the visual appearance of all ancillary infrastructure (including paint colours, specifications and screening) blends in as far as possible with the surrounding landscape.

6.4.7 Shadow flicker and blade glint

192. Given the separation distance of the turbines to non-associated residences, the project has limited potential for shadow flicker. The LVIA included a Shadow Flicker Assessment, which concluded that the proposed layout would not exceed the Visual Assessment's Bulletin's recommended limit of 30 hours per year at all non-associated receivers.
193. Goldwind has committed to minimising blade glint by ensuring turbines are finished with a low reflectivity surface treatment. The Department supports this approach to minimise blade glint where possible.

6.4.8 Aviation hazard lighting

194. Under the National Airports Safeguarding Framework (NASF), Guideline D Managing the Risk to Aviation Safety of Wind Turbine Installations (Wind Farms) / Wind Monitoring Towers (National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group, 2012). CASA must be notified if a proposed

wind turbine or wind monitoring tower is higher than 150 m or infringes on the Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) of an aerodrome. CASA may determine, and subsequently advise an Applicant and relevant planning authorities, whether it considers obstacle lighting is required.

195. Where lighting is required, the NASF Guidelines recommend that to minimise visual impacts *“obstacle lights may be partially shielded, provided it does not compromise their operational effectiveness. Where obstacle lighting is provided, lights should operate at night, and at times of reduced visibility. All obstacle lights on a wind farm should be turned on simultaneously and off simultaneously.”*
196. Goldwind’s Aviation Impact Assessment (AIA) concluded that no obstacle night lighting would be required for the project to maintain an acceptable level of safety to aircraft. However, CASA advised that the project is required to be obstacle lit and that a steady medium-low intensity red obstacle lighting would be required.
197. Goldwind prepared an Obstacle Lighting Plan which proposed to light 56 of the 175 turbines incorporating CASA’s recommendations. CASA has reviewed and supported the lighting plan.
198. The Department has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind to install aviation hazard lighting in accordance with CASA recommendations and in a manner that minimises any adverse visual impacts.

6.4.9 Recommended conditions

199. To minimise and manage the residual visual and lighting impacts as far as practicable the Department has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind to:
 - provide visual impact mitigation measures, such as landscaping and/or vegetation screening, to non-associated residences within 5.9 km of any approved turbine, upon receiving a written request from the owners of these residences;
 - implement all reasonable and feasible measures to minimise the impacts of the visual appearance of the development;
 - paint turbines off-white/grey and finish the blades with a treatment that minimises potential for glare or reflection;
 - implement reasonable and feasible measures to minimise the off-site lighting impacts of the development; and
 - limit shadow flicker associated with turbines to no more than 30 hours per annum at any non-associated residence.

6.4.10 Conclusion

200. The Department considers that the project would not result in significant visual impacts on surrounding non-associated residences or public viewpoints and would meet the visual performance objectives in the Visual Bulletin. The Department has, should the Commission determine to approve the project, recommend conditions to further minimise impacts

6.5 Traffic and Transport

201. Approximately 15% of submissions objecting to the project raised concerns about traffic-related impacts. Concerns related to impacts to the roads during the construction of the project and the suitability of the road network for project traffic, impacts on residents from increased traffic generated by the project and the impacts on the condition of the roads required for the project.
202. The construction of the project would involve the delivery of plant, equipment, and materials, including by heavy vehicles and heavy vehicles requiring escort (also known as oversized and over-mass (OSOM) vehicles), with some being 'high-risk' due to vehicle/load dimensions and/or weight). These vehicle movements have the potential to impact on the state and local road network. Large equipment, such as wind turbine components, substation, BESS, batching plant equipment and water tanks, is proposed to be transported via OSOM to the project site.
203. The primary site access for the project is directly from the State road network from the Sturt Highway as shown in Figure 9.
204. As part of the EIS, Goldwind prepared a Traffic Impact Assessment and a Route Study for OSOM vehicles from Port of Adelaide to the project site, and revised these studies during the Department's assessment of the project to address advice from TfNSW and comments from Council. TfNSW and Council confirmed that the project's risk to the local and State road network could be adequately managed and mitigated through the implementation of the road upgrades and the traffic mitigation measures to be detailed within the Traffic Management Plan.
205. Goldwind's assessment assumed the maximum blade length was 90.2 m with a required vehicle length accessing the project site of 105 m long to transport turbine blades; and the tallest component would be tower body sections of up to 6.4 m. The heaviest vehicles would weigh up to 120 tonnes to transport the turbine nacelles. It is noted this blade length is shorter than the overall maximum blade length that Goldwind is seeking approval for.
206. Advice from TfNSW and submissions from Murray River Council and Hay Shire Council raised concerns regarding heavy vehicles travelling on the state and local road network, the suitability of the proposed transport routes, and potential impacts to bridges, culverts, rail

crossings, safety and amenity. Additional information was requested and subsequently provided by Goldwind in the revised Traffic Impact Assessment.

6.5.1 Traffic volumes and impacts

207. Construction would occur over approximately 42 months (assuming Stage 1 and 2 are constructed consecutively), with a peak construction period of 15 months. During peak construction, the project would generate up to 268 light vehicles and 146 heavy vehicles per day, of which 16 would be bus trips for staff transport to and from the off-site accommodation camp located in Balranald (should this be the option progressed).
208. The project would also generate a total of up to 2,375 OSOM vehicles that would deliver turbine components, with an average of 4 to 5 deliveries per day. Pilot guiding vehicles and police management would be required, in accordance with a Traffic Management Plan that would be prepared in consultation with TfNSW and relevant rail authorities.
209. Goldwind assessed the traffic impacts of the project on intersections and levels of service along the proposed transport route within the State road network. Goldwind concluded that the network would continue to operate with a good level of service, with the intersection of Sturt Highway and the primary site access maintaining Level of Service A (LOS A) during peak construction. Accordingly, the primary site access on the Sturt Highway is expected to adequately accommodate the traffic movements generated by the project.
210. During operation, traffic generation would be generally minimal but during maintenance and monitoring activities there would be up to 70 light vehicle movements per day associated with 35 operational staff accessing the site.

6.5.2 Project site access and transport route

211. Wind turbine components would be nominally transported to the project site from the Port Adelaide.
212. These vehicles would cross the NSW border via the Murray Valley Highway at Euston and travel east along the Sturt Highway through Balranald, Keri Keri and Maude, before accessing the site via the primary site entrance off the Sturt Highway, as shown in Figure 9.
213. During construction, other heavy and light vehicles would access the site via the primary site entrance from the Sturt Highway. Three emergency access points are proposed: one to the south of the project site off Baldon Road, and two to the east off Baldon Road and Keri East Road. These emergency access points would only be used in emergency situations, such as bushfire or flooding.

214. In addition, Goldwind identified construction routes within the project site, which would be utilised by all construction vehicles. These comprise a 12 km section of Baldon Road and a small portion of Keri East Road (local roads).
215. Shuttle buses may also be used to transport workers to and from the project site from Balranald, if that accommodation option is progressed. These buses would travel between the camp and the site via Church Street, McCabe Street, and Sturt Highway. The need for this shuttle bus would be confirmed in an Accommodation and Employment Strategy.
216. During operations, the southern access point off Baldon Road may also be utilised by up to 10 light vehicles per day travelling to and from Moulamein.
217. The Traffic Impact Assessment included an OSOM route study that assumed a 90.2 m blade length. The assessment identified that access to the project site by OSOM vehicles is feasible, subject to upgrades to key intersections and roads, and the use of existing rest stops and pullover bays to facilitate the safe passage of general traffic around OSOM vehicles. The access routes are predominantly along State highways which provide regular truck parking areas and services for rest breaks, and are generally designed to handle OSOM vehicles. The OSOM transport route requires some road upgrades in order to allow the vehicles to successfully access the site from Port Adelaide. Further detail of the required road upgrades is provided in **Section 6.5.3**.
218. Should wind turbine blades greater than 90.2 metres be proposed, a revised route analysis assessment would be required that demonstrates that the dimensions of vehicles can be facilitated within the road network. This would need to be reviewed and approved by TfNSW.
219. Other large project equipment would also be transported to the project site from Port Adelaide predominantly using B-Double or shorter configurations travelling along the proposed OSOM route. The roads comprising the transport route are designated for B-Double vehicles.
220. Segments of the route that are outside of NSW do not form part of the project for which Goldwind is seeking development consent in NSW. Goldwind would be responsible for undertaking any required coordination or consultation with agencies in other states, to ensure relevant transport and road requirements are met.
221. The Department has recommended a condition of consent requiring Goldwind to consult with the relevant port authority, TfNSW and the NSW Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner to ensure any inter-state movements and deliveries can be accommodated. Should the Commission determine to approve the project, the Department considers that the proposed consultation requirements provide a framework for the port authorities to receive information for consideration.

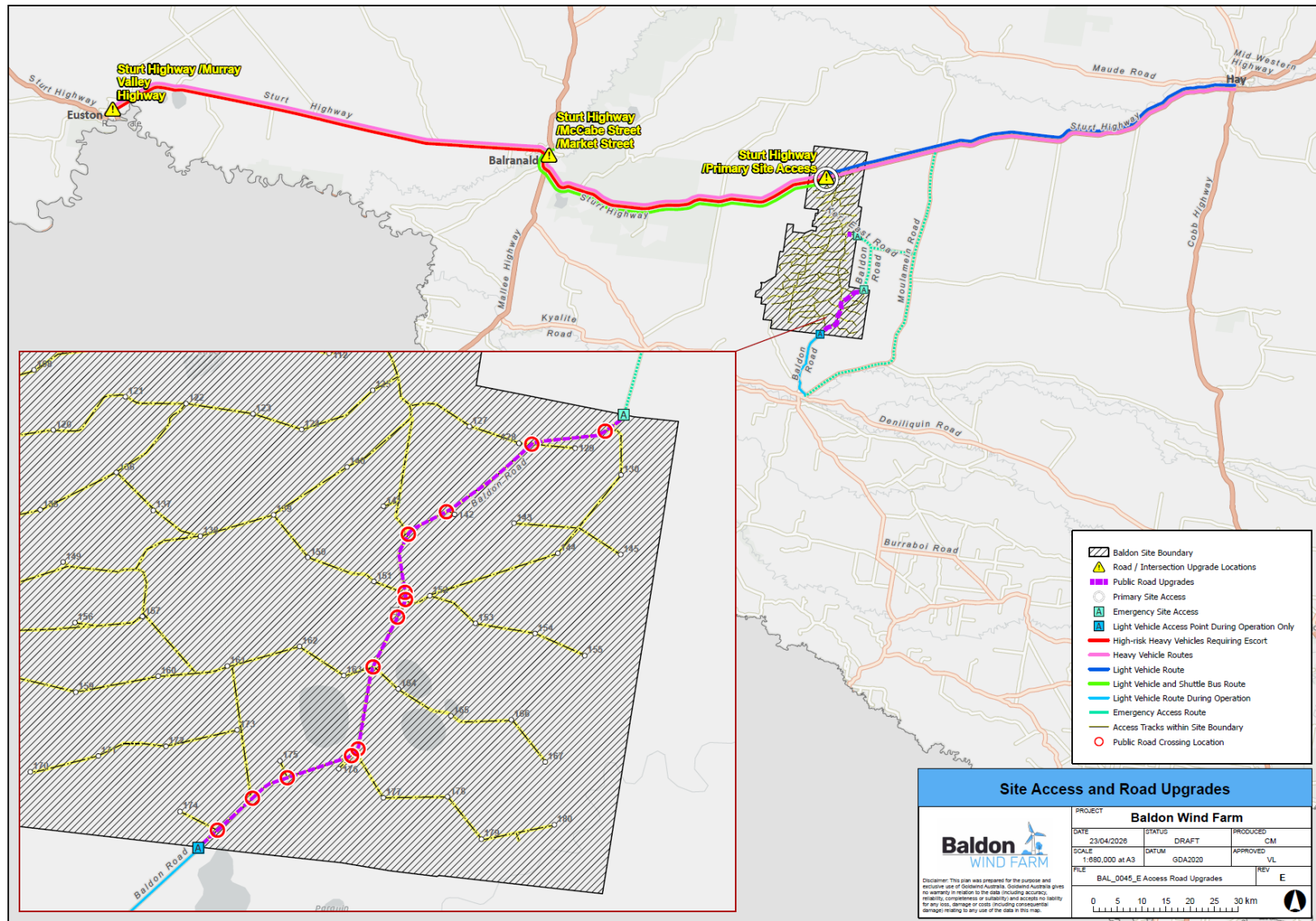


Figure 9 | Transport route, site access and road upgrades

6.5.3 Road upgrades and maintenance

222. Goldwind proposes to undertake intersection upgrades and road upgrades to facilitate construction vehicle access to the project site, including:
- Murray Valley Highway / Sturt Highway intersection (Euston);
 - Sturt Highway (Market Street) / Sturt Highway intersection (Balranald); and
 - Sturt Highway into the site entrance.
223. TfNSW recently announced funding for some of the intersections in the REZ to facilitate OSOM movements, however the timing of these upgrades is still to be confirmed. Regardless, the Department has recommended conditions requiring the upgrades of these intersections prior to use by OSOM vehicles. If the relevant intersections are upgraded by TfNSW, the conditions provide the flexibility that, subject to demonstrating that these components can be accommodated, Goldwind could utilise those upgraded intersections.
224. Rest stops would be used to ensure that drivers delivering turbine components can safely take rest breaks. Goldwind identified two rest stops in NSW which would be used by project-related OSOM vehicles, and four pullover bays to allow following traffic to pass safely. All proposed rest stop locations and pullover bays can be suitably accessed without the need for any road upgrades.
225. Goldwind proposes to use a network of internal access tracks for vehicle movements within the site. Several of these tracks intersect with public roads, including approximately 12 km of Baldon Road and a short section of Keri East Road. Vehicles would utilise Baldon Road as part of the transport route, while movements across Keri East Road would occur only at designated crossing points. In response to concerns raised by Murray River Council, Goldwind proposes to upgrade this section of Baldon Road and along Keri East Road within the project boundary to a standard suitable for the project's transport requirements prior to use by construction vehicles.
226. The Department has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind implement any necessary road upgrades in accordance with the relevant standards and timing requirements, to the satisfaction of the relevant roads authority. A schedule of road upgrades has been included in the recommended conditions of consent (see **Appendix F**).
227. The Department considers that, subject to the implementation of these upgrades, the road network can safely accommodate the vehicle movements associated with the project.
228. The Department's recommended conditions also require Goldwind to undertake dilapidation surveys of local roads along the transport route prior to the commencement of construction and within one month of the completion of construction, and to undertake any necessary repairs to restore roads to an equivalent or improved condition. Additionally, the

Department has recommended that any damage to roads resulting from the development be rectified within seven days of identification.

229. Accordingly, the Department is satisfied that, subject to the recommended conditions of consent, the road network would be adequate to facilitate the safe movement of project-related traffic and that any impacts on the road the road network can be appropriately managed.

6.5.4 Cumulative traffic impacts

230. Given the project's location in the South West REZ, there are a number of proposed energy projects in the region that may utilise the Sturt Highway. Goldwind's Traffic Impact Assessment considered the potential overlap between the construction periods of the Baldon Wind Farm and other projects.
231. The traffic assessment identified that construction traffic for the project has the potential to interact with construction traffic for two projects under assessment (Tchelery Wind Farm and Keri Keri Wind Farm) and two projects preparing their EISs (Wilan Wind Farm and Abercrombie Wind Farm). Traffic interactions with these projects may occur along the Sturt Highway and within the nearby towns of Hay and Balranald. These vehicles would be distributed across the road network and are expected to have a minimal cumulative impact.
232. Traffic modelling indicates the Sturt Highway has sufficient capacity to accommodate construction and operational traffic associated with the project as well as potential cumulative traffic impacts if concurrent construction were to occur with surrounding State significant projects in the region.

6.5.5 Recommended conditions

233. The Department has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind to:
- restrict project related vehicles to the use of the approved access route;
 - undertake dilapidation surveys of the relevant local roads along the transport routes during, prior to and following construction, upgrades and decommissioning and repair any damage resulting from construction traffic;
 - undertake all necessary road upgrades to the satisfaction of the relevant road authority;
 - prepare a Traffic Management Plan in consultation with the relevant roads authority that includes provisions for:
 - temporary traffic controls;
 - notifying the local community about development-related traffic impacts;
 - a traffic management system for managing over-dimensional vehicles;

- managing oncoming traffic delays as a result of heavy vehicles requiring escort; and
 - a driver’s code of conduct that addresses fatigue management and includes procedures for drivers to adhere to the designated haulage routes and speed limits and implement safe driving practices.
- Should wind turbine blades greater than 90.2 metres be required, prepare a revised route analysis which demonstrates that any high-risk heavy vehicles transporting blades longer than 90.2 m can be accommodated on the road network and have identified the relevant approvals pathways and timing of the approvals and upgrades;
 - Subject to the recommended conditions, the Department is satisfied that the project would not result in significant impacts on road network capacity, efficiency or safety.

6.5.6 Conclusion

234. The Department considers that should the Commission determine to approve the project, the project would not have unacceptable impacts on the capacity, efficiency or safety of the road network, subject to the implementation of the recommended conditions. These conditions have been developed in consultation with TfNSW and Councils, which include road upgrades, regular road maintenance and the implementation of a Traffic Management Plan.

6.6 Other issues

235. The Department’s consideration of other issues is provided in **Table 11** below.

Table 11 | Assessment of other issues

Findings	Recommended conditions
Noise and vibration • Eight submissions raised concerns about potential noise impacts from the project. • The project is generally isolated from residential receivers, with the nearest non-associated receiver 3.66 km away from the nearest wind turbine. • Goldwind prepared a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) to assess construction and operational noise of the project in accordance with the EPA's <i>Interim Construction Noise Guideline</i> (2009) (ICNG), the NSW Road Noise Policy (DECCW, 2011) and the Department's <i>Wind Energy: Noise Assessment Bulletin</i> (2016) (the Noise Bulletin). • The project site is located in a rural environment where background noise levels are typically below 35 dB(A) during the day. Construction noise and vibration • The NIA predicts that noise related to all construction stages (including gypsum extraction and road upgrades) would be below the 'noise affected' noise management level (NML) for all non-associated receivers. • Goldwind proposed construction hours to be Monday to Sunday 6 am to 6 pm. • The NIA identifies that the out-of-hours works for critical wind turbine concrete foundation pours and blade installation activities have been assessed, with noise impacts anticipated not to exceed the NML at non-associated dwellings. • The Department has recommended construction hours consistent with standard construction hours in the ICNG. Where activities are inaudible at non-associated receivers, or if agreed with the Planning Secretary, the Department has recommended conditions allowing activities to be considered on a case-by-case or activity specific basis. • The NIA identifies no exceedances of the NML for passive recreation areas during construction, with the highest predicted noise level being less than 25 dB(A) for the Yanga State Conservation located approximately 12 km from the nearest turbine. • The Department has also considered the impacts from blasting associated with the project which may be required as part of the construction of turbine foundations. • Given the separation distances between blasting activities and the nearest non-associated receiver is 3.66 km from the nearest wind turbine, relevant blasting criteria provided in the guideline would be complied with. • The Department has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind to minimise noise during construction by implementing noise mitigation measures set out in the EPA's <i>Interim Construction Noise Guideline</i> (2009) during construction, including scheduling activities, using quieter equipment, consulting with affected residences prior to undertaking noisy construction works and establishing a complaint handling procedure.	• Restrict construction to standard construction hours (i.e. 7 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday, and 8 am to 1 pm Saturday). • Construction outside of standard construction hours subject to approval from the Planning Secretary on a case-by-case or activity specific basis. • Limit blasting on site to between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday and between 9 am and 1pm on Saturday as well to meet the required criteria at all receivers. • Verify through noise monitoring that the noise generated by the operation of the wind farm does not exceed 35 dB(A) or the existing background noise level (LA₉₀ (10-minute)) plus 5 dB(A) for each integer wind speed.

Findings	Recommended conditions
Construction traffic noise - Noise impacts associated with the general increase in daily traffic along the proposed access routes would be directly related to the proximity of a receiver to an access route. - Construction traffic noise impacts were assessed in accordance with the <i>NSW Road Noise Policy</i> (DECCW, 2011) (RNP). No non-associated receivers would experience exceedances of the relevant noise criteria. Operational noise - Operational noise levels were assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Department's <i>Wind Energy: Noise Assessment Bulletin</i> (2016) (the Noise Bulletin). Consistent with the Noise Bulletin, the NIA calculated environmental noise criteria for operation of the turbines, based on different wind speeds. - Goldwind's NIA predicts that noise impacts associated with the project, including consideration of low-frequency noise, would comply with operational noise criteria for all non-associated receivers. - The Department notes the EPA requested revised noise modelling to be undertaken once a turbine model has been chosen. - The Department has recommended conditions are outcome based for Goldwind to ensure that the noise generated by the operation of the project does not exceed relevant noise criteria, regardless of the final turbine chosen. - Operational noise of ancillary infrastructure, including the proposed BESS and substations, are predicted to below the relevant criteria at all associated and non-associated dwellings. - The Department concludes that the operational noise of the project would be acceptable with the implementation of the Department's recommended conditions of consent and through the mitigations proposed by Goldwind.	
Heritage	
Aboriginal Heritage: - Goldwind prepared an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) accompanying the EIS and updated the ACHAR and prepared an Archaeological Technical Report (ATR) during the Department's assessment of the project, addressing comments from Heritage NSW. - The ACHAR identified 101 newly recorded sites within the development corridor including areas of potential archaeological deposit (PADs). No previously registered Aboriginal heritage items are located within the development corridor. - For the sites within the development corridor, Goldwind has committed to avoiding two sites, 77 sites would be potentially impacted, and 22 sites have undetermined impacts.	- Ensure the development does not cause any direct or indirect impacts on any items located outside the approved development footprint, or areas where test excavations are required and have not yet been undertaken. - Undertake test excavations in accordance with the Test Excavation Methodology

Findings	Recommended conditions
- Goldwind also provided an Addendum Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment to assess the impacts on Aboriginal heritage values of the three road upgrades required for the project. The assessment identified that no known Aboriginal objects, sites or values would be impacted by the road upgrades. Heritage NSW reviewed the addendum ACHAR and had no further comments. - The Department acknowledges that archaeological test or salvage excavations were not undertaken by Goldwind at the request of Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs). Heritage NSW accepted this approach on the basis that additional assessment would be undertaken to inform detailed design, including a program of subsurface test excavation within Aboriginal heritage sites located within the development corridor that contain PADs where complete avoidance through micro-siting is not possible. - The revised ACHAR identified that the project layout has undergone extensive refinement to avoid impacts to sites of high cultural value including burial and mound features and culturally modified trees. Goldwind has further committed to prioritising the avoidance of sites through micro-siting project infrastructure during detailed design. - The revised ACHAR identified a range of management approaches which have been refined into the conditions of consent in consultation with Heritage NSW. For example, for areas of PAD and Mounds that may not be able to be avoided by works such as stringing of overhead lines, testing and/or salvage excavation of these features would only be required if they are unable to be avoided by the proposed works. - Where required by the conditions of consent, subsurface test excavations would be undertaken in accordance with a <i>Test Excavation Methodology</i> and an <i>Unexpected Heritage Finds Protocol</i> to be developed in consultation with Heritage NSW and RAPs. - The Department's recommended conditions requires that the revised list of Aboriginal heritage items that would be protected, and items that would be salvaged and relocated would be provided in the Heritage Management Plan. - Heritage NSW noted some comments on the revised ACHAR or submissions report regarding naming sites which was rectified through the conditions. Heritage NSW had no concerns around the adequacy of consultation undertaken with RAPs. - The Department and Heritage NSW considers that subject to recommended conditions, the project would not significantly impact the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of the locality. Non-Aboriginal Heritage: - One submitter raised concerns regarding the potential impact of the project on historic heritage values. - There are no Commonwealth or World listed heritage places, nor State listed or locally listed heritage places or items within or close to the site. - The project site is not listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR), nor is it in the immediate vicinity of any SHR items. Council raised no concerns regarding potential impacts to locally listed heritage items.	- Salvage and relocate Aboriginal items identified for impact to suitable alternative locations in consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders. - Implement all reasonable and feasible measures to avoid and minimise harm to Aboriginal heritage items located within the development corridor. - Undertake consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders prior to construction. - Prepare and implement a Heritage Management Plan in consultation with Heritage NSW and Aboriginal stakeholders, including procedures for unexpected finds and detailed photographic archival records.

Findings	Recommended conditions
As such, the Department considers impacts on heritage values from the project is unlikely and would be adequately managed by the implementation of recommended conditions.	
Land use compatibility	
Agriculture - Twenty submitters raised concerns about the project being on agricultural land and impacts to the agricultural productivity of the surrounding region. - The project site and surrounds are dominated by agricultural land uses, particularly grazing. - No Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) has been mapped on the project site. - The site is mostly comprised of landscape soil capability Class 5 (56%) (moderate-low capability) and Class 6 (44%) (very low capability). - Wind harvesting is a passive land use that can co-exist with grazing activities, which can continue concurrently throughout the project lifespan. As such, the Department considers that the project would not compromise or significantly diminish the availability of land for primary production purposes within the project site or surrounding LGAs. Crown land - The project site contains several small parcels of Crown land. Goldwind committed to securing the necessary authorisations prior to commencement of any works within parcels of Crown land. - The Department is confident that the project is unlikely to result in significant land use compatibility impacts. Mining and exploration - Goldwind would be required to obtain a Mining Lease for the extraction of gypsum at the on-site gypsum extraction area, in accordance with the <i>Mining Act 1992</i>. - DPIRD Resources did not raise any concerns regarding the extraction of gypsum at the on-site gypsum extraction area. - The project site does not overlap with any existing mining leases (MLs) or exploration licences (ELs). - In regard to gypsum extraction activities, Goldwind has committed to rehabilitating all disturbed areas following construction to ensure the gypsum extraction area is rehabilitated concurrently with other rehabilitation activities to a condition fit for the intended land use and are commensurate with the surrounding landscape. - The Department is satisfied that with the implementation of Goldwind's commitments and recommended conditions, the quarries could be rehabilitated to a condition fit for the intended land use.	- Require the rehabilitation of the project site to a standard that makes it available for agricultural production following decommissioning. - Require the rehabilitation of the gypsum extraction area in accordance with the conditions imposed on the mining lease associated with the development under the <i>Mining Act 1992</i>.

Findings	Recommended conditions
Aviation safety - Goldwind undertook an Aviation Impact Assessment (aviation assessment) as part of the EIS. The assessment concluded that the project would not have adverse or significant impacts to air safety, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures and administrative controls. - The project is located within 30 nm (56 km) of one certified airport, the Balranald airport which is located 24 nautical miles (nm) north-west of the project and operated by Balranald Shire Council. The project is also located 4.1 nm north of the Moulamein aircraft landing area (ALA), and 5.7 nm south-west of the Ravensworth ALA. Balranald Shire Council did not raise concerns about potential impacts of the project on aircraft operations at Balranald airport, and the aviation assessment identified that Moulamein and Ravensworth ALAs would not experience impacts due to their distance from the project. - There are also two uncertified ALAs located within the project area, including Baldon ALA and Jeraly Station ALA. While these ALAs would experience wake turbulence impacts from the project, the ALAs are both located on land associated with the project. Additionally, there is one unnamed ALA located approximately 3.3 nm to the west of the project area at the Keri Keri Station. The assessment identified that the project would not have an adverse impact to this ALA. - Airservices initially advised that the maximum height of the turbines would affect the lowest safe altitude (LSALT) for air route W762 and H247, and that these air-routes would need to be amended to accommodate the project. AirServices later confirmed that the required air-route amendments will be implemented in November 2026, and raised no further concerns about the project. - Prior to construction of wind turbines, the Applicant has committed to consultation with CASA, Airservices Australia and relevant aerodrome operators to communicate the final turbine coordinates and heights. The Department has recommended conditions to give effect to this commitment. - The NSW Rural Fire Service did not raise any concerns or comment about aviation impacts of the project. Regardless, the Department has recommended a condition requiring Goldwind to detail operational procedures in the event of a bushfire in its Emergency Plan.	- Carry out the development in accordance with the National Airports Safeguarding Framework Guideline D: Managing the Risk to Aviation Safety of Wind Turbine Installations (Wind Farms)/ Monitoring masts - Notify the relevant aviation authorities and local airstrip operators of the final location and specifications of the wind turbines and any monitoring masts.
Bushfire safety - Several submitters raised concerns regarding the impacts of the project on bushfire risk and management and highlighted the importance of aerial firefighting for fire control activities. - The project site is not mapped as bushfire prone land by the RFS, though bush fire prone land is identified directly east of the project site within the Edwards River LEP. The project site is located within the Mid Murray Zone Bush Fire Management Committee's Bush Fire Risk Management Plan.	Ensure compliance with relevant asset protection requirements in the RFS's <i>Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019</i> (or equivalent).

Findings	Recommended conditions
- Goldwind would be required to establish and maintain a 10 m asset protection zone (APZ) at each wind turbine and monitoring masts, and the compound for the operation and maintenance facilities, including substations in accordance with RFS's <i>Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019</i>. - Goldwind committed to compliance with the RFS's <i>Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019</i> and the preparation and implementation of a Bushfire Management Plan and Emergency Response Plan to manage fire risks. Goldwind also committed to a number of mitigation measures and strategies, including fuel reduction and management and the development and distribution of operational guidelines regarding site access, infrastructure, firefighting resources on-site, fire control strategies and site risks and hazards. - RFS supported the recommendations of the Bushfire Assessment Report included in the EIS. - The Department, RFS and FRNSW are satisfied that the bushfire risks can be suitably managed through the implementation of standard fire management plans and procedures in the recommended conditions.	- Ensure the site is suitably equipped to respond to fires on site, including the provision of a 20,000 litre water supply. - Prepare and implement a Bushfire Management Plan, and an Emergency Response Plan. - Landscape planting to be in accordance with <i>Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019</i>.
Water resources	
Water Supply - Two submitters raised concerns regarding water supply required for the project. - The amount of water required for the construction of the wind farm is estimated to be around 250 ML per annum over a period of approximately 12-24 months sourced primarily from existing and proposed on-site bores and/or Billabong Creek. This includes water for the construction of concrete foundations for the wind turbines, access tracks and concrete hardstands, potable water for amenities and workers accommodation facilities and dust suppression and in case of fire. - Goldwind proposes to obtain the water for construction and operation from multiple sources, including: - extraction of groundwater from one exiting licenced bore, under agreement with host landowner; - establishment of up to four additional groundwater bores and the use of an existing water pipeline along Baldon Road (piped from Moulamein); to assist with construction water supply and minimal operational requirements; and - potable water for site amenities during construction and operation would be sourced from rainwater harvesting or licenced water tankers. - Water required for operation would be 3 ML per year on average limited to amenities usage in the operations and maintenance facility. - DCCEE Water raised concerns regarding secure water supply, groundwater, setbacks from waterfront land, and sewage management arrangements. In response, Goldwind provided additional information, including a groundwater impact assessment to assess the impact of water sourced from existing and proposed groundwater bores.	- Ensure the development has adequate water supplies for the project and that it obtains any necessary licences under the <i>Water Act 1912</i> or <i>Water Management Act 2000</i>. - Ensure all works are undertaken in accordance with Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land (NRAR, 2018) and <i>Policy and Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation and Management</i> (2013). - Prepare a soil and water management plan to minimise any soil erosion in accordance with the <i>Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction</i> (Landcom, 2004) manual and ensure the project is constructed and maintained to avoid causing erosion on site.

Findings

- Groundwater drawdown associated with use of existing and proposed bores during construction is expected to be minimal and unlikely to impact any private bores.
- Excavation within the project site is not anticipated to extend greater than 5 metres below ground level, and would not intersect the local groundwater table, which is around 8 to 9 metres below ground level.
- The project would secure an updated Water Access Licence (zero share) and purchase sufficient temporary water entitlements on the water market for project requirements prior to commencement of construction.
- The Department and NSW DCCEEW - Water Group are satisfied that the project's water use is unlikely to have any significant impact on water supply and demand in the region.

Surface water and flooding

- The project area is located between the major waterways of the Murrumbidgee River to the north and the Edward River to the south. The Abercrombie Creek catchment covers the majority of the site while the Forest Creek catchment encroaches on a small portion of the south-east area of the project area.
- The Abercrombie Creek (Strahler 9th order) passes through the middle of the project, Abercrombie Channel through the northern area, and Forest Creek through the south east area.
- Following the exhibition of the project, three turbines were removed to avoid high flood hazard areas in response to CPHR advice.
- Goldwind provided a flood impact assessment as part of the submissions report. Events assessed include the 5% AEP, 1% AEP, 0.5% AEP, 0.2% AEP and PMF for the local catchment, along with breakout of the 0.05% AEP for the regional (Murrumbidgee) catchment.
- Although there is no Council flood study which covers the same geographical extent as that included in the flood impact assessment for the project, the assessment was consistent with council study (Hay and Maude Flood Study – 2023).
- Project infrastructure was modelled in low hazard areas (up to H3) for events from the 5% to 0.2% AEP, with some turbines in high hazard areas (up to H4) along Abercrombie Creek during the PMF event. Wind turbines within the northern area of the site and infrastructure in the central and northern areas of the site are located in areas where flood levels have increased during events from the 1% AEP to the PMF. In response Goldwind has elevated the proposed wind turbines and infrastructure above 1% AEP flood level plus 0.5 m freeboard. No significant changes to hazard are expected within or outside the site as a result of the project.
- Access throughout the project site would be considered limited for events greater than 5% annual exceedance probability flood events, with most of the site becoming inundated in a probable maximum flood event.
- The risk of isolation for any project workers during significant flood events would require mitigation through appropriate emergency management, including the preparation and implementation of a site Emergency Response Plan.

Recommended conditions

- Ensure the development:
 - does not materially alter the flood storage capacity, flows or characteristics in the development area or off-site; and
 - is designed, constructed and maintained to reduce impacts on surface water and localised flooding at the site.
- Prepare and implement a flood emergency response plan.

Findings	Recommended conditions
- Goldwind has committed to a range of measures to be incorporated into the detailed design to mitigate potential flooding impacts. - The Department has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind to design and operate the project with consideration of flood risk through the implementation of a Flood Emergency Response Plan, which would be consistent with relevant agencies flood emergency strategies. - The Department has recommended conditions in consultation with local Councils, EPA, SES and CPHR, that would minimise the impacts to flooding. Erosion and sedimentation - Goldwind prepared a Soil and Agricultural Impact Assessment which concluded that there is a moderate to high potential risk for dispersion of disturbed soils, in particular during the construction period. This assessment identified that the flat nature of the project and existing aeolian processes, the risk of erosion and sedimentation impacts is low. - Goldwind has committed to preparing a Soil and Water Management Plan, inclusive of site and soil specific erosion and sediment controls prior to the commencement of construction. The erosion control measures would be implemented in accordance with the relevant requirements in the <i>Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction</i> (Landcom, 2004) manual. - Potential water quality impacts during the operational phase would be minimal, as the day-to-day activities during this phase would be limited to routine maintenance and monitoring. - The Department considers that any erosion and sedimentation risks associated with the project can be effectively managed by complying with the relevant requirements in the Blue Book.	
Social and economic 48 submitters raised concerns about socio-economic impacts and two submitters were supportive of the socio-economic benefits to the local community. - The project would generate direct and indirect benefits to the local community including: - up to 400 construction jobs and 35 ongoing operational jobs; - expenditure in the local economy by workers who would reside in the area; and - the procurement of goods and services by Goldwind and associated contractors. - Goldwind has committed to benefit sharing to the community. - Benefit sharing would be undertaken in accordance with the Benefit-Sharing Guideline – Guideline for large-scale renewable energy projects (November 2024) at a rate of \$1,100 per MW generated (noting the Benefit Sharing Guideline requires \$1,050 per MW generated).	- Enter into a VPA with Hay Shire Council and Murray River Shire Council prior to commencing construction. - Prepare and implement an Accommodation Camp Management Plan and an Accommodation and Employment Strategy prior to commencing construction.

Findings

Recommended conditions

- Consistent with the Guideline, 85% (equivalent to \$935/MW) would be provided under a VPA to Murray River Council and Hay Shire Council. The allocation is split based on the relative impacts to each LGA, with Murray River Council receiving 80% and Hay Shire Council receiving 20%, with contributions as follows:
 - Murray River Council (80%) – total upfront payments \$1,077,120 for Stage 1 and \$3,111,680 for Stage 2, with an annual contribution of around \$269,280 per year for Stage 1 and \$777,920 for Stage 2 (excl. GST and indexed CPI).
 - Hay Shire Council (20%) – Upfront payment of \$269,280 for Stage 1 and \$777,920 for Stage 2, and an annual contribution of around \$67,320 per year for Stage 1 and \$194,480 for Stage 2 (excl. GST and indexed to CPI).
- The remaining 15% of the annual contributions allocated to a Community Benefit Fund to be administered by Goldwind and a nominated committee, which would include local community and First Nations initiatives.
- The Department considers that the community and social impacts could be appropriately managed with the implementation of Goldwind's commitments and the Department's recommended conditions.

Accommodation

- The project construction workforce would increase demand for housing and accommodation in towns surrounding the project, noting the project is expected to have a peak construction workforce of 400.
- While the project alone would not result in a significant population change across the Hay Shire LGA and Murray River LGA, the likely concurrent construction workforces from projects in the South West REZ may result in cumulative impacts across the region.
- The Social Impact Assessment identifies that there is an existing shortage of local accommodation and community members raised increased pressure on housing and accommodation due to the construction workforce as a key area of concern.
- Goldwind provided the Department with additional information regarding the details of two options for the workforce accommodation camp including the design, services, noise and social impacts. One proposed option includes offsite at existing accommodation infrastructure available for hire in Balranald along with limited local lodging options in Balranald, Hay, Maude, and Moulamein. The other option includes onsite within the approved development corridor utilising mobile accommodation camp contract with a provider.
- The Department considers that accommodation for the entirety of the workforce for construction of the project is required to appropriately manage impacts on housing and short-term accommodation availability.
- The Department has recommended a condition requiring Goldwind to prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy prior to the commencement of construction. This would outline the final accommodation approach for the development (either an offsite accommodation camp at existing accommodation infrastructure, or an onsite accommodation onsite camp or a combination of both). This Accommodation and Employment Strategy would be developed in consultation with councils, EnergyCo and to the satisfaction of the Planning Secretary.

Findings	Recommended conditions
- Goldwind has committed to providing appropriate health and welfare services for the occupants of the camp including on-site nursing practitioners, telehealth services and first aid training. Property value - Submitters raised concerns about potential adverse impacts on property values in the area. - The Department notes that: - the project is sited within the South West REZ an area aimed at encouraging investment in electricity infrastructure and providing additional renewable energy generation; - the project is permissible with consent under the relevant environmental planning instruments; - the project would comply with applicable amenity criteria established by the NSW Government for wind farm developments and Goldwind has entered into agreements with more highly impacted nearby landowners; - the Land and Environment Court has ruled on several occasions that the assessment of the impacts of projects on individual property values is not generally a relevant consideration under the EP&A Act, unless the project would have significant and widespread economic impacts on the locality, which is not the case in this instance; and - in particular, the Department notes that <i>King & Anor v Minister for Planning; Parkesbourne-Mummel Landscape Guardians Inc v Minister for Planning; Gullen Range Wind Farm Pty Limited v Minister for Planning</i> ([2010] NSWLEC 1102) considers property values for sites adjacent to a wind farm. The judgement determined that there was no loss of property value to which the Court could lawfully have regard, as the wind farm was permissible with consent. - Accordingly, the Department considers that the social and economic benefits of the project outweigh the negative social and economic impacts. As such, the project is in the public interest.	
Radiocommunication	
- Electromagnetic signals transmitted for telecommunication systems (such as radio, televisions, mobile phones and mobile/fixed radio transmitters) function most efficiently where a clear line of sight exists between the transmitting and receiving locations. Wind farms and other infrastructure have the potential to cause interference with this line of sight. - Goldwind undertook an assessment of electromagnetic interference as part of the EIS. The assessment concluded that the project is unlikely to cause interference with radiocommunications associated with nearest tower located approximately 7 km north east of the closest proposed turbine. Turbines may interfere with point-to-area style services such as mobile phone signals and terrestrial television broadcasting. Impacts as a result of the Project are considered unlikely.	If the project disrupts any radiocommunications services, Goldwind must make good any disruption to these services as soon as possible, but no later than one month following the disruption of the service, unless the relevant service provider or user or Planning Secretary agrees otherwise.

Findings	Recommended conditions
• The Department has recommended a condition requiring Goldwind to make good any disruption to these services as soon as possible. • The Telco authority reviewed the project and did not raise any concerns. As such, the Department is satisfied that the project is not likely to have significant impacts on radiocommunications.	
Electric and magnetic fields (EMF)	
• Public submissions raised concerns regarding the potential health impacts of electric and magnetic fields (EMF). • Most operational infrastructure (including turbines, substations, transmission lines and interconnecting cables) are sources of EMF. • The EIS includes an assessment of the EMF levels for operational infrastructure against public exposure guidelines. The results show that the project would comply with the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields which indicates that the levels of EMF would be significantly lower than the current internationally acceptable level for human health. • The Department notes that EMF reduces rapidly with distance from its source. The highest EMF emitter would be the substations, located more than 2.1 km away from all residences. • The Department is satisfied that with the proposed mitigation measures, including setting back electrical infrastructure from receivers, burying electrical infrastructure at sufficient depth to shield electrical fields and exclusion zones around substations, the project is not likely to have any significant EMF related impacts.	• Comply with the applicable EMF criteria
Waste	
• 24 submitters raised concerns about resource usage, waste and recycling, decommissioning and rehabilitation. • The project is not expected to generate large volumes of waste during the development. Goldwind has committed to the preparation of a Waste Management Plan in consultation with Murray Joint Organisation Riverina Waste Group, that would detail measures to reduce waste generated by the project. • The Department has imposed a condition requiring Goldwind to reduce waste, recycle where possible, and to dispose of unrecyclable waste at a licenced facility. • Noting the above, the Department considers that the waste generated by the project could be appropriately managed.	• Prepare and implement a Waste Management Plan to ensure waste is minimised, handled in accordance with waste hierarchy and disposed of appropriately.
Air Quality	
• Goldwind considered air quality impacts from construction activities across the project site. There are 26 non-associated sensitive receivers located within 10km of the project site. If left unmitigated, dust impacts could arise from construction of tracks, hardstand areas and excavation for footings, as well as from other general construction activities. Goldwind	• Ensure off-site dust, fume and blast emissions are minimised.

Findings	Recommended conditions
has committed to a number of mitigation measures to manage potential air quality impacts, including dust suppression and controls and limiting construction during windy weather conditions. Cumulative air quality issues across the South West REZ can be effectively managed by conditioning appropriate mitigation measures. - Noting the above, and that any potential air quality impacts would be limited in duration, the Department considers that the project would not significantly impact the air quality in the locality. Gypsum extraction activities - There would be no blasting required to extract the gypsum resource at gypsum extraction area. - Air quality impacts assessed for the EIS considered all project activities within the disturbance area which includes the gypsum extraction area. Potential impacts associated with the construction related activities are primarily the generation of airborne dust and particulate matter. - Given the gypsum extraction area is more than 8 km from the nearest sensitive receiver, impacts were predicted to be negligible.	Ensure surface disturbance of the site is minimised.
Contamination	
23 submitters raised concerns about contamination and pollution. - Goldwind considered the risk of contamination for the project site. The EIS identified that the project site has historically been used for agricultural land uses including sheep and cattle grazing, and some irrigated cropped areas. - Goldwind prepared a preliminary site investigation (PSI) which assessed the site suitability and potential for contamination at the proposed wind farm site as well as at the proposed intersection upgrades at Sturt Highway, McCabe Street and Market Street, Balranald and at Murray Valley Highway and Sturt Highway, Euston. - The project site is not listed as a contaminated site in the NSW EPA Contaminated Land Record or the list of NSW contaminated sites. - At the proposed intersection upgrade location at Sturt Highway, McCabe Street and Market Street, Balranald, the PSI identified two potential off-site contamination sources from: - potential use of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) during historical fire training at the off-site Fire & Rescue Station in proximity to the intersection upgrade location; and - fuel/chemical storage areas at the off-site Nelson K & S L freight and transport depot in proximity to the intersection upgrade location). - The PSI identified that there would be minimal disturbance required to undertake the intersection upgrade, with excavation between 200 to 300 mm below ground level. As such, it is considered unlikely that an intrusive investigation for this area is required as the upgrade works at this location are minimal.	- Condition requiring the inclusion of an unexpected finds protocol as part of the CEMP. - Comply with Section 120 of the POEO Act.

Findings	Recommended conditions
- During construction, there is a risk for soil to become contaminated through accidental chemical or fuel spills, leaks from construction plant and equipment. - Goldwind has committed to the preparation of a construction environmental management plan (CEMP), as recommended by the PSI, which would include procedures to manage unexpected contamination as well as measure to manage spills and leaks from equipment. If contaminated soils are encountered, they would be handled and disposed of in accordance with NSW EPA guidelines, Australian Standards, and relevant industry codes of practice. - The Department considers the site would be suitable for the proposed development and that the proposed mitigation is sufficient to minimise risks.	
Decommissioning and rehabilitation	
20 submitters raised concerns about decommissioning and rehabilitation. - The Department has developed standard conditions for wind farms to cover this stage of the project life cycle, including clear decommissioning triggers and rehabilitation objectives. - Additionally, the Department has provided guidance on how host landowner agreements should consider refurbishment, decommissioning and rehabilitation in the NSW Wind Energy Framework's Negotiated Agreement Advice Sheet. - With the implementation of these measures, the Department considers that project infrastructure would be suitably decommissioned, either at the end of the project life or if the project is not operating for more than a year, and the site appropriately rehabilitated to a standard that would allow the ongoing productive use of the land.	- Decommission and rehabilitate the on-site accommodation camp within 12 months of commencing operation of the project. - Decommission wind turbines (and associated infrastructure) within 18 months of the cessation of operations; - Rehabilitate the site, and minimise the total disturbance area exposed at any time; and - Comply with a number of rehabilitation objectives, including removing redundant above-ground infrastructure, restoring rural land capability and vegetation, ensuring public safety and ensuring the site is maintained in a safe, stable and non-polluting condition.
Hazards	
Blade Throw A submission raised concerns regarding the risk of blade throw (where a turbine blade falls off a tower) to public safety.	Demonstrate that the battery storage layout is consistent with the recommendations of the Preliminary Hazard Analysis prior to commencing

Findings	Recommended conditions
- Goldwind submitted a blade throw risk assessment as part of their EIS which included probability calculations for blade throw impacting receivers. - The project layout includes setback distances of over 600 m to dwellings and sensitive infrastructure/sensitive locations over 300 m to local and state roads. - Given the distance of the turbines to dwellings and sensitive infrastructure/sensitive locations and roads, the Department is satisfied that the project is unlikely to pose significant blade throw risk to the community. BESS Hazards Analysis - The projects preliminary hazards analysis (PHA) considered risk associated with the construction and operation of an on-site centralised and/or distributed BESS, the transport and storage of hazardous materials, as well as the operation of the BESS itself, in accordance with the <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021</i> (Resilience and Hazards SEPP), and the relevant Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Papers. - The Department is satisfied that the dangerous goods stored on-site would be unlikely to exceed the threshold limits in <i>Applying SEPP 33</i> and the project is not 'potentially hazardous'. - The PHA identified one medium risk event associated with unauthorised access resulting in asset damage. The project includes security fencing to minimise this risk. - All other potential risks were concluded to be very low with no significant off-site impacts, subject to the implementation of recommendations, including: - adequate separation distances both within the BESS (between components) and between the site and surrounding land uses; - relevant infrastructure and engineering controls installed and maintained (such as fire-fighting equipment); and - appropriate management processes put in place during construction and operations. - The PHA and clarifications within the submissions report identify that the area allocated for the BESS is sufficient for batteries and other associated equipment, allowing for appropriate separation distances. - The project would comply with the <i>International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection</i> guidelines for electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields. - The Department considers that the hazard risk for the project can be managed, subject to the recommendations of the PHA, and the Department's recommended conditions of consent, including preparation of a Fire Safety Study prior to commencing construction of the BESS.	construction of the battery storage facility, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Secretary.

Findings	Recommended conditions
Cumulative • 10 submitters raised concerns regarding cumulative impacts of the project particularly as it is within the South West REZ. • The EIS includes a cumulative impact assessment for the project, which provided an assessment of potential impacts of the project alongside potential impacts of other proposed projects in the region. • The approved South West REZ Project EnergyConnect project traverses the project site. There are currently no approved projects within 10 km from the project, but two projects Tchelery Wind Farm and Keri Keri Wind Farm are within 10 km of the project site and are in the process of being assessed by the Department. • There is potential for cumulative amenity impacts associated with noise, traffic, air quality and visual impacts during construction. Cumulative impacts during construction would be temporary and vary depending on the extent of activity occurring at each project concurrently. Each project would implement mitigation measures to minimise their potential impacts. Cumulative visual, biodiversity and traffic impacts are detailed respectively in Section 6 of this report. • The cumulative impact assessment considered the neighbouring Keri Keri Wind Farm and Tchelery Wind Farm and, concluded that the compliance outcome does not change for any relevant receiver as a result of the project turbine layout. • As such, cumulative impacts are likely if there is an overlap of peak construction periods, in particular in relation to accommodation availability. Goldwind proposes a temporary workers accommodation camp to facilitate the project (potentially combined with an off-site option). The project would therefore not compete with surrounding projects for accommodation. • The Department also notes that three other wind farm projects and one solar project were successful in gaining the rights to connect to Project EnergyConnect. Energy Corporation notes that, at this stage, there is no additional capacity available on the South West REZ transmission network, meaning that there would be limitations to other new projects connecting in the short term. However, should there be other future successful projects or projects connecting to the existing network, then the number of additional projects constructing at the same time is unlikely to be significant. • The Department has been involved in the preparation of a range of cumulative impact studies (Regional Major Infrastructure Studies) to respond to community concerns regarding cumulative impacts and provide relevant agencies a shared baseline of information in relation to the impacts of projects across the South West REZ. • The Department has considered the cumulative impacts of the project and acknowledges that there would be some cumulative impacts associated with other projects should construction activities overlap in the South West REZ, however these impacts would be temporary in nature and managed. Cumulative impacts would be addressed through the implementation of committed mitigation measures and recommended conditions of this and any other projects within the South West REZ, should the Commission determine to approve the project.	• No specific conditions required.

7 Evaluation

236. The Department has assessed the development application, EIS, submissions report, amendment report and additional information and has carefully considered:
- submissions received from members of the community;
 - comments provided by councils; and
 - advice received from State and local government agencies.
237. The Department has also considered the objectives of the EP&A Act, including the principles of ecologically sustainable development, and relevant considerations under section 4.15(1) of the EP&A Act. The Department has given consideration to Goldwind's evaluation of the merits of the project against applicable statutory and strategic planning requirements.
238. The project has been located and designed to largely avoid key constraints, including threatened species habitat, visual amenity, traffic impacts and impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage sites. The project was also amended through the assessment process in response to concerns raised during community engagement and to avoid key constraints, including reducing the number of turbines from an initial 180 to 175.
239. The project has implemented a number of measures to avoid and minimise biodiversity impacts through project design. This has been achieved through measures such as locating infrastructure within areas of non-threatened vegetation, adopting buffers for important habitat features and avoiding threatened species habitat. Goldwind has committed to adopt further avoidance wherever practicable as part of the detailed design process.
240. The project would meet the visual performance objectives of the Visual Bulletin and there would be no significant visual impacts from the project. The Department acknowledges the project is sited away from non-associated residences, with four non-associated residences located within 5.9 km (the blue line) of the nearest proposed turbine, and two of these are within 4 km (the black line) but more than 3.5 km from the nearest turbine. Vegetation screening would be offered to these non-associated residences.
241. In relation to traffic impacts, the Department considers that, with the implementation of recommended conditions, the proposed transport routes could be appropriately upgraded to facilitate the transportation of large turbine components to site, if approved.
242. To address the residual impacts of the project, the Department has recommended a range of detailed conditions, developed in conjunction with government agencies and Council, to

effectively minimise, manage or offset residual impacts. Goldwind has reviewed the conditions and does not object to them.

243. The Department considered the submissions made during the exhibition of the project and the issues raised by the community and agencies during consultation. These matters have been addressed through changes to the project and recommended conditions of consent.
244. The project is located in the South West REZ of NSW, which is aimed at encouraging investment in electricity infrastructure and unlocking additional generation capacity in order to secure reliable energy in NSW. The project has not been granted Access Rights under the South West REZ Access Scheme but may either seek to connect in the event that one of the access right holders cannot meet its obligations or seek to connect an initial stage to the existing transmission network.
245. Importantly, the project would assist in transitioning the electricity sector from coal and gas-fired power stations to low emission sources and is consistent with the goals of the *NSW Climate Change Policy Framework and the Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030*. It would have a generation capacity of around 1,400 MW of clean electricity, which is enough to power approximately 639,000 homes.
246. The inclusion of a BESS would enable the project to store energy for dispatch to the grid when the wind is not blowing and/or during periods of peak demand, increasing grid stability and energy security.
247. The project would also provide flow-on benefits to the community, including up to 400 construction jobs, 35 operational jobs and a financial contribution of \$1,100/MW/annum split across the host councils over the operational life of the development. The significant capital investment associated with the project of \$2.8 billion would have broader benefits to the region and State.
248. The Department has carefully considered the likely environmental, social, and economic impacts of the project in accordance with the requirements of section 4.15 of the EP&A Act.
249. Overall, the Department's assessment concludes that the project would result in benefits to the State of NSW including providing renewable energy in the South West REZ and in an area that has available network capacity.
250. The Department has not provided an overall recommendation but rather has undertaken a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the project to inform the Commission to make its decision on whether the project is in the public interest. Should the Commission determine to approve the project, the Department has provided recommended conditions (see **Appendix F**).
251. This assessment report is hereby presented to the Commission for determination.

Prepared by:

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Recommended by:

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14/09/2026

Nicole Brewer
Director
Energy Assessments

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14/09/2026

Chris Ritchie
Executive Director
Energy, Resources and Industry

Appendices

Appendix A – Environmental Impact Statement

Appendix B – Submissions, government agency and panel advice

Appendix C – Submissions report

Appendix D - Amendment report

Appendix E – Additional information

Appendix F – Recommended development consent

Appendices A to F available at: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/baldon-wind-farm>

Appendix G – Statutory considerations

Objects of the EP&A Act

In line with the requirements of section 4.15 of the EP&A Act, the Department’s assessment of the project has given detailed consideration to a number of statutory requirements. These include:

- the objects found in section 1.3 of the EP&A Act; and
- the matters listed under section 4.15(1) of the EP&A Act, including applicable environmental planning instruments and regulations.

The Department has considered all these matters in its assessment of the project and has provided their assessment in Table 12 below.

Table 12 | Objects of the EP&A Act and how they have been considered

Consideration
Objects of the EP&A Act The objects of most relevance to the Consent Authority’s decision on whether to approve the project are found in sections 1.3(a), (c), (d), (e),(f), (j) and (k) of the EP&A Act. The Department considers the project encourages the social and economic welfare of the community and the proper management of natural resources (Object 1.3(a), (c), and promotes orderly and economic use of land (Object 1.3(k)), as the project: • is a permissible land use on the subject land; • the site is suitable and in a logical location for efficient wind farm development; • is able to be managed such that the impacts of the project could be adequately minimised, managed, or at least compensated for, to an acceptable standard; • would contribute to a more diverse local industry, thereby supporting the local economy and community; • would not fragment or alienate resource lands in the LGA; and • is consistent with the goals of NSW’s <i>Climate Change Policy Framework and Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030 and Implementation update</i> (2022) and would assist in meeting Australia’s renewable energy targets whilst reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Consideration of environmental protection (Object 1.3(d)) is provided in Section 6 of this report. The Department considers that the project can be undertaken in a manner that would at least maintain the biodiversity values of the locality over the medium to long term and would not significantly impact threatened species and ecological communities of the locality. The Department is also satisfied that any residual biodiversity impacts can be managed and/or mitigated by imposing appropriate conditions and retiring the required biodiversity offset credits. Consideration of resilience to climate change and natural disasters (Object 1.3(e)) is provided in Section 6 of this report including the potential flooding and bushfire impacts associated with the project. The Department is satisfied that the project can be undertaken in a manner that is resilient to climate change and natural hazards through appropriate mitigation, prevention and preparedness measures. Consideration of the sustainable management of built and cultural heritage (Object 1.3(f)) is provided in Section 6 of this report. The Department considers the project would not significantly impact the built or cultural heritage of the locality, and any residual impacts can be managed and/or mitigated by imposing appropriate conditions.

Consideration

The Department has considered the encouragement of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) (Object 1.3(ii)) in its assessment of the project. This assessment integrates all significant socio-economic and environmental considerations and seeks to avoid any potential serious or irreversible environmental damage, based on an assessment of risk-weighted consequences.

In addition, the Department considers that appropriately designed SSD wind development, in itself, is consistent with many of the principles of ESD. Goldwind has also considered the project against the principles of ESD. As such, the Department considers that the project can be carried out in a manner that is consistent with the principles of ESD.

State significant development

Under section 4.36 of the EP&A Act, the project is considered State significant development.

Under section 4.5(a) of the EP&A Act, the Commission is the consent authority for the development as Goldwind disclosed a reportable political donation under section 10.4 of the EP&A Act.

Under Section 4.38(3) of the EP&A Act, development consent may be granted for SSD applications where the development is partially prohibited, noting that the proposed subdivision of the lots would be below the minimum lot size of 200 ha and prohibited under the LEPs.

Environmental Planning Instruments (EPIs) - LEPs

The *Hay Local Environmental Plan 2011*, and the *Wakool Local Environmental Plan 2013* (LEPs) apply to the extent of determining the permissibility and land use zoning of the project. The project is located in RU1 land use zonings under these LEPs and is permissible with consent under the provisions of the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP. The Department provides its consideration of the potentially relevant provisions within the LEPs below.

Heritage conservation (Section 5.10 Hay LEP and Wakool LEP)

Goldwind assessed Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage in Section 6.2 of the EIS and in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR). These assessments concluded that the project would not significantly impact the built or cultural heritage of the locality and that residual impacts can be managed and/or mitigated by imposing appropriate conditions. The Department's assessment of heritage is provided within **Section 6.6**.

Flood Planning (Section 5.21 Hay LEP and Wakool LEP)

Goldwind assessed hydrology and flooding in Section 6.6 of the EIS and in the Response to Submissions Appendix G Flood Study. The assessment identified that flood hazards and their extents are considered generally compatible with the project, noting project infrastructure is located in low hazard areas (up to H3) for events from the 5% to 0.2% AEP, with a few turbines in high hazard areas (up to H4) along Abercrombie Creek during the PMF event. Goldwind has elevated the proposed wind turbines and infrastructure above 1% AEP flood level plus 0.5 m freeboard. No significant changes to hazard are expected within or outside the site.

Earthworks (Section 6.1 Hay LEP and Wakool LEP)

Construction would involve earthworks within the development footprint. The Department considered these impacts throughout **Section 6** of this Assessment Report. The Hydrology and Flooding Assessment notes that the project is located on relatively flat landscape and only minor earthworks are required. The risk of soil erosion and sediment impacts of the project is low. The Department's consideration of these matters is included in Section 6.6 and discussed further below.

- Drainage patterns and soil stability
 - Erosion from concentrated flows would be minimised through appropriate drainage, erosion and sediment control measures, as required under recommended conditions.
 - The Department has recommended conditions requiring that the project does not cause any increased water being diverted off the site and that the project does not alter localised hydrology.
- Future use or redevelopment of the land
 - The Department considers the site could be fully restored when the project is decommissioned and has recommended conditions requiring Goldwind to restore the land capability to pre-existing productive capacity.

Consideration

- Quality of fill and its source
 - The extent and volume of excavations and fill material, as well as its use, storage and management, would be identified during detailed design. As noted above, the extent of earthworks for the project would be minor, due to the level topography of the site. The Department considers that excavated and fill material can be appropriately managed through the recommended conditions, including minimising land disturbance, maximising salvage and reuse of soil resources and preparing and implementing a Waste Management Plan.
- Amenity impacts on adjoining properties
 - The Department's assessment concluded the project would not have unacceptable visual amenity impacts on adjoining properties subject to the recommended conditions and implementation of landscape screening as requested (see **Section 6.5**). Construction noise impacts from earthworks would not exceed the noise management level of 45 dB(A) at non-associated receivers (see **Section 6.6**).
 - With the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed by Goldwind and the recommended conditions of consent, the Department considers that earthworks for the project are unlikely to result in impacts to the amenity of adjoining properties.
- Likelihood of impacts on relics
 - As noted above, that the project would not significantly impact items of the built or cultural heritage of the locality. The Department has recommended a condition requiring the preparation of a contingency plan to manage potential impacts to unexpected Aboriginal heritage relics.
- Proximity and potential for adverse impacts on waterways
 - Two major watercourses traverse the project area including Abercrombie Creek and The Forest Creek, both streams are classified as Strahler order 9 stream. Abercrombie Creek is within the assessment corridor of the project, The Forest Creek is at least 320 m from the nearest assessment corridor. Abercrombie Creek is an ephemeral creekline that is predominantly dry except during significant periods of rainfall.
 - Works near higher order watercourses, including Abercrombie Creek and Forest Creek, would be avoided and any works within 40 m of a watercourse would comply with relevant legislation (**Section 6.6**). Recommended conditions require Goldwind not alter surrounding hydrology, ensure the capture and removal of contaminants from stormwater basins and for Goldwind to comply with relevant legislation. With the implementation of these conditions the Department considers that impacts to waterways are unlikely.

Essential services (Section 6.2 Hay LEP and Section 6.8 Wakool LEP)

The Department considered these matters in **Section 6** and is satisfied that any impacts can be managed and services can be delivered. This is discussed further below.

- Supply of water
 - As set out in **Section 6.6**, water for the project can be met through several water supply options, including groundwater bores, reuse of captured rainwater and an existing water pipeline along Baldon Road (piped from Moulamein).
 - The NSW DCCEEW - Water Group is satisfied that the project's water use is unlikely to have a significant impact on the water supply and demand in the region.
 - The NSW DCCEEW - Water Group raised no concerns about the use of the four additional bores (PB1, PB2, PB3 and PB4), and the use of an existing water pipeline along Baldon Road, and one existing licenced bore (GW504355.1.1) (agreement with host landowner). The Department has recommended a condition which

Consideration

outlines that Goldwind must ensure that it has sufficient water for all stages of the development, and if necessary, adjust the scale of the development to match its available water supply.

- Supply of electricity
 - During construction, electricity would be supplied by generators, which were assessed in the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment. During operation, the project would connect to the grid, and the Department considers electricity supply arrangements adequate.
- Disposal and management of sewage
 - Sewage would be managed via on-site septic tank or transported for management off-site via tank. The Department considers there is adequate arrangements for waste management.
- Stormwater drainage or on-site conservation
 - Stormwater drainage and erosion and sediment controls would be designed, installed and maintained in accordance with the relevant guidelines and the Department has recommended a condition to this effect.
- Suitable road access
 - The project area would be accessed via one primary site access point off the Sturt Highway. During construction, other heavy and light vehicles would access the site via the primary site entrance. Three emergency access points are proposed: one to the south of the project site off Baldon Road, and two to the east off Baldon Road and Keri East Road (used for emergency situations such as bushfire or flooding). Subject to required road upgrades and implementation of a Traffic Management Plan, the Department and the relevant roads authorities are satisfied that the project would not result in significant impacts on road network capacity, efficiency or safety.

Airspace Operations (Section 6.3 Hay LEP)

- The maximum height of the turbines would affect the lowest safe altitude (LSALT) of air routes W762 and H247, and the 25 nm Minimum Sector Altitude instrument procedure at Hay Aerodrome. The air routes would require amendment to an LSALT of 2300 ft AHD to accommodate the wind farm, which AirServices Australia has confirmed it is progressing. The Department considers that the project would not impact any airspace operations.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021

- Chapter 3 – Potentially Hazardous and offensive development
 - The project is not categorised as potentially hazardous or potentially offensive development under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021* (Hazards SEPP).
 - A Preliminary Hazard Analysis (PHA) confirmed the transport and storage of hazardous materials for the projects would not exceed the relevant thresholds set out in the SEPP and that the project is not considered to be potentially hazardous in respect to dangerous goods. Consequently, the Department considers the project would not be considered hazardous or potentially offensive.
 - The PHA also confirmed that the fire risks associated with the BESS meet the qualitative risk criteria outlined in the Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Paper No. 4 and that the implementation of the identified controls would appropriately minimise the risk of fire propagation between batteries. As such, the Department considers the project does not exceed the acceptable risk criteria and would not significantly increase risk of fire in surrounding areas.

Consideration

- Chapter 4 – Remediation of Land
 - The project area is not listed as a contaminated site in the NSW EPA Contaminated Land Records or the list of NSW contaminated sites. Goldwind undertook a PSI and concluded the site was suitable for the development and the Department's assessment concluded the project area would be suitable for the project.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021

Section 2.48 – Determination of development applications – or other development

The Department reviewed the project against the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP and considers the project is permissible under the SEPP. In accordance with the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP, the Department has given written notice of the project to EnergyCo and Transgrid as the electricity supply authorities and TfNSW (Section 5).

State Environmental Planning Policy (Primary Production) 2021

The Department has considered the provisions of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Primary Production) 2021*. The SEPP aims to facilitate the orderly economic use and development of lands from primary production to reduce land use conflict and sterilisation of rural land and to identify State significant agricultural land. The Department has considered all these matters in Section 6 and concluded that the project is generally consistent with the broader and specific land use planning objectives for the project area and the region under the relevant planning instruments and strategies.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021

Murray River Council LGA is listed in Schedule 2 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021*. Goldwind's BDAR found no evidence of koalas and the Department has considered biodiversity in Section 6.3 concluding the koala population would not be impacted by the project.

Appendix H - Consideration of community views

The Department exhibited the EIS for the project from 14 August until 10 September 2024 (28 days) and received 77 unique public submissions (73 objecting to the project, one in support and three comments). The Department also consulted with government agencies and relevant councils throughout the assessment process.

The key issues raised by the community (including in public submissions) and considered in the Department's Assessment Report include social and economic, soil, water and land use, biodiversity, resource usage, waste and decommissioning, and contamination/pollution impacts. Submissions in support of the project noted various benefits of the project, including climate change, the importance of transitioning away from fossil fuel, appropriateness of the project site and the high level of misinformation used to object to wind farms. The Department has considered these matters and presented an assessment in Table 13 below. Other issues are addressed in detail throughout this Assessment Report.

Table 13 | Consideration of community views

Issue	Consideration
Socio-economic - Lack of community benefits - Economic viability - Impacts to electricity costs - Disruption on the community during construction - Energy efficiency and reliability and project cost - Strain on local accommodation and housing	Assessment - Concerns about socio-economic impacts were raised in 48 public submissions regarding the potential adverse impacts on the local community's economic viability. In relation to project-induced factors affecting property values and economic activity such as fluctuating energy prices or proposed accommodation. - The project's construction phase would generate up to 400 construction jobs and 35 operational jobs. - The project's net economic stimulus is estimated at approximately \$2.9 billion in direct investment. - Goldwind has committed to enter a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with Hay Shire Council and Murray River Council. The total contribution payable is \$1,100 per MW generation capacity installed per year for the duration of the project. - The project would power approximately 639,000 homes per year. - There would be two options proposed to accommodate the temporary workers including a temporary workers accommodation camp on site and a mobile accommodation camp contract offsite. This would minimise any strain on the housing supply in the area. - While Goldwind has committed to a local participation and procurement approach, the Department has recommended a condition requiring Goldwind to prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy in consultation with council, to prioritise local employment and procurement, and to mitigate the potential impacts of worker housing unavailability. Recommended conditions - Prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy for the project in consultation with Council, with consideration to prioritising the employment of local workers. - Enter into a VPA with Councils prior to commencing construction.

Issue	Consideration
Soil, water, and land use • Impacts to Agricultural land, water, and soils • Risk of contamination to waterways and soils • Impacts to farming communities • Water security in the region	Assessment • Of the submissions, 33 raised concerns regarding soil, water, the loss of agricultural land, and potential impacts to agricultural practices. • The project site and surrounds are dominated by agricultural land uses, particularly grazing. • No Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) is mapped within the project site. • The site is mostly comprised of landscape soil capability Class 5 (56%) (moderate-low capability) and Class 6 (44%) (very low capability). • While the project would temporarily reduce the available land for agricultural uses during construction, the long-term use of the land for agricultural purposes would not be compromised during the operation of the project. Additionally, the Department considers that the project would provide an additional source of income for the landowners of the associated properties, whose land would be impacted. • Wind harvesting is a passive land use that can co-exist with grazing activities, which can continue concurrently throughout the project lifespan. As such, the Department considers that the project would not compromise or significantly diminish the availability of land for primary production purposes within the project site or surrounding LGAs. • The project would secure an updated Water Access Licence (zero share) and purchase sufficient temporary water entitlements on the water market for project requirements prior to commencement of construction. • During construction, there is a risk for soil to become contaminated through accidental chemical or fuel spills, leaks from construction plant and equipment. The ground disturbance would be limited to locations for temporary construction facilities and permanent operational infrastructure. Noting the minimal level of ground disturbance required for the project Goldwind identified that the risk of exposing contaminated land during construction of the project is low. All areas impacted during construction would be sealed or rehabilitated and landscaped to prevent soil erosion. • The Department considers that any erosion and sedimentation risks associated with the project can be effectively managed by complying with the relevant requirements in the Blue Book. Recommended Conditions • Require the rehabilitation of the project site to a standard that makes it available for agricultural operations following decommissioning. • Preparation of a soil and water management plan. • Ensure the development has adequate water supplies for the project and that it obtains any necessary licences under the <i>Water Act 1912</i> or <i>Water Management Act 2000</i>. • Ensure all works are undertaken in accordance with Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land (NRAR, 2018) and <i>Policy and Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation and Management</i> (2013). • Minimise any soil erosion in accordance with the <i>Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction</i> (DECC, 2008) manual and ensure the project is constructed and maintained to avoid causing erosion on site. • Include an unexpected finds protocol in the CEMP.

Issue	Consideration
Biodiversity • Bird and Bat Strike • SAIL impacts • Vegetation clearing • Threatened species impacts	Assessment • Of the submissions objecting to the project, 30 raised concerns about potential impacts on biodiversity, including the clearing of native vegetation, the potential impacts on threatened species and the adequacy of the biodiversity assessment. • DEECCW CPHR considered the project would have the potential to cause Serious and Irreversible Impacts to the threatened species, the Plains-wanderer. Based on this, the Department sought independent advice from the Panel that concluded that any impact of the project would not be SAIL. • The project development footprint (including proposed road upgrades areas) would disturb around 795 ha, which includes approximately 769.35 ha of native vegetation. • The project would impact one TEC listed under the BC Act and EPBC Act, 1.12 ha of Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains listed as a critically endangered ecological community (CEEC) under the BC Act and the EPBC Act. • The project has been designed and refined to avoid and minimise biodiversity impacts to areas of higher conservation value. The Department considers that the vegetation clearing impacts of the project would not be significant, subject to a range of mitigation and adaptive management measures and by offsetting the residual biodiversity impacts. • A prescribed impact assessment was prepared to consider the potential impacts from turbine strikes on significant bird and bat species and considered impacts 50 bird and bat species including, 9 threatened species. • In consultation with CPHR, the Department has recommended conditions requiring a comprehensive regime of adaptive management to address the risk of bird and bat strike. • A Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan would be developed in consultation with CPHR. Given this, the Department is satisfied that the project's impacts upon avifauna can be appropriately managed. Recommended conditions • Minimise the clearing of native vegetation and key fauna habitat, including hollow bearing trees, within the development footprint and protect native vegetation and key fauna habitat outside the approved disturbance area in accordance with limits in the recommended conditions. • Prepare and implement the Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a description of the measures to: - implement clearing and operational management protocols; - minimise the impacts of development on threatened flora and fauna species within the disturbance footprint; - minimise the potential indirect impacts on threatened flora and fauna species, migratory species and 'at risk' species; - rehabilitate and revegetate temporary disturbance areas and maximise the salvage of resources within the approved disturbance area for beneficial reuse (such as fauna habitat enhancement) during the rehabilitation and revegetation of the site; - control weeds and feral pests; and - provide a detailed program to monitor and report on the effectiveness of these measures.

Issue	Consideration
	• Preparation of a Regional Plains-Wanderer Management Strategy to improve the regional monitoring and management of this species within the Southwest REZ. • Prepare and implement a Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan in consultation with CPHR. • Retire the applicable biodiversity offset credits in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme prior to carrying out any development that could directly or indirectly impact the biodiversity values requiring offset.
Resource usage, waste and decommissioning • Waste management • Impacts from construction, operation or decommissioning activities	Assessment • Concerns were raised in 24 submissions for resource usage, waste management, and decommissioning. • The project would not generate significant volumes of waste during construction. • During the operation of the project there would be negligible amounts of waste, except for repair and maintenance activities. • The Department has imposed a condition requiring Goldwind to reduce waste, recycle where possible, and to dispose of unrecyclable waste at a licenced facility. • Noting the above, the Department considers that the waste generated by the project could be appropriately managed. • The Department has developed standard conditions for wind farms to cover this stage of the project life cycle, including clear decommissioning triggers and rehabilitation objectives. • Additionally, the Department has provided guidance on how host landowner agreements should consider refurbishment, decommissioning and rehabilitation in the NSW Wind Energy Framework's Negotiated Agreement Advice Sheet. • With the implementation of these measures, the Department considers that project infrastructure would be suitably decommissioned, either at the end of the project life or if the project is not operating for more than a year, and the site appropriately rehabilitated to a standard that would allow the ongoing productive use of the land. Recommended Conditions • Prepare and implement a Waste Management Plan which identifies the waste management facilities to be used by the project and minimise waste generated by the project, and classify, store and handle all waste on site in accordance with its classification. • Decommission and rehabilitate the on-site accommodation camp within 12 months of commencing operation. • Decommission wind turbines (and associated infrastructure) within 18 months of the cessation of operations; • Rehabilitate the site, and minimise the total disturbance area exposed at any time; and • Comply with a number of rehabilitation objectives, including removing redundant above-ground infrastructure, restoring rural land capability and vegetation, ensuring public safety and ensuring the site is maintained in a safe, stable and non-polluting condition.

Issue	Consideration
Contamination & Pollution • Bisphenol A (BPA) and nanoparticle contamination from turbine blades • Contamination to agriculture land • Long-term contamination in surrounding environment	Assessment • 23 submissions objected to the project expressing concern about pollution and contamination to surrounding landscape from the project, including Bisphenol A (BPA) nanoparticles from wind turbines. • Wind turbine blades and all other associated componentry of the wind turbine complies with all applicable Australian Standards relating to hazardous materials. Even though the blades have a protective non-toxic coating the physical condition of the blades would be monitored as part of the routine operations of the wind farm. Any damaged blades would result in repairs or replacement. • During construction, there is a risk for soil to become contaminated through accidental chemical or fuel spills, leaks from construction plant and equipment and from inappropriate storage of hazardous materials. The ground disturbance would be limited to locations for temporary construction facilities and permanent operational infrastructure. Noting the minimal level of ground disturbance required for the project, Goldwind has identified that the risk of exposing contaminated land during construction of the project is low. All areas impacted during construction would be sealed or rehabilitated and landscaped to prevent soil erosion. • The Department considers the site would be suitable for the proposed development and that the proposed mitigation is sufficient to minimise risks. Recommended Conditions Comply with Section 120 of the POEO Act.

Appendix I - Assessment of Matters of National Environmental Significance

In accordance with the Bilateral Agreement with the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (AG DCCEEW), the Department provides the following additional information required by the Commonwealth Minister, in deciding whether to approve a proposed action (i.e. the project) under the EPBC Act.

The Department's assessment has been prepared based on the assessment contained in the Baldon Wind Farm Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), submissions report, amendment report, revised Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) and additional information provided during the assessment process, public submissions, and advice provided by CPHR, other NSW government agencies and the Commonwealth DCCEEW.

This Appendix is supplementary to, and should be read in conjunction with, the assessment included in Section 6.3 of this report, which includes consideration of impacts to listed threatened species and communities, and mitigation and offsetting measures for threatened species and communities, including Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES).

Controlled Action Decision – 2024/09772

On 27 May 2024, the Baldon Wind Farm was determined to be a Controlled Action by the Australian Government (AG) DCCEEW for the controlling provision of listed threatened species and communities. The Commonwealth Referral Decision (2024/09772) (Referral Decision) was based on likely significant impacts to:

- Plains-wanderer (*Pedionomus torquatus*) - Critically Endangered
- Winged Peppercreep (Lepidium monoplacoides) - Endangered
- Mossiel Daisy (*Brachyscome papillosa*) - Vulnerable

Additionally, the AG DCCEEW identified there was some risk that there may be impacts on the following matters:

- Pink Cockatoo (eastern) (*Lophochroa leadbeateri leadbeateri*) - Endangered
- Southern Bell Frog (*Litoria raniformis*) - Vulnerable
- Blue-winged Parrot (*Neophema chrysostoma*) - Vulnerable
- Southern Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*) - Vulnerable
- Chariot Wheels (*Maireana cheelii*) - Vulnerable
- Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains – Critically Endangered
- Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) - Critically Endangered

- Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) - Critically Endangered
- Australasian Bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*) - Endangered
- Australian Painted Snipe (*Rostratula australis*) - Endangered
- South-eastern Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*) – Endangered
- Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) - Endangered
- Grey Falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*) - Vulnerable
- Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*) - Vulnerable
- Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*) - Vulnerable
- Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*) - Vulnerable
- Brown Treecreeper (south-eastern) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*) - Vulnerable
- Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) - Vulnerable
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*) – Vulnerable
- Trout Cod (*Maccullochella macquariensis*) – Endangered
- Murray Cod (*Maccullochella peelii*) – Vulnerable
- Koala (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory) (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) - Endangered
- Corben's Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus corbeni*) – Vulnerable.
- Grey Snake (*Hemiaspis damelii*) – Endangered
- Slender Darling-pea, Slender Swainson, Murray Swainson-pea (*Swainsona murrayana*) – Vulnerable

All entities identified above as requiring an assessment were considered in Goldwind's EIS (in particular the EPBC Act Matters of National Significant Report) as outlined in the following sections.

The following threatened entities NOT identified in referral decision EPBC 2024/097722 were added to the list of species and communities in the BDAR that have the potential to be impacted:

- A Spike-rush (*Eleocharis obicis*)
- Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*)
- Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)
- Yellow Wagtail (*Motacila flava*)
- Caspian Tern (*Hydroporgne caspia*)

- Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*)
- Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)
- Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*)
- Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)

The following threatened entities identified in referral decision EPBC 2024/09722 were considered and excluded from the BDAR based on targeted survey outcomes or exclusion by habitat constraints or geographic limitations in the BAM-C:

- Winged Peppercreep (*Lepidium monoplocoides*)
- Australasian Bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*)
- Brown Treecreeper (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)
- Grey Falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*)
- Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*)
- Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)
- Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*)
- Australian Painted Snipe (*Rostratula australis*)
- Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*)
- Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)
- Trout Cod (*Maccullochella macquariensis*)
- Grey Snake (*Hemiaspis damelii*)

Although not recorded on site, some of the abovementioned fauna species have ecosystem credits generated through associated PCTs as habitat surrogates in the BAM-C.

Impacts on EPBC Listed Threatened Species and Communities

Section 6.3 of this report describes the biodiversity assessment undertaken for the project and the resulting BDAR.

All entities that were identified as requiring an assessment of significance were assessed.

Table 14 provides a summary of the likelihood of occurrence for each of the remaining species identified above by the Commonwealth DCCEEW as requiring consideration.

Table 14 | Impacts on MNES entities considered likely to occur

Entity	Conservation Status	Likelihood of Occurrence	Comments
Threatened Ecological Communities			
Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains	CEEC	Recorded	• TEC associated with areas of PCT 46 which occurs within the project site. • Direct removal of 1.12 ha of PCT 46. • Impacts would be offset through the retirement of 59 ecosystem credits. • CPHR considered that the amount of this community to be impacted is small at the state and national scale, however the project would reduce the extent of the community in the landscape and a slight increase in fragmentation at a local scale.
Threatened Flora Species			
Mossgiel Daisy (<i>Brachyscome papilosa</i>)	V	Recorded	• Direct impacts from removal of 295 ha of habitat. • Impacts to the species would be offset as species credits. • CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the local, state and national level.
A Spike-rush (<i>Eleocharis obicis</i>)	V	Assumed present	• Not recorded during targeted surveys due to conditions being too dry. The species was recorded incidentally and was assumed present. • Direct impacts from removal of 53.73 ha of assumed habitat. • Impacts to the species would be offset as species credits. • CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the local, state and national level.
Chariot Wheels (<i>Maireana cheelii</i>)	V	Recorded	• Recorded as scattered populations in the mid southern portion of the Subject Land, ranging from scattered individuals to small patches of 10-500 individuals • Direct impacts from the removal of 62.66 ha of habitat.

Entity	Conservation Status	Likelihood of Occurrence	Comments
			- Impacts to the species would include direct loss of individuals and habitat within the development footprint. - Impacts to the species would be offset as species credits. - CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the state and national level.
Slender Darling-pea (<i>Swainsona murrayana</i>)	V	Recorded, assumed present	- Seven individuals were recorded in PCT 164. - Assumed present in a small area of PCT 164 that was not surveyed. - Impacts to the species would be offset as species credits. - CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the local, state and national level.
Threatened Fauna Species			
Southern Whiteface (<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>)	V	Recorded	- A total of 2,811.99 ha of suitable habitat occurs within the project site in PCTs 15, 17, 28, 46, 57, 153, 159, 160, 163 and 164. - Direct impact to 769.09 ha of suitable habitat. - The BDAR identified the species is ground foraging, therefore the risk of collision from operating turbines is low. - Impacts to the species would be offset as ecosystem credits. - CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the local, state and national level.
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (<i>Calidris acuminata</i>)	V, M	Not recorded	- The species is migratory and is not restricted to the project site. - CPHR considered that there would be a low risk of turbine collision, and the project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the species at a local, state and national level.

Entity	Conservation Status	Likelihood of Occurrence	Comments
Curlew Sandpiper (<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>)	CE, M	Not recorded	- The species is migratory and is not restricted to the project site. - CPHR considered that there would be a low risk of turbine collision, and the project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the species at a local, state and national level.
Latham's Snipe (<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>)	V, M	Not recorded	- The species is migratory and is not restricted to the subject land. - CPHR considered that there would be a low risk of turbine collision, and the project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the species at a local, state and national level.
Southern Bell Frog (<i>Litoria raniformis</i>)	V	Recorded	- Impacts to 37 ha of suitable habitat. No habitat locations would be directly impacted. - May be subject to prescribed impacts when moving across the landscape during rainfall events. - Impacts to the species would be offset as species credits. - CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the state or national level.
Pink Cockatoo (eastern) (<i>Lophochroa leadbeateri</i>)	E	Recorded	- A total of 102.33 ha of suitable habitat would be impacted by the project (PCTs 15, 28, 57, 153, 159 and 163). - The BDAR identified the species would be offset as ecosystem credits under the BAM, as no breeding was observed within the subject land. - The BDAR considered that the risk of collision from a turbine was high for the species. - Impacts to the species would be offset as ecosystem credits. - CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the state or national level.

Entity	Conservation Status	Likelihood of Occurrence	Comments
Hooded Robin (<i>Melanodryas cucullata cucullata</i>)	E	Not recorded	- Assumed present due to foraging habitat. - Impacts to the species would be offset as ecosystem credits. - CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the local, state or national level.
Blue-winged Parrot (<i>Neophema chrysostoma</i>)	V	Recorded	- Recorded twice during surveys. - Direct impact from removal of 769.35 ha of suitable habitat (PCTs 15, 17 28, 46, 57, 153, 159, 160, 163 and 164). - The BDAR identified moderate risk of turbine collision during operation. - Impacts to the species would be offset as ecosystem credits. - CPHR identified risk of turbine collision during operation of the project. - CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the local, state or national level.
Corbens-Long-eared Bat (<i>Nyctophilus corbeni</i>)	V	Recorded	- Species group was recorded within the subject land. - Assumed present foraging habitat. - The BDAR identified that the risk of collision from a turbine is considered moderate. - The Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan would minimise and manage project impacts during operations. - Impacts to the species would be offset as ecosystem credits. - CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the local, state or national level.
Plains-wanderer (<i>Pedionomus torquatus</i>)	CE	Recorded	22 birds recorded in the subject land including breeding birds. - The project would directly impact over 647 ha of habitat (28% of available habitat in the subject land), however no mapped important habitat would be impacted. - The species suitable habitat within the subject land comprises of PCTs 46, 163

Entity	Conservation Status	Likelihood of Occurrence	Comments
			and 164. Potential area of impact of PCT 163 and PCT 164 makes up approximately 604.68 ha, totalling 647.77 ha with PCT 46. - The BDAR identified indirect impacts would include reduced habitat quality in adjacent vegetation due to edge effects, noise impacts, transport of weeds and pathogens, loss of breeding habitat, and increase in predator. - The BDAR considered that there would be no significant impact to the species. - CPHR considered that the project would likely have a significant impact at the local level. - CPHR noted that the project would reduce occupancy by 2%, which is not considered significant nationally. - Impacts to the species would be offset as ecosystem credits.
Diamond Firetail (<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>)	V	Not recorded	49.54 ha of associated habitat (PCT 28, PCT 46 and PCT 57) would be directly impacted by the project. - Impacts would be offset as ecosystem credits. - CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the local, state or national level.
Common Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>)	E, M	Not recorded	- Not recorded within the subject land. - CPHR identified a low risk of turbine collision. - CPHR considered that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact at the local, state and national level.

Impacts on threatened ecological communities

As described in Section 6 of this report, Goldwind has generally focused on avoidance of impacts through site selection and avoidance of higher quality native (threatened) vegetation and habitat during the preliminary design process for the project. This work has focussed largely on avoiding impacts to areas of Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains CEEC.

Notwithstanding, the action would result in the clearance of approximately 1.12 ha of the Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains TEC. The assessment of significance contained within the MNES Assessment concluded that whilst the project would reduce the extent of the TEC and cause a slight increase in fragmentation, there would be no significant residual impact from the project on the TEC.

Goldwind would offset the residual biodiversity impacts of the action in accordance with the requirements of NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme. The Department considers that impacts to this community would be appropriately offset via the ecosystem credit requirements detailed in **Section 6.3** of this report. The Department has recommended conditions and additional measures to avoid or minimise impacts on threatened ecological communities as detailed in **Section 6.3.10** of this report.

Impacts on threatened flora species

Two flora species (Mossgiel Daisy and Chariot Wheels) was recorded during targeted surveys in the project area. Three threatened flora species Bindweed, A Spike-rush, and Slender Darling Pea were unable to be surveyed. The Department considers that the species identified would be appropriately offset via the species and ecosystem credit requirements detailed in **Section 6.3** of this report. The Department has recommended conditions and additional measures to avoid or minimise impacts on threatened flora species as detailed in **Section 6.3.4**.

Impacts on threatened fauna species

Goldwind determined that there is predicted habitat or identified known habitat within the project area for nine threatened fauna species listed under the EPBC Act. Assessments of significance were carried out for these species, summarised in the BDAR (9 September 2025).

The assessments of significance for these species determined that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact on any threatened fauna species, with the exception of the critically endangered Plains-wanderer. While the project would avoid impact to mapped important habitat for the Plains-wanderer, 647.77 ha of suitable habitat (PCTs 46, 163 and 164) would be directly impacted.

The Department considers that the species identified would be appropriately offset via the credit requirements detailed in **Section 6.3.5** of this report. The Department has recommended conditions and additional measures to avoid or minimise impacts on threatened fauna species as detailed in **Section 6.3.10** of this report.

Conservation Advice

In its MNES assessment, Goldwind has appropriately referred to the Conservation Advice for Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains CEEC, Mossgiel Daisy (*Brachyscome papillosa*), Spike-rush

(*Eleocharis obicis*), Chariot Wheels (*Maireana cheelii*), Slender Darling-pea (*Swainsona murrayana*), Southern Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*), Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*), Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*), Pink Cockatoo (*Lophochroa leadbeateri*), South-eastern Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*), Blue-winged Parrot (*Neophema chrysostoma*), Corben's Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus corbeni*), Plains-wanderer (*Pedionomus torquatus*), Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*), and Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*).

The Department notes the key threats to species and communities include landscape fragmentation, introduction of weeds, competition for land, infection of amphibians with chytrid fungus, habitat degradation (particularly by rabbits, unmanaged goats, and feral pigs), climate change, disease transmission (particularly by feral pigs), biological effects associated with invasive species and predations (particularly by feral cats and foxes).

The Department's recommended conditions require Goldwind to prepare and implement a Biodiversity Management Plan detailing how these risks would be minimised and managed, including measures to:

- ensure the development does not adversely affect the native vegetation and habitat outside the disturbance footprint;
- minimise the clearing of native vegetation and habitat within the disturbance footprint;
- minimise the impacts of the development on threatened flora and fauna species within the disturbance footprint and its surrounds;
- rehabilitate and revegetate temporary disturbance areas;
- protect native vegetation and key fauna habitat outside the approved disturbance footprint;
- maximise the salvage of resources within the approved disturbance footprint - including vegetative and soil resources - for beneficial reuse (such as fauna habitat enhancement) during the rehabilitation and revegetation of the project area;
- collect and propagate seed (where relevant);
- control weeds and feral pests;
- control erosion; and
- manage bushfire.

Goldwind would be required to prepare the Biodiversity Management Plan in consultation with CPHR, and ensure the plan is prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced biodiversity expert.

In addition, Goldwind is required to ensure impacts on species and communities are avoided and minimised, where practicable during detailed design, and offset the residual biodiversity impacts of the project in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme.

Recovery Plans

Recovery plans for species including the Chariot Wheels, Southern Bell Frog and the Plains-wanderer were referenced in the BDAR. Recovery Plans have generally been referenced to inform the identification of areas of important habitat for these species.

Threat Abatement Plans

The relevant Threat Abatement Plans that apply to the project include:

- Threat abatement plan for predation, habitat degradation, competition and disease transmission by feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*) (Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy, 2017);
- *Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats* (Australian Government Department of the Environment, 2015);
- *Threat abatement plan for predation by the European red fox* (Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2008);
- Threat abatement plan for infection of amphibians with chytrid fungus relating in chytridiomycosis (Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy, 2016);
- *Threat abatement plan for competition and land degradation by rabbits* (Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy, 2016); and
- *Threat abatement plan for competition and land degradation by unmanaged goats* (Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2008).

The Department has included measures for the control of feral animals under the recommended Biodiversity Management Plan for the project, including specific requirements for Goldwind to consider the actions identified in relevant Threat Abatement Plans. With these measures in place, the Department considers that the action can be carried out in a manner which is compatible with the relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Subject to the recommended conditions, the Department considers that the project can be carried out in a manner that is consistent with the relevant conservation advice, recovery plans and threat abatement plans.

Review of EPBC listed threatened species and communities

Table 15 provides a detailed review of whether the assessment documentation (i.e. the EIS, submissions report, amendment report and revised BDAR) includes all relevant required information.

Table 15 | CPHR advice to the Department on EPBC Act listed threatened species and communities

BALDON WIND FARM (SSD-40138508)

PROJECT ASSESSMENT OF EPBC ACT LISTED THREATENED SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES

South West Planning Team, Regional Delivery, Conservation Programs Heritage and Regulation

27 October 2025

Table 1: CPHR officer project advice to DPHI on EPBC Act listed threatened species and communities.

Requirement	Information	Reference /BAM/ BLA ¹ BDAR
Background & Description of Action	Does the EIS/BDAR²• ☑ clearly show how operational and construction footprints including clearing boundaries, structures to be built and elements of the action are situated with regard to MNES ☑ depict stages and timing of the action that may impact on MNES ☑ provide a map(s) of the subject land boundary showing the final proposal/disturbance footprint with respect to location of MNES, including GIS shape files. Include references to where this detail is provided.	BAM Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 8 BDAR (Final V2.1 dated 09/09/2025)
	Provide advice on the adequacy of the background and action description with respect to MNES and identify any recommended additional information requirements: The project was reviewed by Conservation Programs Heritage and Regulation (CPHR) for compliance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM), including the proponent's use of the credit calculator (the Calculator) to produce a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR). CPHR had ongoing consultation with the BAM assessors and Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (C'wth DCCEEW) officers during the preparation of the BDAR and RTS phase. CPHR considers the BDAR adequately describes the project that includes: (i) operational and construction footprints, (ii) structures to be built, (iii) elements of the action in relation to MNES. The project is proposed to be constructed in two stages and these stages have been adequately described and impacts for each stage are separately documented in the BDAR for MNES. GIS shapefiles and maps have been provided to CPHR/DPHI by the proponent that represent MNES matters and can be provided if required.	BDAR Chapter 4, 5 and BDAR Appendix L.4, L.5, L.8 and L.9.

	Chapter 7, Figures 7-9 to 7-11 (and Appendix L.8 and L.9 for Atlas series), shows construction footprint including EPBC Act species and communities for both Stage 1 and Stage 2. Chapter 7, Figures 7-12, shows operation footprint. Chapter 4, Figure 4-12 and 4-13 (and Appendix L.4 and L.5 for Atlas series) show the known and assumed present EPBC Act species in relation to the construction footprint. Chapter 5, Figure 5-1 shows the location of TECs in the subject land including the construction footprint.	
Landscape Context of the MNES	Provide advice on the adequacy of the landscape context information and identify any additional information requirements: The proposal is for the construction and operation of the Baldon Wind Farm which is a new wind farm consisting of 175 wind turbine (WTGs) generators as well associated access tracks, transmission lines, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and construction and operational facilities impacting about 795 hectares of the 45,259 hectare project area. The proposal, including the wind farm site and the transport route cover a single IBRA region being the Riverina Bioregion and all impacts to native vegetation (795 hectares) occurs in the Murrumbidgee IBRA subregion. CPHR confirms that details on landscape context have been undertaken in accordance with BAM requirements and the landscape assessment meets the requirements of Stage 1 (s3 and 4.1) of the BAM. The selection of a single IBRA subregion for BAM-C calculation purpose is consistent with guidance provided in Section 2.2.1 of the Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 Operational Manual – Stage 1.	BAM Section 3.1 BLA clause 7.4 BDAR (Final V2.1 dated 09/09/2025). BDAR Chapter 2.
EPBC Act Listed Threatened Species & Communities	Verify that the EIS/BDAR includes relevant information on the identification of all EPBC Act listed threatened species and communities on the site or in the vicinity³ via ☒ field based survey effort ☒ published peer reviewed literature ☐ local data ☒ supporting databases (such as the NSW BioNet Vegetation Classification, NSW BioNet Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection, NSW BioNet Atlas, Commonwealth Species Profile and Threats Database search results) Verify that the EIS/BDAR includes appropriate mapping of all EPBC Act listed threatened species and communities in accordance with the relevant Commonwealth Listing Advice. The EIS/BDAR should include important populations and critical habitat as defined in Approved Listing Advice, Approved Conservation Advice and Recovery Action Plans. Provide advice on the adequacy of the identification methods and mapping information / any additional information requirements: Chapter 5, Figure 5-1 shows the location of TECs in the subject land including the construction footprint. Section 5.2.1 provides an adequate assessment of TECs against the Approved Listing Advice for the Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains. While Table 11-5 and 11-6 of the BDAR outlines the MNES entities that will be impacted, some ecosystem credit MNES species are missing or have incorrect credits reported in this table but are included in the BAM-C credit reports. CPHR have accounted for the omissions in the BDAR and included all impacted species in Table 2 of this document.	BAM Chapters 4 and 5 BDAR (Final V2.1 dated 09/09/2025). BDAR s4 and s5

	The assessment of species and communities excluded (Appendix B.2) because they do not occur on or near the site is supported by robust analysis and justification. The assessment of species and communities included/excluded were justified with supporting evidence including targeted survey effort consistent with industry guidelines and vegetation integrity plots to classify plant community types and TECs. With the exception of databases searches over the project area, no local data was collected. However, wet benchmark data was applied to come PCTs due to rainfall being above the wet condition benchmarks thresholds for some of the survey periods. Supporting databases were used to inform the BDAR. A list of databases used is provided in Section 1.4 of the BDAR.	
	Confirm that all EPBC Act listed threatened species and communities that occur on the subject land, or in the vicinity, have been identified in the BDAR/EIS including those that are ecosystem credit species. If any species and communities identified in the referral documentation (provided by DAWE) have been ruled out because they don't occur on or near the site, verify that there is robust analysis and justification for why these species can be ruled out. Provide advice on whether there are any other MNES species or communities that are missing from the assessment based on BCS knowledge and experience. The following threatened entities NOT identified in referral decision EPBC 2024/09722 were added to the list of species and communities in the BDAR that have associated PCTs and/or known habitat that will be impacted (ecosystem and/or species credits): • A Spike-rush (<i>Eleocharis obicis</i>) The following migratory species NOT identified in referral decision EPBC 2024/09722 were added to the list of species in the BDAR known and likely to occur that will have potential habitat impacted or have potential to be impacted by turbine collision: • Marsh Sandpiper (<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>) • Wood Sandpiper (<i>Tringa glareola</i>) • Yellow Wagtail (<i>Motacilla flava</i>) • Caspian Tern (<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>) • Pectoral Sandpiper (<i>Calidris melanotos</i>) • Common Sandpiper (<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>) • Fork-tailed Swift (<i>Apus pacificus</i>) • Gull-billed Tern (<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>) The following threatened entities identified in referral decision EPBC 2024/09722 were considered and excluded from the BDAR based on targeted survey outcomes or exclusion by habitat constraints or geographic limitations in the BAM-C: • Winged Peppercreess (<i>Lepidium monoplocoides</i>) • Australasian Bittern (<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>) • Brown Treecreeper (<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>)	BDAR (Final V2.1 dated 09/09/2025). Appendix B.2 and B.3

- Grey Falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*)
- Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*)
- Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)
- Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*)
- Australian Painted Snipe (*Rostratula australis*)
- Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*)
- Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)
- Trout Cod (*Maccullochella macquariensis*)
- Grey Snake (*Hemiaspis damelii*)

The following TECs, listed and migratory species were NOT identified in referral decision EPBC 2024/09722 but were considered in the BDAR based on the Protected Matters Search Tool and/or BAM-C and then excluded from further assessment based on targeted survey outcomes and lack of suitable habitats:

- A Speargrass (*Austrostipa metatoris*)
- A spear grass (*Austrostipa wakoolica*)
- A Burr-daisy (*Calotis moorei*)
- Menindee Nightshade (*Solanum karsense*)
- Yellow Swainson-pea (*Swainsona pyrophila*)
- Buloke woodland of the Riverina and Murray Darling Depression bioregion
- Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) grassy woodlands and derived native grasslands of southern eastern Australia
- Plains mallee box woodlands of the Murray Darling Depression, Riverina and Naracoorte Coastal Plain bioregions
- Weeping Myall Woodlands
- White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)
- Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*)
- Regent Parrot (*Polytelis anthopeplus monarchoides*)
- Satin Flycatcher (*Myiagra cyanoleuca*)
- Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*)
- Sloanes Froglet (*Crinia sloanei*)
- Silver Perch (*Bidyanus bidyanus*)
- Flathead Galaxias (*Galaxias rostratus*)
- Macquarie Perch (*Macquaria australasica*)
- Pink-tailed Legless Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*)

Advise whether there is appropriate justification and supporting evidence for the addition and/or exclusion of any EPBC Act listed threatened species and/or communities from the list (if applicable):

	Threatened species and communities included/excluded from the assessment were done so based on habitat constraints and/or survey results. A significant impact assessment <i>has not</i> been provided for the following MNES entities listed in the Controlled Action determination because they were not recorded on site during BUS or targeted surveys: • Winged Peppercreep (<i>Lepidium monoplocoides</i>) • Australasian Bittern (<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>) • Brown Treecreeper (<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>) • Grey Falcon (<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>) • Painted Honeyeater (<i>Grantiella picta</i>) • Swift Parrot (<i>Lathamus discolor</i>) • Malleefowl (<i>Leipoa ocellata</i>) • Australian Painted Snipe (<i>Rostratula australis</i>) • Diamond Firetail (<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>) • Koala (<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>) • Trout Cod (<i>Maccullochella macquariensis</i>) • Grey Snake (<i>Hemiaspis damelii</i>) Although not recorded on site, the fauna species listed above, some have ecosystem credits generated through associated PCTs as habitat surrogates in the BAM-C (see Table 2).	
Avoidance, Minimisation, Mitigation & Management	Verify that the EIS/BDAR demonstrates all feasible alternatives and efforts to avoid and minimise impacts on EPBC Act listed threatened species and communities (including direct, indirect and prescribed impacts) including an analysis of alternative: • ☒ designs and engineering solutions • ☒ modes or technologies • ☒ routes and locations of facilities • ☒ sites within the subject site • ☒ Verify that the EIS/BDAR identifies any other site constraints in determining the location and design of the proposal (such as bushfire protection requirements, flood planning levels, servicing constraints, etc) Verify that the EIS/BDAR provides feasible measures to mitigate and/or manage impacts on EPBC Act listed threatened species and communities (including direct, indirect and prescribed impacts) including: • ☒ techniques, timing, frequency and responsibility- • ☒ identify measures for which there is risk of failure • ☒ evaluate the risk and consequence of any residual impacts • ☒ any adaptive management strategy proposed to monitor and respond to impacts	BAM Chapters 6, 7 and 8 BLA clause 7.1

Provide advice on whether all feasible impact avoidance, minimisation, mitigation and management measures have been considered and are adequately justified: A tiered approach to biodiversity constraints assessment was completed in the initial stages of project planning to map 'avoid' and 'avoid if possible' biodiversity values. The proponent has worked to reduce overall impacts to native vegetation, though opportunities are minimal in the local setting where most vegetation is native. Section 7 of the BDAR outlines and demonstrates the steps used to avoid and minimise impacts to biodiversity, including MNES. This includes changes to the design of the proposal (s7.1.3) based on high biodiversity constraints including, but not limited to: • Avoiding dense populations of <i>Brachyscome papillosa</i> • Reducing fragmentation for Plains-wanderer at detected sighting locations. • Minimised new access tracks and used existing access tracks as priority to reduce fragmentation to Plains-wanderer • Moving access tracks to avoid population of <i>Swainsona murrayana</i>. • Avoidance of impacts to farm dams that provide habitat for Southern Bell Frog. • Avoiding impacts to 12 HBTs and preventing further fragmentation in good condition woodland (PCT 15) for threatened woodland species such as Pink Cockatoo. Figure 7-7 shows areas that were added or removed to the layout of the Project to avoid the high constraint areas. Section 8.6 outlines the impacts specifically to MNES and Table 8-9 summaries the potential impacts, the extent of impact within the different stages and the duration of impact for MNES. Mitigation measures are outlined in Section 9 and summarised in Table 9-1 for direct, indirect and prescribed impacts. This includes: • Proposed techniques, timing, frequency and responsibility for implementing the measures • Risk of failure • Analysis of consequences of any residual impacts Table 9-1 s9.2 of the BDAR provides information on mitigation measures for general measures and some species-specific measures. Adaptive Management Strategies are outlined in Section 9.2, including: • A Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan (Section 9.2.1) • Southern Bell Frog Adaptive Management Plan (Section 9.2.2) • Plains-wanderer Adaptive Management Plan (Section 9.2.3) There is limited modes and technologies or design and engineering solutions that are relevant or specific to MNES.	Revised BDAR Table 101 to 103 and s12.1.4 BDAR (Final V2.1 dated 09/09/2025). Avoidance and minimisation of impacts in s7 and Figure 7-7. Mitigation in s9 including Table 9-1 and s9.2
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Impact Assessment	Verify that the EIS/BDAR: ☒ identifies the residual adverse impacts likely to occur to each EPBC Act listed threatened species and/or community after the proposed avoidance and mitigation measures are taken into account ☒ provides adequate justification and evidence for the predicted level of impact, with reference to the: - Commonwealth's Significant Impact Guideline https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/42f84df4-720b-4dcf-b262-48679a3aba58/files/nes-guidelines_1.pdf - DPIE Guidance to Assist a Decision-Maker to Determine a Serious and Irreversible Impact (SAIL): (https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/42184df4-720b-4dcf-b262-48679a3aba58/files/nes-guidelines_1.pdf)	BAM Chapters 8 and 9 BLA clauses 6.2(b)(i)-(ii) and 7.1
Requirement	Information	Reference /BAM/ BLA ¹
	Complete the following information for each EPBC Act listed threatened species and/or community (add/remove rows as necessary): - EPBC Act listed threatened species and/or community - nature and consequences of impacts (i.e direct and indirect) - duration of impact (e.g. construction, operation, life of project) - quantum of impact - consequences of impacts on the species, the population and/ or extent of the community at local, state and national scales Confirm the level of predicted impact (cross appropriate): ☒ high risk of impact (requiring offsets)* or SAIL ☐ Low risk of impact (not requiring offsets) *For purposes of EPBC approval, as a minimum, significant adverse residual impacts must be offset (significant impact can be evaluated with reference to the significance impact guidelines) Provide advice on whether adequate justification and evidence is provided for species and communities that have been identified as being at low risk of impact. Table 8-9 of the BDAR outlines the MNES species at risk of impact including: - The name of the entity - The EPBC Act listing of the entity - The potential impacts including direct and indirect - The extent of impact in ha per stage of the Project - The duration of the impact - The AoS results (if it is significant or not) All MNES species at risk of impact by the proposal were assessed in accordance with the <i>Significant Impact Guidelines</i> (DoE, 2013) in Appendix B.3. Assessments of significance were completed 17 entities including one CEEC and 16 threatened species. While application of the MNES significant impact guidelines has determined that Project is unlikely to significantly impact on any MNES,	BDAR (Final V2.1 dated 09/09/2025. AoS in Appendix B.3. S8.6 and Table 8-9.

CPHR does not agree with the outcome of the significance assessment for Plains wanderer. - CPHR has recommended that a potential Serious and Irreversible Impacts (SII) to Plains-wanderer is likely under BC Act. - CPHR notes that the proponent has committed to a long-term Plains-wanderer Management Plan as part of mitigation of uncertain construction and operational impacts of the project, including indirect and prescribed impacts. Section 8.6 and provides a detailed summary of MNES with potential for impact within the subject land.			
MNES entity	Local consequence	State consequence	National consequence
Threatened Ecological Communities			
Natural Grassland of the Murray Valley Plains	The project will reduce the extent of the community in the landscape and a slight increase in fragmentation.	Current extent in NSW is about 120,000 hectares. The amount of this community to be impacted is small in the context of the NSW community occurrence (0.00009% of the estimated NSW extent).	Current national extent of about 153,000-168,000 hectares. The amount of this community to be impacted is small in the context of the NSW and national community occurrence.
Threatened flora			
Mossgiel Daisy (<i>Brachyscome papillosa</i>)	Extensive numbers and areas <i>Brachyscome papillosa</i> were recorded in ranging from scattered individuals to dense patches containing up to 1,000 individuals over 295 ha. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Widespread in NSW on the Hay Plains. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact
A Spike-rush (<i>Eleocharis obicis</i>)	Small occurrences in and mostly outside the development footprint. About 53 ha of assumed habitat in the footprint and other areas outside the footprint not impacted. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Occurs within the south west plains of NSW in locations including the Lachlan River Floodplain, near Condobolin and near Hay. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.
Chariot Wheels (<i>Maireana cheelii</i>)	Recorded as scattered populations in the mid southern portion of the Subject Land, ranging from scattered individuals to small patches of 10-500 individuals (62 ha).	Due to the small proportion to be impacted in regard to the entire Project Area (0.14%), it is likely that the species would still be able persist within the broader Project Area in similar	Unlikely to have a significant impact.

		Widespread records across the site and broader locality.	suitable habitats. Unlikely to have a significant impact.		
	Slender Darling-pea (<i>Swainsona murrayana</i>)	Seven individuals recorded in PCT 164, as well as being assumed present in 0.17ha of PCT 164 that was unable to be surveyed. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Widespread in NSW on the Hay Plains and in woodland in the central west and into central Victoria. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	
	Threatened fauna				
	Southern Whiteface (<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>)	Species recorded in the subject land. Other records in similar habitat in the region. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	
	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (<i>Calidris acuminata</i>)	Species not recorded in subject land and no waterbodies being impacted. Low risk of turbine collision.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	
	Curlew Sandpiper (<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>)	Species not recorded in subject land and no waterbodies being impacted. Low risk of turbine collision.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	
	Latham's Snipe (<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>)	Species not recorded in subject land and no waterbodies being impacted. Low risk of turbine collision.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	
	Southern Bell Frog (<i>Litoria raniformis</i>)	134 ha of suitable habitat of which 37 ha will be impacted. Species recorded at 30 locations. None of 31 habitat locations will be directly impacted. May be subject to prescribed impacts when moving across landscape during rainfall events.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	
	Pink Cockatoo (<i>Lophochroa leadbeateri</i>)	Recorded multiple time in the subject land and 30 times during bird utilisation surveys. No active nests recorded in the subject land but are in the wider project	Loss of suitably sized nest trees but no known nest trees. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	

		area. Potential risk of turbine collision.			
	Hooded Robin (<i>Melanodryas cucullata cucullata</i>)	Not recorded within the subject land. Assumed present foraging habitat. There are similar areas of habitat widespread in the region. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	
	Blue-winged Parrot (<i>Neophema chrysostoma</i>)	Recorded twice during bird utilisation surveys. Risk of turbine collision during operation.	Migratory and at-risk during migration to turbine collision. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	
	Corbens- Long-eared Bat (<i>Nyctophilus corbeni</i>)	Species group of <i>Nyctophilus</i> recorded within the subject land. Assumed present foraging habitat. There are similar areas of habitat widespread in the region. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	
	Plains-wanderer (<i>Pedionomus torquatus</i>)	22 birds recorded in the subject land including breeding birds and over 647 ha of habitat (28% of available habitat in subject land) will be directly impacted. CPHR – locally likely to have a significant impact although BDAR reports no significant impact.	BDAR reports unlikely to have a significant impact. However, also reports that project will result in a loss of habitat critical to the survival of the species.	Will reduce occupancy in national context about 6.48 km ² (2%), not considered significant nationally.	
	Diamond Firetail (<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>)	Species not recorded in the subject land. Other records in similar habitat in the region. Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	
	Common Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>)	Species not recorded in subject land and no waterbodies being impacted. Low risk of turbine collision.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	Unlikely to have a significant impact.	

The quantum of residual impacts to individual species (ecosystem and species credit species) are documented in Table 2 below.

Offsets	Verify that the EIS/BDAR: ☐ identifies any MNES that haven't been offset using the BAM ☒ identifies how impacts requiring offsets correlate to MNES impacts ☒ identifies the plant community types (PCTs) requiring offset and the number and type of ecosystem credits required for impacts to MNES ☒ identifies threatened species requiring offset and the number of species credits required for impacts to MNES ☒ correctly uses the BAM (and BAM calculator) to identify the number and class of biodiversity credits that need to be offset to achieve a standard of 'no net loss' of biodiversity ☐ identifies if ecological rehabilitation and/or biodiversity conservation actions are proposed for offsetting ☒ if known, identifies any other offsetting approach proposed, such as land-based offsets, retiring credits by payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund and/or through supplementary measures[#] [#]In accordance the BAM there is no longer a requirement to define the offsetting approach at EIS stage. Complete the Impacts and Offsets Summary table below (Table 2) Provide advice on the adequacy of the proposed offsets in meeting the requirements of the BAM: In accordance with the BAM there is no longer a requirement to define the offsetting approach at EIS stage. The project offset requirements will be met through a combination of: - Biodiversity Stewardship Sites strategically located within the impact and adjacent sub-regions to the Inland Rail corridor. - Payments directly to the Biodiversity Conservation Fund. The biodiversity offsets will be finalised prior to project construction impacts occurring.	BAM Chapter 10 BLA clauses 71 and 7.2 BDAR (Final V2.1 dated 09/09/2025). BDAR s11 and 11.1.3 and Appendix B.
Other Considerations	Verify if any relevant Commonwealth guidelines and policy statements are applicable to the action and listed threatened species and/or community, including but not limited to: - International environmental obligations - Recovery Plans - Approved Conservation Advice - Threat Abatement Plans The relevant Commonwealth guidelines and policy statements for each species and community are available at: http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/sprat.pl	BLA clauses 6.2(b)(iv), 7.2(c), 7.3 and 7.4
	For each EPBC Act listed threatened species and/or community, provide advice on whether the assessment has been adequately informed by applicable Commonwealth guidelines and/or policy statements. For example, the interaction between the proposed action and important populations or critical habitat identified in policy documents and/or the interaction between the proposed action and threatening processes or recommended conservation actions outlined in Commonwealth policies and plans. Appendix B.3 (Significant Impact Criteria assessments) of the BDAR includes reference to Commonwealth guidelines and policy statements as well as discussion of populations and important populations (depending on the species listing status). These assessments are made with	BDAR (Final V2.1 dated 09/09/2025). AoS in Appendix B.3.

	reference to recovery plans and other relevant documents where they are available. CPHR considers that the MNES assessment has been partially informed by Commonwealth guidelines and policy statements. <u>International environmental obligations</u> The proponent does not specifically discuss impacts to MNES in relation to Australia's international obligations. However, the proposal site does not impact on any Ramsar wetlands and this is mentioned in relevant assessments for migratory species. <u>Recovery plans</u> Recovery plans for the following entities are referenced in Appendix B.3 of the BDAR: • Chariot Wheels (<i>Maireana cheelii</i>) • Southern Bell Frog (<i>Litoria raniformis</i>) • Plains-wanderer (<i>Pedionomus torquatus</i>). <u>Conservation Advice</u> Recent conservation advice was used to prepare the significance assessments the following entities referenced in Appendix B.3 of the BDAR: • Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains CEEC • Mossgiel Daisy (<i>Brachyscome papillosa</i>) • A Spike-rush (<i>Eleocharis obicis</i>) • Chariot Wheels (<i>Maireana cheelii</i>) • Slender Darling-pea (<i>Swainsona murrayana</i>) • Southern Whiteface (<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>) • Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (<i>Calidris acuminata</i>) • Curlew Sandpiper (<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>) • Latham's Snipe (<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>) • Pink Cockatoo (<i>Lophochroa leadbeateri</i>) • South-eastern Hooded Robin (<i>Melanodryas cucullata cucullata</i>) • Blue-winged Parrot (<i>Neophema chrysostoma</i>) • Corben's Long-eared Bat (<i>Nyctophilus corbeni</i>) • Plains-wanderer (<i>Pedionomus torquatus</i>) • Diamond Firetail (<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>) • Common Greenshank (<i>Tringia nebularia</i>) <u>Threat Abatement Plans (TAPs)</u> Although Threat Abatement Plans are relevant to most species that has significance assessments prepared in the Appendix B.3 of the BDAR, non-specifically reference relevant listed TAPs for each species. However, CPHR that the following TAPs are relevant to species listed in Appendix B.3 of the BDAR.	
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Threatened Species/ Community listed under EPBC Act	Relevant Threat Abatement Plan		
A Spike-rush (<i>Eleocharis obicis</i>)	- Threat abatement plan for competition and land degradation by rabbits. - Threat abatement plan for predation, habitat degradation, competition and disease transmission by feral pigs		
Slender Darling-pea (<i>Swainsona murrayana</i>)	- Threat abatement plan for competition and land degradation by rabbits. - Threat abatement plan for predation, habitat degradation, competition and disease transmission by feral pigs - Threat abatement plan for competition and land degradation by unmanaged goats.		
Southern Whiteface (<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>)	Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats.		
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (<i>Calidris acuminata</i>)	Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats.		
Latham's Snipe (<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>)	- Threat abatement plan for predation by European red fox. - Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats.		
Southern Bell Frog (<i>Litoria raniformis</i>)	- Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats. - Threat Abatement Plan for infection of amphibians with chytrid fungus resulting in chytridiomycosis.		
Pink Cockatoo (<i>Lophochroa leadbeateri</i>)	Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats.		
South-eastern Hooded Robin (<i>Melanodryas cucullata cucullata</i>)	Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats.		
Blue-winged Parrot (<i>Neophema chrysostoma</i>)	Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats.		
Corben's Long-eared Bat (<i>Nyctophilus corbeni</i>)	Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats.		
Plains-wanderer (<i>Pedionomus torquatus</i>)	- Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats. - Threat abatement plan for competition and land degradation by rabbits. - Threat abatement plan for predation, habitat degradation, competition and disease transmission by feral pigs. - Threat abatement plan for predation by European red fox.		
Diamond Firetail (<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>)	Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats.		

Recommended Conditions	Provide advice on any recommended conditions and reasons for imposing the conditions: <u>EPBC Approval 1</u> CPHR recommends an EPBC condition that minimises the impacts of the action on protected matters by not clearing more than the amounts (ha) and credits specified in Tables 11-1, to Table 11-4 of the BDAR dated 09/09/2025. <u>EPBC Approval 2</u> CPHR recommends that any NSW conditions relating specifically to Plains-wanderer be prepared in consultation with the Australian Government DCCEEW because the Project will have potential significant impacts on this species.	BLA clause 6.2(c)(iii)
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¹ Bilateral agreement (BLA) made under section 45 of the EPBC Act, including Amending Agreement No. 1 (2020)

² Or revisions of the BDAR and associated documentation made as a result of previous reviews or project changes post-exhibition.

³ On land to which impacts may extend.

Table 16 | MNES impact and offset summary

Table 2: MNES impact and offset summary for Stage 1 and 2 (combined).

Threatened species/ Community listed under EPBC Act	PCTs associated with the ecosystem credit species / ecological community	Area of impact (ha)	Credits required	Offsetting approach	Reference (EIS, BDAR)
Australian Painted Snipe (<i>Rostratula australis</i>)	PCTs 17 and 160	28.39 ha	804 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 17 - 21 ecosystem credits, • PCT 160 - 783 ecosystem credits	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Australasian Bittern (<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>),	PCTs 17 and 160	28.39 ha	804 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 17 – 21 ecosystem credit, • PCT 160 – 783 ecosystem credits.	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Blue-winged Parrot (<i>Neophema chrysostoma</i>)	PCTs 15, 17, 28, 46, 57, 153, 159, 160, 163 and 164.	769.35 ha	25,926 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 216 ecosystem credit, • PCT 17 – 21 ecosystem credits • PCT 28 – 106 ecosystem credits, • PCT 46 - 1542 ecosystem credits, • PCT 57 – 6 ecosystem credits • PCT 153 – 1628 ecosystem credits, • PCT 159 – 403 ecosystem credits, • PCT 160 – 783 ecosystem credits, • PCT 163 – 157 ecosystem credits, • PCT 164 – 21,064 ecosystem credits.	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Chariot Wheels (<i>Maireana cheelii</i>)	PCTs 28, 46, 153, 159, 163 and 164	62.66 ha	2881 species credits consisting of: • PCT 28 – 23 species credits • PCT 46 – 190 species credits • PCT 153 – 55 species credits • PCT 159 – 24 species credits • PCT 163 – 53 species credits • PCT 164 – 2536 species credits	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Corben's Long-eared Bat (<i>Nyctophilus corbeni</i>)	PCT 28 and 57.	769.35 ha	25,926 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 216 ecosystem credit, • PCT 17 – 21 ecosystem credits • PCT 28 – 106 ecosystem credits, • PCT 46 - 1542 ecosystem credits, • PCT 57 – 6 ecosystem credits	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 4-3, 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C

Threatened species/ Community listed under EPBC Act	PCTs associated with the ecosystem credit species / ecological community	Area of impact (ha)	Credits required	Offsetting approach	Reference (EIS, BDAR)
			• PCT 153 – 1628 ecosystem credits, • PCT 159 – 403 ecosystem credits, • PCT 160 – 783 ecosystem credits, • PCT 163 – 157 ecosystem credits, • PCT 164 – 21,064 ecosystem credits.		
Diamond Firetail (<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>)	PCTs 28, 46 and 57	49.54 ha	1654 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 28 - 106 ecosystem credits, • PCT 46 - 1542 ecosystem credits, • PCT 57 – 6 ecosystem credits	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Grey Falcon (<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>)	PCTs 15, 17, 28, 46, 57, 153, 159, 160, 163 and 164	769.35 ha	25,926 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 216 ecosystem credit, • PCT 17 – 21 ecosystem credits • PCT 28 – 106 ecosystem credits, • PCT 46 - 1542 ecosystem credits, • PCT 57 – 6 ecosystem credits • PCT 153 – 1628 ecosystem credits, • PCT 159 – 403 ecosystem credits, • PCT 160 – 783 ecosystem credits, • PCT 163 – 157 ecosystem credits, • PCT 164 – 21,064 ecosystem credits.	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Mossgiel Daisy (<i>Brachyscome papillosa</i>)	PCTs 15, 17, 46, 153, 159, 160, 163 and 164	295.41 ha	13,532 species credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 49 species credits • PCT 17 – 20 species credits • PCT 46 – 609 species credits • PCT 153 – 269 species credits • PCT 159 – 45 species credits • PCT 160 – 660 species credits • PCT 163 – 4 species credits • PCT 164 – 11,876 species credits	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Painted Honeyeater (<i>Grantiella picta</i>)	PCTs 15, 28 and 57.	16.74 ha	328 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 216 ecosystem credit, • PCT 28 – 106 ecosystem credits, • PCT 57 – 6 ecosystem credits	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C

Threatened species/ Community listed under EPBC Act	PCTs associated with the ecosystem credit species / ecological community	Area of impact (ha)	Credits required	Offsetting approach	Reference (EIS, BDAR)
Pink Cockatoo (<i>Lophochroa leadbeateri</i>)	PCTs 15, 28, 57, 153, 159 and 163 (foraging only).	102.07 ha	2516 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 216 ecosystem credit, • PCT 28 - 106 ecosystem credits, • PCT 57 – 6 ecosystem credits • PCT 153 – 1628 ecosystem credits • PCT 159 – 403 ecosystem credits, • PCT 163 – 157 ecosystem credits.	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Plains-wanderer (<i>Pedionomus torquatus</i>)	PCTs 46, 163, 164	647.77 ha	22,712 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 46 – 1542 ecosystem credits • PCT 163 – 157 ecosystem credits • PCT 164 – 21,064 ecosystem credits.	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Slender Darling-pea (<i>Swainsona murrayana</i>)	PCT 164	0.38 ha	18 species credits for PCT 164.	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Spike-rush (<i>Eleocharis obicis</i>)	PCTs 15, 17, 28, 160 and 163	53.73 ha	1741 species credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 246 species credits • PCT 17 – 24 species credits • PCT 28 – 106 species credits • PCT 160 – 1044 species credits • PCT 163 – 321 species credits	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Southern Bell Frog (<i>Litoria raniformis</i>)	PCTs 15, 28, 46, 153, 159, 160 and 164	37.05 ha	1609 species credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 30 species credits, • PCT 28 – 4 species credits, • PCT 46 – 1 species credit, • PCT 153 – 70 species credits, • PCT 159 – 6 species credits, • PCT 160 – 152 species credits, • PCT 164 – 1346 species credits	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Southern Whiteface (<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>)	PCTs 15, 17, 28, 46, 57, 153, 159, 160, 163 and 164	769.09 ha	25,926 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 216 ecosystem credit, • PCT 17 – 21 ecosystem credits • PCT 28 – 106 ecosystem credits, • PCT 46 - 1542 ecosystem credits, • PCT 57 – 6 ecosystem credits	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C

Threatened species/ Community listed under EPBC Act	PCTs associated with the ecosystem credit species / ecological community	Area of impact (ha)	Credits required	Offsetting approach	Reference (EIS, BDAR)
			• PCT 153 – 1628 ecosystem credits, • PCT 159 – 403 ecosystem credits, • PCT 160 – 783 ecosystem credits, • PCT 163 – 157 ecosystem credits, • PCT 164 – 21,064 ecosystem credits.		
South-eastern Hooded Robin (<i>Melanodryas cucullata cucullata</i>)	PCTs 15, 28 and 57.	16.74 ha	328 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 216 ecosystem credit, • PCT 28 – 106 ecosystem credits, • PCT 57 – 6 ecosystem credits.	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Superb Parrot (<i>Polytelis swainsonii</i>)	PCTs 28 and 46 (foraging only)	49.26 ha	1648 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 28 - 106 ecosystem credits, • PCT 46 - 1542 ecosystem credits.	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
Swift Parrot (<i>Lathamus discolor</i>)	PCT 15 (foraging only)	10.29 ha	216 ecosystem credits for PCT 15.	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C
White-throated Needletail (<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>)	PCTs 15, 17, 46, 159, 160	88.77ha	2965 ecosystem credits consisting of: • PCT 15 – 216 ecosystem credit, • PCT 17 – 21 ecosystem credits, • PCT 46 - 1542 ecosystem credits, • PCT 159 – 403 ecosystem credits, • PCT 160 – 783 ecosystem credits.	Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund or establishment of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site.	BDAR Tables 11-5 and 11-6 and credit reports in Appendix C

TABLE 3: MNES impacted and only listed under the EPBC Act

Threatened Species / Community listed under EPBC Act	PCTs associated with the species / ecological community	Area of Impact (ha)	Credits required	Reference (EIS, BDAR)	Significance
Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains	PCT 46 (high)	1.12 ha	59 ecosystem credits	S8.6.1 and Appendix B3 of BDAR	Unlikely to be significant
Migratory species					
Gull-billed Tern (<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>)	Recorded during BUS surveys in grassland	Low potential for turbine collision risk	None	S5.4, 8.6.3 and Appendix B3 of BDAR	Not significant
Caspian Tern (<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>), Common Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>), Common Sandpiper (<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>), Curlew Sandpiper (<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>) Fork-tailed Swift (<i>Apus pacificus</i>), Latham's Snipe (<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>), Marsh Sandpiper (<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>), Pectoral Sandpiper (<i>Calidris melanotos</i>), Sharp-tailed sandpiper (<i>Calidris acuminata</i>), Wood Sandpiper (<i>Tringa glareola</i>), Yellow Wagtail (<i>Motacilla flava</i>).	N/A. Not recorded	Low potential for turbine collision risk	None	S8.6.2, 8.6.3 and Appendix B3 of BDAR	Not significant

Additional EPBC Act Considerations

Table 17 contains the additional mandatory considerations, factors to be taken into account and factors to have regard to under the EPBC Act that are additional to those already discussed.

Table 17 | Additional considerations for the Commonwealth Minister under the EPBC Act

EPBC Act Section	Considerations	Conclusion
Mandatory considerations		
136(1)b	Economic and social matters are discussed in Section 6.6 of this report.	The project would provide benefits for the local and regional economy and is of public benefit. Up to 400 workers would be required during the construction period. Up to 35 ongoing jobs would be required for operation of the project. Impacts on the local community would primarily occur during the construction period, which has been considered in the assessment report. The recommended conditions require Goldwind to minimise potential traffic and amenity impacts including noise, dust and visual impacts. Key social impacts would also be managed through an Accommodation and Employment Strategy.
3A, 391(2)	Principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD), including the precautionary principle, have been taken into account, in particular: - the long term and short term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations that are relevant to this decision; - conditions that restrict environmental impacts and impose monitoring and adaptive management, reduce any lack of certainty related to the potential impacts of the project; - conditions requiring the project to be delivered and operated in a sustainable way to protect the environment for future generations and conserving the relevant matters of national environmental significance; - advice provided within this report reflects the importance of conserving biological diversity, ecological and cultural integrity in relation to all of the controlling provisions for this project; and - mitigation measures to be implemented which reflect improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms are promoted by placing a financial cost on the proponent to mitigate the environmental impacts of the project.	The Department considers that the project, if undertaken in accordance with the recommended conditions of consent, would be consistent with the principles of ESD.

EPBC Act Section	Considerations	Conclusion
136(2)(e)	Other information on the relevant impacts of the action.	The Department considers that all information relevant to the impacts of the project has been taken into account in its assessment.
139(1)	Requirements for decisions about threatened species and endangered communities	Recovery plans and threat abatement plans are addressed above. Australia's obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (Biodiversity Convention) include the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and technologies, and by appropriate funding. The recommendations of this assessment report are consistent with the Biodiversity Convention, which promotes environmental impact assessment (such as this process) to avoid and minimise adverse impacts on biological diversity. Accordingly, the recommended development consent requires avoidance, mitigation and management measures for listed threatened species, and all information related to the project is required to be publicly available to ensure equitable sharing of information and improved knowledge relating to biodiversity. There are no additional requirements for decisions about threatened species and endangered communities that apply to the project. The Apia convention and CITES are not relevant to the project.
Factors to have regard to		
176(5)	Bioregional plans	There is no approved bioregional plan related to the activity.
Consideration on deciding conditions		
134(4)	Must consider: Information provided by the person proposing to take the action or by the designated applicant of the action; and The desirability of ensuring as far as practicable that the condition is a cost effective means for the Commonwealth and the person taking the action to achieve the object of the condition.	All project related documentation is available on the NSW Planning Portal - www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au. The Department considers that the recommended conditions at Appendix F are a cost effective means of achieving their purpose. The conditions are based on material provided by Goldwind that was prepared in consultation with the Department, CPHR and other government agencies.

Conclusions on Controlling Provisions

The Department considers that effort has been made to avoid and minimise biodiversity impacts as far as practicable through project design. This has been achieved through measures such as locating infrastructure within areas of non-threatened vegetation, adopting buffers for important habitat features and avoiding threatened species habitat. Goldwind has committed to adopt further avoidance wherever practicable as part of the detailed design process.

The Department considers that the recommended condition for a Biodiversity Management Plan and Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan would further minimise the impacts on vegetation and fauna, including the collision risk to birds and bats.

Overall, the Department considers that the biodiversity impacts of the project are acceptable, subject to the implementation of the recommended conditions, offsetting the residual biodiversity impacts of the project, and the provision of minimisation measures to manage impacts to Plains-wanderer.

For the reasons set out in **Section 6.3** of this report and this appendix, the Department considers that the impacts of the action would be acceptable, subject to the avoidance and mitigation measures described in the EIS, amendment report, revised BDAR, and the recommended development consent in **Appendix F**.