

EPBC Act referral



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

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Title of proposal	2019/8589 - Mt Fyans Wind Farm
Section 1	
Summary of your proposed action	
1.1 Project industry type	Energy Generation and Supply (renewable)
1.2 Provide a detailed description of the proposed action, including all proposed activities	
<p>Woolnorth Wind Farm Holding Pty Ltd (the Proponent) is proposing to develop the Mt Fyans Wind Farm (the Project) approximately 140 km's (km) west of Geelong and 4 km north of the town of Mortlake in southwest Victoria. The Project will comprise of a maximum of 85 wind turbines, with a maximum blade tip height of up to 200 metres (m), and a combined capacity of approximately 400 megawatts (MW). The Project also includes infrastructure associated with exporting electricity to the National Electricity Market (NEM) via the nearby Mortlake Terminal Substation. Electrical infrastructure will include onsite and offsite substations and overhead and underground cabling.</p> <p>A Project Plan is provided in Attachment 1 and shows a realistic layout for wind turbines and associated infrastructure. Subject to planning approval, the final project layout will be confirmed during detailed design as part of a secondary consent process.</p> <p>The Project site covers an area of approximately 13,200 ha, within which a Development Area has been nominated. The Development Area comprises of 105 titles covering approximately 3,450 ha, and is the area within which all development will occur. Within the Development Area, three types of Development Envelopes have been identified: turbine, electrical infrastructure and ancillary. The use of Development Envelopes allows for the design and siting of assets and works to respond to specific topographic and land use characters whilst avoiding adverse impacts to environmental and cultural values. Works exclusion areas have also been established within development envelopes to protect all specific ecological or cultural values.</p> <p>The three types of development envelopes are summarised below.</p> <p>Turbine Development Envelope The Turbine Development Envelope is the area within which all wind turbines will be sited. There are three Turbine Development Envelopes that are proposed: A: western area – maximum of 27 turbines B: central / southern area – maximum of 48 turbines; and C: northern area – maximum of 10 turbines</p> <p>The Turbine Development Envelopes will also include ancillary structures, access tracks, temporary construction compounds and underground cables. The final distribution of turbines within the envelope will be no more than nine turbines within a 2 km diameter. This will ensure that the overall density of wind turbines within each Turbine Development Envelope does not alter significantly during the detailed design.</p> <p>Electrical Infrastructure Development Envelope The Electrical Infrastructure Development Envelope delineates the area within all overhead power lines and the location where the two substations will be sited. The Electrical Infrastructure Development Envelope will contain ancillary structures and works, such as control and maintenance buildings and access tracks.</p> <p>Ancillary Development Envelope The Ancillary Development Envelope delineates the area within which structures and works, other than wind turbines, overhead transmission lines and two substations, will be sited. Ancillary structures and works include access tracks, meteorological monitoring masts, temporary construction compounds, underground cabling and access to public roads.</p> <p>The key components of the Project are included in Attachment 'Detailed Answers'.</p>	
1.3 What is the extent and location of your proposed action?	
See Appendix B	
1.5 Provide a brief physical description of the property on which the proposed action will take place and the location of the proposed action (e.g. proximity to major towns, or for off-shore actions, shortest distance to mainland)	
<p>The project site is located within the Moyne Shire in southwest Victoria and is approximately 140 km west of Geelong and 4 km north of Mortlake. It is located on the northern outskirts of the town of Mortlake, which has a population of approximately 1350 people. Mount Shadwell, which forms the backdrop to Mortlake, is located between the Project site and Mortlake. Other smaller towns in the locality include:</p>	



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- Darlington – 11 km to the east
- Woorndoo – 8 km to the north
- Hexham – 6 km to the west

The Project site was initially selected based on the assessment of the suitability of the wind resource, connection to the electricity grid, potential environmental and heritage constraints and low density of dwellings. The site locality is shown in Attachment 3 and demonstrates features such as the nearby townships and landscape features.

For a detailed description of the property see Attachment 'Detailed Answers'.

1.6 What is the size of the proposed action area development footprint (or work area) including disturbance footprint and avoidance footprint (if relevant)?

The Project site covers an area of approximately 13,200 hectares (ha), within which an approximately 3,450 ha Development Area has been identified. The conservative upper estimate of the proposed development footprint (the area disturbed by project components contained in the Development Area and outlined in the table below) is approximately 279.5 ha or 2.1% of the Project site.

See attachment 'Detailed Answers' for table breakdown of areas.

1.7 Proposed action location

Lot - As outlined in Attachment 7

1.8 Primary jurisdiction

Victoria

1.9 Has the person proposing to take the action received any Australian Government grant funding to undertake this project?

☐ Yes ☒ No

1.10 Is the proposed action subject to local government planning approval?

☒ Yes ☐ No

1.10.1 Is there a local government area and council contact for the proposal?

☐ Yes ☒ No

1.11 Provide an estimated start and estimated end date for the proposed action

Start Date 01/07/2021

End Date 01/07/2050

1.12 Provide details of the context, planning framework and state and/or local Government requirements

The Project is predominantly subject to legislation and policy frameworks under the Victorian jurisdiction, as well as Commonwealth legislation.

The purpose of the Project is for a wind energy facility as well as utility installation. The Project is proposed within the Moyne Shire council, and therefore will require a planning permit pursuant to the Moyne Planning Scheme (the planning scheme) as implemented by the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (PE Act). Pursuant to Clause 72.01 of the planning scheme, the Minister of Planning (through DELWP) is the responsible authority in relation to the use and development of land for a wind energy facility, as well as any minor utility installation or utility installation associated with a wind energy facility.

The Project has been assessed against all relevant provisions of the Moyne Planning Scheme, including the planning policy frameworks and local planning policies frameworks, zone and overlay controls, as well as the relevant particular provisions.

Apart from the PE Act to which administers the planning scheme, the project is also subject to assessment under a range of other State legislation; these are detailed below.



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The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act) is relevant for the removal of any FFG-listed species located on road services within the project site.

The project has been examined as to whether assessment under the Environmental Effects Act 1978 (EE Act) for potential environmental impacts was required. An Environmental Effects Statement (EES) was submitted in mid-2017, to which the Minister determined on 2 August 2017 that an EES was not required subject to conditions. A copy of the EES is attached with this referral (Attachment 2).

The project is subject to provisions under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (AH Act) as the proposed activity (development of a wind facility) is a high impact activity under Section 43 of the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007. Additionally, the project site contains areas of cultural heritage sensitivity as defined under Section 23 of the regulations due to the presence of named waterways. Two cultural heritage management plans (CHMP) have been prepared and will be assessed by the relevant Aboriginal corporations. The two CHMPs correspond to the boundaries of the respective traditional owner groups.

The Hamilton Highway (owned and managed by VicRoads) is located within the project site. Alterations to the highway requires the consent of VicRoads as stipulated under the Road Management Act 2004 (RM Act). Additionally, consent from Moyne Shire Council is required for any alterations to other roads located within the project site.

The Project will require permits granted under the Water Act 1989. This includes a 'take and use' licence for dewatering during turbine foundation worksite (if long term dewatering is required). Additionally, the Project will require a significant volume of water for construction, and a lesser volume for ongoing operation and maintenance. This may require a 'take and use' permit if water is sourced from a waterway, groundwater, a spring or soak, or people from a dam.

1.13 Describe any public consultation that has been, is being or will be undertaken, including with Indigenous stakeholders

Indigenous Stakeholders

Two cultural heritage management plans (CHMPs) have been prepared for the site based on the boundaries of Traditional Owner Groups. Given the absence of an appointed Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for both areas, Aboriginal Victoria (AV) will assess the CHMPs. AV will engage with Traditional Owner Groups as part of this assessment.

Work commenced on the two CHMPs in 2013 based on the boundaries of Traditional Owner Groups. At the time, The Martang Aboriginal Corporation was the RAP for the western area of the site before later having their status revoked. Martang's representatives have been involved in undertaking standard and complex field assessments, and Martang's Board has been briefed on outcomes and process. Consultation with AV has occurred throughout this process to report findings from surveys and to confirm methodologies. In the absence of a RAP for the remaining area, standard surveys were completed with the assistance of relevant Aboriginal corporations (Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Kuuyang Maar Aboriginal Corporation). The complex survey was undertaken with the assistance of the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

Community Stakeholders

As part of the development activities, the proponent has undertaken a range of community engagement activities with a variety of stakeholders including:

- Immediate neighbours to the project
- The Mortlake District
- Moyne Shire Council
- VicRoads
- Country Fire Association (CFA)
- Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA)
- Other developers in the region

For a detailed description of community engagement activities undertaken see Attachment 'Detailed Answers'.

1.14 Describe any environmental impact assessments that have been or will be carried out under Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation including relevant impacts of the project

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth)

Referral of the action is being made to the Commonwealth by the Proponent under section 68 (2) of the Act. "A person proposing to take an action that the person thinks is not a controlled action may refer the proposal to the Minister for the Minister's decision whether or not the action is a controlled action".

Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)

Approval will be sought under the Act and detailed assessments of the ecological impacts of the Project have been undertaken and are provided as attachments to this referral (See Attachments 4, 5 & 6).



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Environmental Effects Act 1978 (Vic)

The proposed action has been referred to the Victorian Minister for planning to determine whether an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) is required. On 21 August 2017 the Minister determined that an EES was not required, subject to conditions (Attachment 2).

1.15 Is this action part of a staged development (or a component of a larger project)?

☐ Yes ☒ No

1.16 Is the proposed action related to other actions or proposals in the region?

☐ Yes ☒ No



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Section 2

Matters of national environmental significance

2.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the values of any World Heritage properties?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.2 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the values of any National Heritage places?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.3 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the ecological character of a Ramsar wetland?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.4 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the members of any listed species or any threatened ecological community, or their habitat?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Species or threatened ecological community

Spiny Rice-flower (*Pimelea spinescens* subsp. *spinescens*)

Impact

Targeted surveys for the Spiny Rice-flower were conducted within areas of suitable habitat within the Project site in July 2013 and the spring/summer of 2014/2015. Surveys followed the guidelines specified in the Biodiversity Precinct Structure Planning Kit (DSE 2010) which involve assessment by two botanists walking parallel transect lines a maximum distance of five metres apart within all potential habitat during the flowering period. The Spiny Rice-flower was recorded from two locations with the Project site:

- Within the Woorndoo-Dundonnell Road reserve where 82 plants were recorded within a 5 hectare area
- Within the Castle Carey Road reserve, where 35 plants were recorded within a 2.5 hectare area.

The populations of Spiny Rice-flower were all recorded in remnants of the Critically Endangered Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain ecological community. The targeted surveys did not locate any Spiny Rice-flower plants within the Project Development Area, therefore the project will not have any significant impact on this species.

Species or threatened ecological community

Basalt Rustyhood (*Pterostylis basaltica*)

Impact

Targeted surveys for the Basalt Rustyhood were completed in June 2018. The surveys for Basalt Rustyhood were undertaken across approximately four hectares of potential habitat on stony rises to the north of Woorndoo-Darlington Road. The surveys were based on a method developed with DELWP, which was to survey potential habitat within the project site once emergence of rosettes was confirmed at a designated reference area on the Woorndoo-Dundonnell Road Rd.. The reference site, which is located about 12 km north east of the project site, was chosen because there were recent three records of the Basalt Rustyhood from the reference area (1990, 2005 and 2009).

The survey method used was consistent with the Survey Guidelines for Australia's Threatened Orchids (Commonwealth of Australia 2013), with the exception that the surveys targeted the vegetative growth phase rather than the flowering phase. This approach was specified by DELWP and was considered more likely to detect the species as the rosette growth phase is much longer than the flowering period, which can be difficult to predict. Flowering phase surveys would require regular visits to



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determine exact flowering times, and there is potential that the flowering period at the reference site may not adequately predict the flowering window of unknown populations within the project site.

The survey guidelines recommend area searches or transect searches in areas of potential habitat, with transect spacing between 5 and 10 m. As this survey targeted the rosette stage the transect spacing was reduced to 4 m. The surveys involved two observers walking along parallel transects four metres apart. Each observer searched the area two metres to either side of the transect line. The reference site was visited at the commencement of surveys to confirm ongoing visibility of the rosettes.

The Basalt Rustyhood generally emerges in autumn, grows through the winter before withering in spring, and flowering between November and January. Detection of the species is most likely when the rosette is actively growing (autumn or early winter), although confirmation of species identification may require follow up surveys during the flowering period. The reference site on the Woorndoo-Dundonnell Road was inspected twice (20 April 2018 and 21 May 2018). The presence of *Pterostylis* rosettes at the reference site was confirmed on 21 May 2018 and these rosettes were considered most likely to be Basalt Rustyhood.

Surveys at the Project site were undertaken during June 2018 following the survey at the reference site in May 2018. Surveys were undertaken in suitable habitat within the Project site namely stony rises with surface rock, dominated by introduced grasses and other weeds. Some of these areas also supported scattered native shrubs and native grass species. Fifteen potential search areas were identified which ranged in size from 0.05 ha to approximately 0.9 ha, with a total survey area of 3.67 ha. The targeted survey did not find any Basalt Rustyhood plants within the Project Development Area or anywhere within the Project site, therefore the project will not have any significant impact on this species.

Species or threatened ecological community

Southern Bent-wing Bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii bassanii*)

Impact

The Southern Bent-wing Bat (SBWB) *Miniopterus schreibersii bassanii* which is listed as Critically Endangered was identified as potentially occurring on site through the EPBC Act Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST). The proposed action may have a both a direct and indirect impact on the Southern Bent-Wing Bat. Direct impacts could potentially occur by collision with wind turbines or barotrauma whereby bats are killed as a result of rapid air-pressure reduction near moving turbine blades causing internal haemorrhaging (Baerwald et. al, 2008). Indirect impacts could potentially be habitat avoidance whereby bats avoid the wind farm because of disturbance due to the construction and operation of the wind farm.

A Significant Impact Assessment was completed by Biosis for the SBWB (Biosis 2019; Attachment 5; Appendix 5, Table 1). The assessment concluded that there will be no direct habitat impacts for SBWB from the Project. Similar to other south-west Victorian windfarms, there may be some operational collision risk to SBWB foraging and moving through the Project site. However, the assessment considered that the survey results for the SBWB indicated that the Project site is not a key focal site for the species. There were no roosting sites located within the Project site and the nearest known non-maternity roost site is approximately 35 km's to the south at Panmure and the site is 50 km's north of the Starlight maternity cave. In addition, there is abundant suitable foraging habitat in the area around the Project site and there is a range of similar habitats across south-west Victoria and there is no evidence that the site is used extensively for foraging. Therefore the construction and operation of the wind farm is unlikely to pose a significant risk for the species given that there are no roost sites present and the low level of use of the Project site by the SBWB.

For a detailed description of Southern-bent Wing Bat survey effort and analysis see attachment 'Detailed Answers'.

Species or threatened ecological community

White-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudatus*)

Impact

The white-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudatus*) was not observed during site surveys; however there are 2 records within 20kms of the Project site with the most recent being March 2009 (Victorian Biodiversity Atlas data). The white-throated needletail breeds in Asia and migrates to eastern Australia for the spring-summer, arriving in October and departing in March-April. Sightings, including VBA Approved records are concentrated over coastal, near coastal and alpine areas (Atlas of Living Australia data) particularly over wooded areas but the species also occurs over farmland. The technical report by DELWP titled 'Developing a science-based approach to defining key species of birds and bats of concern for wind farm development in Victoria' (September 2019) included white-throated needletail as a 'species of interest' for turbine collision risks in Victoria. Through the assessment process the species was ruled out as being a 'species of concern' that may be at risk, at a Victorian



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population level, due to collisions with turbines.

The proposed action may have a direct impact on the white-throated needletail through collision with wind turbines. However, the low number of observations in the open / cleared farmland in central SW Victoria indicates that the site is likely to be infrequently used by the white-throated needletail and therefore the construction and operation of the wind farm is unlikely to pose a significant risk for the species.

Species or threatened ecological community

Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*)

Impact

The Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*) inhabits native grasslands and exotic grasslands that are situated close to native grasslands. Striped Legless Lizard habitat has been identified in the Project site within patches of the Ecological Vegetation Community (EVC) Plains Grassland. This EVC also contains the threatened ecological community Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain. The patches of suitable habitat were restricted to linear strips of remnant grassland along roadsides and in road reserves containing loose and lightly embedded rock and cracking clay soils. All the patches of Plains Grassland and potential Striped Legless Lizard habitat identified were surveyed either by non-destructive rock rolling or roof tile survey. Surveys were initially undertaken during October and November 2013. Late spring is considered an optimal time for survey of the species in south-western Victoria.

An additional survey for the striped Legless Lizard using roof tiles, as described in the Survey guidelines for Australia's Threatened Reptiles (DSEWPac 1999) was undertaken in the winter and spring of 2013. The survey involved setting out 50 non-glazed roof tiles in a grid pattern with tiles approximately five metres apart and distributed over an area of approximately 900 m². A total of eight tile grids were laid out during winter at least 6 weeks prior to commencement of the survey in October 2013 to allow tiles to embed to provide suitable artificial habitat sites for fauna. The tiles were checked weekly during October and November with a minimum of eight checks over the period. Striped Legless Lizards were recorded on three occasions from only one of the tile grids which was located on the road reserve at the western end of Castle Carey Road adjacent to the Hamilton Highway within the Project site. The Striped Legless Lizard was not recorded from any other location within the Project site during the targeted surveys involving rock rolling.

Being a cryptic species, there is still a potential for the species to occur in other areas of suitable habitat within the Project site, despite not being recorded elsewhere during the targeted surveys. It is known that the floristic composition of the grassland is not necessarily the only factor in determining Striped Legless Lizards presence and the mapped areas of known habitat includes grasslands dominated by introduced species. Therefore field surveys were used to identify and map potential habitat at the Project site which was informed by a range of habitat elements including:

- grassland structure and composition
- soil composition
- degree of connectivity / isolation from adjacent areas of suitable habitat
- drainage
- level of ploughing/cropping activity
- intensity of grazing.

The Development Area avoids mapped areas of potential Striped Legless Lizard habitat. To further minimize risk and potential impacts on Striped Legless Lizards and their habitat, access tracks that intercept habitat along Castle Carey Road reserve will use existing road access locations. During construction, grassland habitat within the road reserve will be marked out as 'no-go' zones. Therefore the Project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Striped Legless Lizard.

Species or threatened ecological community

Corangamite Water Skink (*Eulamprus tympanum marnieae*)

Impact

The Corangamite Water Skink (*Eulamprus tympanum marnieae*) which is listed as Endangered under the EPBC Act inhabits stony knolls that have deep fissures and cracks and that are associated with ephemeral or permanent wetlands on the Victorian volcanic plains. Targeted surveys for the Corangamite Water Skink were undertaken in potential habitat which included all the ephemeral and permanent wetlands (nine wetlands) within the project site during January and February 2013 and 2014 on the following dates:

- January 8-9, January 22-23, February 5-6; 2013
- January 20, February 6-7, February 18-19, February 28; 2014.

Corangamite Water Skinks were recorded at three of the wetlands within the Project site (Wetlands 1, 3 and 4). No skinks were recorded at any of the other wetlands. The Development Area for the wind farm has been situated to avoid any direct



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impacts on the wetlands (Wetlands 1 to 9). The locations of Wetlands 1, 3 and 4, where Corangamite Water Skinks were recorded is located to the north of the Development Area and are well outside of the proposed Development Envelopes and the Project is not expected to impact on this species or its habitat. Therefore the Project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Corangamite Water Skink.

Species or threatened ecological community

Dwarf Galaxias (*Galaxias pusilla*)

Impact

Dwarf Galaxias (*Galaxias pusilla*) which is listed as Vulnerable under EPBC Act occurs in slow flowing and still, shallow, permanent and temporary freshwater habitats such as swamps, drains and the backwaters of streams and creeks in southern Victoria and Tasmania. Targeted aquatic surveys were undertaken over 14 days between November 2012 and February 2013 using backpack electrofishing, fyke nets and bait trapping. The survey was conducted in accordance with guidelines for detecting fish listed as threatened under the EPBC Act (DSEWPaC 2011). Ten bait traps with 2 millimetre mesh and entrance funnels of 40 millimetres in diameter were set overnight at suitable sites. Single wing (5 m) fyke nets constructed of 4 millimetre (mm) knotless nylon mesh; were also set overnight at suitable sites. Half of the fyke nets at each site were set with a 20 x 20 mm mesh exclusion grill on the first internal throat to exclude large species from these nets, thereby reducing the predation and mortalities of smaller fishes that occurs when captured in the same nets and subsequently improving the representation of smaller fish such as dwarf galaxias species in the catch.

A total of 1,429 individual fish and crayfish were collected during the aquatic fauna surveys and consisted of nine native species and three exotic species. At the time of survey there were no existing records of Dwarf Galaxias occurring within, or in the vicinity of, the Project site on the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA). However, the survey undertaken as part of the Project recorded 21 individuals which were collected at two sites on Salt Creek which runs along the along the western edge of the Project site. The Development Area is located to the east of Salt Creek and therefore there will be no direct impacts on this population of Dwarf Galaxias. Indirect impacts will be avoided and minimised through not installing additional crossing points on, or upstream of Salt Creek, and implementing sediment and pollution control measures during construction. Therefore the proposed wind farm is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Dwarf Galaxias.

Species or threatened ecological community

Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain

Impact

The EPBC Act PMST identified that the Critically Endangered Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain and the Critically Endangered Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater) of the Temperate Lowland Plains could potentially occur within the Project site.

Field surveys to verify the presence of these communities were undertaken as part of the flora surveys.

The field survey confirmed that Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain ecological community was present within patches of the Heavier-soils Plains Grassland EVC; Plains Grassy Wetland and Stony Knoll Shrubland EVC and the Plains Grassy Wetland EVC at the Project site. The Heavier-soils Plains Grassland EVC occurs in the road reserve along Castle Carey Road and on some stony rises at the Project site. The most high quality example of this grassland EVC occurs on the road reserve on the Woorndoo-Dundonnell Road which is outside of the Development Area. Patches of Plains Grassy Wetland patches were mapped to the north east of the Woorndoo-Darlington Road which is also outside of the Development Area. Stony Knoll Shrubland occurs in isolated patches of low quality throughout the Project site, mainly to the north and immediately south of the Woorndoo-Chatsworth Road which is outside of the Development Area.

Most areas of Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain are avoided as they are located outside of the Development Area. Those patches that are within the Development Area have been identified as works exclusion zones where no construction activity will occur. Therefore, the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant impact on this threatened ecological community.

The field survey confirmed that Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater) of the Temperate Lowland Plains was present at the Project site within areas of the Aquatic Herbland and Plains Grassy Wetland EVCs. As noted above the Plains Grassy Wetland EVC occurs outside of the Development Area and will be avoided. The patches of Aquatic Herbland EVC were mapped as scattered occurrences throughout the Project site where they were associated with the wetlands and lakes that occur across the area.

As with the Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain threatened community the areas of Seasonal



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Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater) of the Temperate Lowland Plains are avoided as they are mostly located outside of the Development Area. Those patches that are within the Development Area will be identified as works exclusion zones where no construction activity will occur. Therefore, the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant impact on this threatened ecological community.

2.4.2 Do you consider this impact to be significant?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.5 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the members of any listed migratory species or their habitat?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Migratory species

Recorded on site:

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)

Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)

Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Species with potential direct impact:

White-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudatus*)

Impact

Nineteen migratory species have been recorded or area predicted to occur in the Project search area. Four migratory species (Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Latham's Snipe, Red-necked Stint and Common Sandpiper) were recorded from the Project site during targeted surveys. The number of species and individuals observed across the Project site, along with pre-existing database records, indicate that no sites within the Project site or its vicinity can be considered 'important habitat', as outlined in the significant impact guidelines (DEWHA 2009a; DoE 2013).

As detailed in Attachment 4 & 5, winter surveys were conducted in August 2012 and July 2013 to locate any over-wintering shorebirds that may have stayed in Australia rather than return to the northern hemisphere to breed (see Attachment 4). This survey was carried out over two days on 28-29 August 2012 and 17-18 July 2013 within the project site. Summer surveys were conducted within the project site on four occasions between January and February 2013.

Four listed migratory shorebird species were identified during the current assessment but the number of species and individuals observed was insufficient for any of the sites to be considered 'important habitat'.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*. Fourteen birds were observed on two occasions at Wetland 2 and were all seen actively foraging. No roosting behaviour was observed.

Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*. A single bird was opportunistically flushed from grassland adjacent to Wetland 2.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*. A total of 134 birds were observed over four surveys from Wetland 2. Collectively this was the largest group of any listed migratory shorebird species observed during the current study. All birds were seen foraging or loafing. No roosting behaviour was observed.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*. Two birds were seen at Wetland 2 during survey 1. They were seen actively foraging and no roosting behaviour was observed.

The Development Area has been designed to avoid direct impacts on wetland habitat suitable for migratory species. Therefore, the proposed action is not likely to have a significant impact on a listed migratory species.

The white-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudatus*) was not observed during site surveys; however there are 2 records within 20kms of the Project site with the most recent being March 2009 (Victorian Biodiversity Atlas data). The white-throated needletail breeds in Asia and migrates to eastern Australia for the spring-summer, arriving in October and departing in March-April. Sightings, including VBA Approved records are concentrated over coastal, near coastal and alpine areas (Atlas of Living Australia data) particularly over wooded areas but the species also occurs over farmland. The technical report by DELWP titled 'Developing a science-based approach to defining key species of birds and bats of concern for wind farm development in Victoria' (September 2019) included white-throated needletail as a 'species of interest' for turbine collision risks in Victoria. Through the assessment process the species was ruled out as being a 'species of concern' that may be at risk, at a Victorian population level, due to collisions with turbines.



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The proposed action may have a direct impact on the white-throated needletail through collision with wind turbines. However, the low number of observations in the open / cleared farmland in central SW Victoria indicates that the site is likely to be infrequently used by the white-throated needletail and therefore the construction and operation of the wind farm is unlikely to pose a significant risk for the species.

2.5.2 Do you consider this impact to be significant?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.6 Is the proposed action to be undertaken in a marine environment (outside Commonwealth marine areas)?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.7 Is the proposed action likely to be taken on or near Commonwealth land?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.8 Is the proposed action taking place in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.9 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on a water resource from coal seam gas or large coal mining development?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.10 Is the proposed action a nuclear action?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.11 Is the proposed action to be taken by a Commonwealth agency?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.12 Is the proposed action to be undertaken in a Commonwealth Heritage place overseas?

☐ Yes ☒ No

2.13 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on any part of the environment in the Commonwealth marine area?

☐ Yes ☒ No



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Section 3

Description of the project area

3.1 Describe the flora and fauna relevant to the project area

The Project site is located on the Victorian volcanic plain which is characterised by a virtually treeless landscape that has been extensively cleared of native vegetation for agricultural use. The Project site predominantly supports introduced vegetation which has replaced the native flora and that is of limited value for native fauna. However there are remnant patches of high quality native vegetation mainly on the public road reserves which traverse the Project site and the rocky rises to the north which provide habitat for native fauna. There are also a number of wetlands and lakes and a waterway (Blind Creek) within the Project site and Salt Creek borders the western boundary of the Project site. Ten Ecological Vegetation Communities (EVCs) were identified and mapped within the Project site in addition to scattered trees which were nearly all River Red-gums *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* with the occasional Drooping She-oak *Allocasuarina verticillata*). The EVC's were predominantly grassland, shrubland and wetland communities (e.g. Heavier-soils Plains Grassland EVC 132_6, Stony Knoll Shrubland EVC 649, and Aquatic Herbland EVC 653). Eight fauna habitat types were also identified and mapped including creeks, wetlands, grasslands, rocky escarpments and rock outcrops and rock walls.

Flora and fauna surveys were undertaken across the Project site to gain an understanding of the existing environmental conditions. The surveys recorded two threatened flora species the Spiny Rice-flower *Pimelea spinescens* subsp. *spinescens* (Vulnerable under EPBC Act, Listed under FFG Act) which occurs in native grasslands and the Basalt Rustyhood *Pterostylis basaltica* (endangered under the EPBC Act, listed under the FFG Act) which is endemic to the Victorian volcanic plains. Nine threatened fauna species were recorded including:

- one fauna species associated with grassland and rocky habitats; the Striped Legless Lizard *Delma impar* (Vulnerable under EPBC Act, Listed under FFG Act)
- seven species associated with wetland habitats
 - o Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa* (Listed under FFG Act)
 - o Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica macrotarsa* (Listed under FFG Act)
 - o Eastern Great Egret *Ardea modesta* (Listed under FFG Act)
 - o Brolga *Antigone rubicunda* (Listed under FFG Act, - there are two Brolga breeding sites within the Project site and one breeding site immediately adjacent the Project site, there are also three Brolga flocking sites to the east of the Project site.
- o Corangamite Water Skink *Eulamprus tympanum marnieae* (Endangered under EPBC Act, Listed under FFG Act)
- o Brown Toadlet *Pseudophryne bibronii* (Listed under FFG Act)
- two species associated with streams
 - o Dwarf Galaxias *pusilla* (Vulnerable under EPBC Act, Listed under FFG Act) – recorded from Salt Creek
 - o Hairy Burrowing Crayfish *Engaeus sericatus* (vulnerable on the DELWP Advisory List) - one individual collected at the Project site in Blind Creek.

The Southern Bent-wing Bat (Critically Endangered under EPBC Act, Listed under the FFG Act) was recorded flying across the site (presumably foraging) by acoustic surveys as described in Section 2.1. However, no roost sites for this species were located at the Project site. Other native mammal species recorded at the Project site were the Lesser Long-eared Bat *Nyctophilus geoffroyi*, Eastern Grey Kangaroo *Macropus giganteus* and the Fat-tailed Dunnart *Sminthopsis crassicaudata* (recorded in grassland on Woorndoo Road during the tile surveys for the Striped Legless Lizard).

A full description of the fauna and flora surveys and the results are provided in Attachment 4 - EPBC MFWF Flora and fauna existing conditions (Biosis 2019) and Attachment 5 - EPBC MFWF Targeted surveys and impact assessment (Biosis 2019).

3.2 Describe the hydrology relevant to the project area (including water flows)

The Project site is located in the Hopkins River Basin within the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (CMA). The Project site is typical of the surrounding landscape, being largely of low relief and intersected by intermittently flowing creeks, and ephemeral and permanent wetlands. A large proportion of the Project site, particularly adjacent to creeks and drainage lines, is subject to flooding (VicMap Hydro 1:25,000 flat_sti (subject to inundation) mapping layer). The construction footprint has been designed to avoid permanent waterbodies and land buffers have been established around significant waterways.

3.3 Describe the soil and vegetation characteristics relevant to the project area

However, in the northern area of the site areas of remnant native vegetation persists within the stony rises, and in low-lying areas associated with depressions and drainage lines. Several roadsides within the wider area are known to support high-value native grasslands. There are two remnant River Red Gums within the Turbine Development Area.

The Project site is contained within the Victorian Volcanic Plain Bioregion. The surface geology is the result of quaternary



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basalt flows with small areas of recent alluvial sediments (derived from basalt) around the lakes and waterways. The most recent basalt flows, which are confined to the northern section of the Project site, have formed complex stony rises, these are interspersed with low-lying areas and wetlands. Older basalt flows in the southern section of the Project site have weathered to undulating and flat landscapes.

3.4 Describe any outstanding natural features and/or any other important or unique values relevant to the project area

The key ecological values identified from within the Project site are as follows:

- Nine Endangered EVCs and one Vulnerable EVC.
- Scattered remnant trees along the transmission line corridor.
- Eight fauna habitat types, including creeks, wetlands, grasslands and stony rises
- Habitat or potential habitat for EPBC Act and FFG Act listed species
- Endangered communities, including Natural Temperate Grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plain and Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater) of the Temperate Lowland Plains.

3.5 Describe the status of native vegetation relevant to the project area

The Project site has been extensively cleared of the native vegetation for agriculture and mostly supports introduced vegetation which has replaced the native vegetation. However there are remnant patches of high quality native vegetation mainly on the public road reserves which traverse the Project site and the rocky rises to the north. Ten EVCs were identified and mapped within the Project site in addition to scattered trees which were nearly all River Red-gums *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* with the occasional Drooping She-oak *Allocasuarina verticillata*). Nine of the ten EVC's recorded are listed as Endangered within the Victorian Volcanic Bioregion and one; Plains Sedgy Wetland, is listed as Vulnerable. The EVCs recorded from within the Project site are:

- Heavier-soils Plains Grassland EVC 132_6
- Plains Grassy Wetland EVC 125
- Stony Knoll Shrubland EVC 649
- Plains Grassy Woodland EVC 55_61
- Aquatic Herbland EVC 653
- Tall Marsh EVC 821
- Brackish Wetland EVC 656
- Scoria Cone Woodland EVC 894
- Escarpment Shrubland EVC 895
- Plains Sedgy Wetland EVC 647.

The proposed development will impact 0.416 ha of native vegetation, including six scattered trees along the transmission corridor. Under the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (DELWP 2017), this area of vegetation will generate an offset value of 0.102 general habitat units with a minimum strategic biodiversity score of 0.503.

3.6 Describe the gradient (or depth range if action is to be taken in a marine area) relevant to the project area

The topography of the Project site is generally flat with minor variations particularly around waterways. The entire Project site sits approximate 50-100 m above sea level.

3.7 Describe the current condition of the environment relevant to the project area

The Project site falls within a section of the volcanic plain which has very few areas of remnant vegetation or habitats managed for conservation. The largest nearby conservation areas are the Cobra Killuc Wildlife Reserve, between Hexham and Woorndoo, and the Mortlake Common Flora Reserve to the west of Mortlake. The Project site is typical of much of the surrounding landscape, being largely cleared with low relief and intersected by intermittently flowing creeks and ephemeral and permanent wetlands.

A large proportion of the Project site, particularly adjacent to creeks and drainage lines, is subject to flooding (VicMap Hydro 1:25,000 flat_sti (subject to inundation) mapping layer). The Western District Lakes Ramsar site includes a number of wetlands that are primarily located within the Lake Corangamite Basin, however, the most westerly component of this Ramsar site (Lake Bookar) is located within the Mount Emu Creek catchment (Hopkins River Basin) and is located approximately 25 km's south-east of the Project site. There does not appear to be any direct hydrological connectivity between the Project site and Lake Bookar.

The section of Blind Creek within the Project site (Reach 24 – a 54 km reach upstream of Salt Creek) was assessed in the 2004 Index of Stream Condition assessment to be in moderate condition. Aquatic life was not assessed, and the streamside zone was considered to be in excellent condition, with all other sub-indices (physical form, hydrology and water quality)



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considered to be in poor-moderate condition. The condition of Blind Creek within the Project site is primarily affected by extensive historical clearing and hydrological alterations associated with extraction for agricultural purposes and subsequent summer stress.

3.8 Describe any Commonwealth Heritage places or other places recognised as having heritage values relevant to the project

Natural heritage:

No natural heritage sites were identified within the Project site. However, one Ramsar wetland of significance was identified within 15 kilometres of the Project site. The Western District Lakes Ramsar site is located downstream of the Project site to the south-east. However, this significant wetland does not share any direct waterway connections and is unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development.

Historic heritage:

The Heritage Overlay (HO89) of the Moyne Shire occurs within the Project site and protects an estate known as the Mondilibi Complex. The proposed development does will not impact HO89.

Additionally, the Moyne Shire protects all Dry Stone Walls. Approximately 6 km's of stone walls exist within the northern section of the Project site. The walls no longer function as a solid boundary for stock, having a number of collapsed sections and steel wire and post fence that runs parallel to the wall.

Several historic sites were identified from within 15 km's of the Project site, including:

- Mount Violet Complex – Ruined Bluestone Cottages (H7422-0005)
- O'Donnell House Complex (H7422-0009)
- Fasham House complex (H7422-0006)
- McColl House (H7422-0008)
- Shepherd/Boundary Rider's Hut & Stockyard (H7422-0007)
- Chimney, Bluestone Mill (H0323)
- Avenue of Honour (H2342).

None of these sites will be impacted by the Project.

3.9 Describe any Indigenous heritage values relevant to the project area

The assessment process for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage has occurred over two key stages:

A preliminary cultural heritage assessment was undertaken in 2012 and 2013. The report from this assessment was updated and finalised in 2017.

The preparation of two Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) according to Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) applicant boundaries commenced in late 2013 and will be submitted for assessment following the submission of the planning application for the MFWF project. Please note that the RAP application (Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation) was unsuccessful, and the RAP status for Martang Pty Ltd was recently subject to revocation. The CHMPs however are progressing according to these past boundaries.

As outlined above, the project was split into two CHMPs. The Martang Pty Ltd RAP section (Mt Fyans Wind Farm Western Extension Area CHMP 12658) included the land between the Hamilton Highway and Mortlake – Ararat Road. The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation RAP application section (Mt Fyans Wind Farm CHMP 12657), assessed the remainder and bulk of the proposed wind farm.

During preparation of CHMP 12658, three Aboriginal places were recorded, and an additional Aboriginal place was merged with a previously recorded intangible place (Boorug & Mondilibi Landscape VAHR 7421-0228).

- VAHR 7422-0581 Boorug & Mondilibi Landscape Ridge
- VAHR 7422-0584 Ollocibberloke LDAD 1
- VAHR 7422-0582 Ollocibberloke LDAD 2
- VAHR 7422-0583 Murkupang Landscape LDAD

The artefact accumulation at each of the Aboriginal places is related to both the use of the area and taphonomic processes. Stony rises in the area were created during periods of volcanic activity from the Pliocene and the mid to early Pleistocene (State of Victoria Department of Primary Industries, 2017). These volcanic lava flows produce areas with characteristic irregular stony surfaces, thin layers of soils and in some occasions, woodland cover. The lower lying plains areas around these stony rises consists of seasonally damp dark brown to black clayey soil which in sections would likely have been swamps or wetlands at the time of Aboriginal occupation of the area. The stony rises then, would have been



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strategic locations providing people in the area with a dry vantage point to observe long distances across the volcanic plains.

The previously recorded intangible place is part of a song line. The story related that this song line has been included in the Aboriginal place registration and in the CHMP. Two landscape features (Boorug and Mondilibi, or Mt Shadwell and Flat Top Hill), are prominent in story, and are connected by a clear stony ridgeline. An artefact scatter was recorded within this ridgeline, prompting stakeholders (Biosis Heritage Advisors, Martang Pty Ltd and VAHR staff), to merge the tangible recording with the intangible place.

A total of seven Aboriginal places were recorded in CHMP 12657:
Mount Fyans 2 LDAD (previously Isolated Artefact) (1c) (VAHR 7422-0579)
Boonerah Estate Rd Scarred Tree (VAHR 7421-0235)
Blind Creek 1 LDAD (previously Isolated Artefact) (VAHR 7421-0233)
Dunkeld Unit LDAD (VAHR 7421-0237)
Mount Fyans Newer Volcanic Group Artefact Scatter (VAHR -7422-0587)
Mount Fyans Newer Volcanic Group Lake Artefact Scatter (VAHR 7422-0585)
Mount Fyans Newer Volcanic Group LDAD (VAHR 7422-0586)

With the exception of a scarred tree in the low plains of the Transmission Development Envelope (between the substation and the Hamilton Highway), the remaining cultural heritage located during these assessments consisted of stone artefacts (a total of 137).

Work exclusion zones have been established to protect areas of Aboriginal heritage within the project site.

3.10 Describe the tenure of the action area (e.g. freehold, leasehold) relevant to the project area

The proposed development will comprise a significant portion of private freehold land and a small area of adjoining road reserve (freehold land).

3.11 Describe any existing or any proposed uses relevant to the project area

The majority of the Project site is currently being used for agriculture (grazing and broadacre cropping).



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Section 4

Measures to avoid or reduce impacts

4.1 Describe the measures you will undertake to avoid or reduce impact from your proposed action

Biodiversity assessments, targeted surveys and ecological monitoring were undertaken to identify, avoid and minimise impacts to natural values by the Project.

The findings of biodiversity and heritage assessments have been incorporated into the design of the Project (see Attachment 1). Through the use of development envelopes and exclusion zones the Project avoids all habitat for threatened species and significant ecological communities. The proponent has limited the removal of native vegetation from the Project site to 0.416 hectares, including six scattered trees. Mitigation of impacts to Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) are outlined in detail in Section 2.4.1 of this referral, and include:

- Avoidance of habitat for threatened flora, including Spiny Rice-flower and Basalt Rustyhood.
- Avoidance of habitat for threatened fauna, including Corangamite Water Skink, Striped Legless Lizard, Southern Bent-wing Bat, Dwarf Galaxias and several Migratory bird species.
- Retention and avoidance of all patches of listed ecological communities, including Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain (Critically Endangered under EPBC Act), Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater) of the Temperate Lowland Plains (Critically Endangered under EPBC Act) and Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland (Listed under FFG Act).

Where works are proposed within 50 m of an area identified as a Works Exclusion Zone, a site protection strategy will be implemented that protects the values of the site. This process will be outlined in the Construction Environmental Management Plan and may include the resurvey of site boundaries and the construction of temporary barriers or fences.

Prior to works commencing, evidence will be provided to the responsible authority that the offset required for the removal of native vegetation (as defined DELWP's 2017 Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation) has been secured.

4.2 For matters protected by the EPBC Act that may be affected by the proposed action, describe the proposed environmental outcomes to be achieved

The proponent has carefully considered the findings of the biodiversity assessments, including the presence and distribution of threatened species and significant ecological communities within the Project site, and have designed the Project to avoid significant impacts to MNES.

A Bat and Avifauna Management Plan (BAM Plan) will be developed and implemented for the Project. This plan will allow for annual reporting for up to five years from the start of operation. The BAM Plan will include a bird and bat collision monitoring regime and procedures for reporting and responding to records of any bird or bat species listed under the EPBC Act that are found to have collided with wind turbines, whether found during formal monitoring or incidentally.

The proponent has committed to adopting an adaptive management approach within the BAM plan to monitor, mitigate or offset impacts to targeted species.



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Section 5

Conclusion on the likelihood of significant impacts

5.1 You indicated the below ticked items to be of significant impact and therefore you consider the action to be a controlled action

- ☐ World Heritage properties
- ☐ National Heritage places
- ☐ Wetlands of international importance (declared Ramsar wetlands)
- ☐ Listed threatened species or any threatened ecological community
- ☐ Listed migratory species
- ☐ Marine environment outside Commonwealth marine areas
- ☐ Protection of the environment from actions involving Commonwealth land
- ☐ Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- ☐ A water resource, in relation to coal seam gas development and large coal mining development
- ☐ Protection of the environment from nuclear actions
- ☐ Protection of the environment from Commonwealth actions
- ☐ Commonwealth Heritage places overseas
- ☐ Commonwealth marine areas

5.2 If no significant matters are identified, provide the key reasons why you think the proposed action is not likely to have a significant impact on a matter protected under the EPBC Act and therefore not a controlled action

A detailed and thorough assessment has been undertaken on the potential impacts for matters protected under the EPBC Act in relation to the Project site. As a result of Project design in response to ecological assessments and findings, impacts have been reduced and mitigated by ensuring all works avoid areas of sensitivity.

A summary of the assessment against the significant impact guidelines for each of these matters is provided below to outline why the project is not likely to have a significant impact on MNES.

Spiny Rice-flower - All recorded populations are outside of the proposed Development Area. The project will not result in a significant impact to this species.

Basalt Rustyhood - The recorded populations are outside of the proposed Development Area. The project will not result in a significant impact to this species.

Corangamite Water Skink – The proposed development area avoids recorded population and suitable wetland habitats. Therefore, the proposed action will not directly or indirectly impact this species.

Striped Legless Lizard – The proposed Development Area avoids mapped areas of potential Striped Legless Lizard habitat. Grassland habitat on road reserves will be avoided during construction. Therefore the Project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Striped Legless Lizard.

Golden Sun Moth – The Golden Sun Moth is considered to be absent from the Project site, therefore the Project will not result in a significant impact to this species.

Growling Grass Frog – The Growling Grass Frog considered to be absent from the Project site, therefore the Project will not result in a significant impact to this species.

Southern Bent-wing Bat - Findings based on the habitat assessment and acoustic surveys indicates the proposed development would be unlikely to have a significant impact on this species. Please refer to Appendix 5 in Attachment 5 for a complete analysis of SBWB impact against the EPBC criteria.

White-throated needletail – At Victorian level the species was not considered to be a 'species of concern' from Wind Farms through an assessment undertaken DELWP in 2019. Records indicate that this species is an infrequent visitor to the Project site. The proposed development would be unlikely to have a significant impact on this species.

Dwarf Galaxias - The Development Area avoids habitat for Dwarf Galaxias in Salt Creek. An assessment against the significant impact guidelines for a vulnerable species shows that the proposed action is not likely to result in a significant impact on this species.

Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain – Areas of Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain ecological community within the Development Envelopes have been avoided through the use of Exclusion Zones, in which no construction activity will be undertaken. Therefore, works are not likely to result in a significant impact.



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Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater) of the Temperate Lowland Plains - Areas of Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain ecological community within the Development Envelopes have been avoided through the use of Exclusion Zones, in which no construction activity will be undertaken. Therefore, works are not likely to result in a significant impact.

Migratory species - The number of species and individuals observed across the Project site, along with pre-existing database records, indicate that no sites within the Project site or its vicinity can be considered 'important habitat', as outlined in the significant impact guidelines (DEWHA 2009a). The Project has been designed to avoid direct impacts on wetland habitat suitable for migratory species. Therefore, the proposed action is not likely to have a significant impact on a listed migratory species.

Western District Lakes Ramsar wetland - The Project site does not have any direct hydrological connection with the majority of the wetlands that comprise this Ramsar site. The Project site appears to lack a direct hydrological connection with Lake Bookar, or Lake Colongaluc the closest wetlands of this Ramsar site occur in the neighbouring river basin. Development of the Project site is unlikely to result in a significant impact to this Ramsar site.



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Section 6

Environmental record of the person proposing to take the action

6.1 Does the person taking the action have a satisfactory record of responsible environmental management? Explain in further detail

Woolnorth Wind Farm Holding Pty Ltd (the Proponent) was established in 2012, and currently owns and operates three wind farms – Bluff Point (BPWF), Studland Bay (SBWF), and Musselroe Wind Farms (MRWF). Each of these projects have active and enforceable EPBC Act approvals (BPWF and SBWF 2000/12 and MRWF 2002/683). Reporting on compliance against these approvals has been consistently undertaken by the Proponent since it took ownership over these projects in 2012 (BPWF and SBWF) and 2013 (MRWF). These projects also have state permits issued under Tasmanian Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 (EMPCA) and again there is a well-documented history of compliance with these permit conditions. The Proponent also has ISO14001 certification and this has been maintained since 2013. The scope of the Proponents EMS and certification includes the three assets currently owned.

6.2 Provide details of any past or present proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against either (a) the person proposing to take the action or, (b) if a permit has been applied for in relation to the action – the person making the application

The Proponent has not been involved in any past or present legal proceedings 'relating to either (a) or (b) above.

6.3 If it is a corporation undertaking the action will the action be taken in accordance with the corporation's environmental policy and framework?

☒ Yes ☐ No

6.3.1 If the person taking the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework

The Proponent (including operations at BPWF, SBWF & MRWF) operates its business under a Health, Safety and Environmental management system.

The HSE system includes Policies, Procedures, Forms and other documents that assist to establish and set high-level directives to all areas of the business. This includes defining document accountabilities and responsibilities, effectively outlining business and operational risks, developing procedures and protocols to effectively control and manage these risks. In addition, the system includes methods to check and review system performance and implementation and ensure a systematic continuous improvement cycle is established and implemented.

The HSE management system is described (including access to most system documents) and available on the Proponents website www.woolnorthwind.com.au/health-safety-environment. The Project is subject to a risk assessment process and this will continue to evolve as the Project moves from planning to construction to operations. Documentation to outline risks and controls will be developed at strategic times to ensure risks are adequately controlled. This will include environmental management plans specific to each phase of the project.

6.4 Has the person taking the action previously referred an action under the EPBC Act, or been responsible for undertaking an action referred under the EPBC Act?

☒ Yes ☐ No

6.4.1 EPBC Act No and/or Name of Proposal

Bluff Point Wind Farm & Studland Bay Wind Farm, Tasmania (EPBC 2000/12)
Musselroe Wind Farm, Tasmania (EPBC referral 2002/683)



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Section 7

Information sources

Reference source

Biosis 2019. Mt Fyans Wind Farm Southern Bent-wing Bat Significant Impact Assessment. Report for Hydro Tasmania. Authors: Venosta, M. Biosis Pty Ltd, Melbourne. Project no. 29551.

Reliability

This assessment was undertaken by Mark Venosta, a Senior Zoologist with two decades experience working with native fauna. The purpose of this report was to assess the potential impact to Southern Ben-wing Bat against the commonwealth standards.

Uncertainties

The uncertainties associated with assessing utilisation and impacts are addressed in the report. Further assessment work is currently underway on the Southern Bent Wind Bat in consultation with the Victorian DELWP.

Reference source

Baerwald, E. F., D'Amours, G. H., Klug, B. J. & Barclay, R. M. R. 2008. Barotrauma is a significant cause of bat fatalities at wind turbines. *Current Biology* 18(16): 695-696

Reliability

Published peer reviewed scientific paper. Hence the reliability is high.

Uncertainties

None - peer reviewed scientific paper

Reference source

Commonwealth of Australia 2013. Survey Guidelines for Australia's Threatened Orchids. Guidelines for detecting orchids listed as 'Threatened' under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Reliability

These guidelines are the standard to which the Commonwealth government expect targeted surveys for Threatened Orchids are undertaken. Hence the reliability is high.

Uncertainties

None – Commonwealth Government publication.

Reference source

DELWP 2017. Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. Victorian Government Department of Land, Water and Planning, Melbourne (December 2017).

Reliability

These guidelines are the standard to which the State government determine offsets for impacts to threatened flora and fauna. Hence the reliability is high.

Uncertainties

None – State Government publication.

Reference source

Lumsden, L, Moloney P & Smales, I 2019. Developing a science-based approach to defining key species of birds and bats of concern for wind farm developments in Victoria. Victorian Government Department of Land, Water and Planning, Melbourne (September 2019).

Reliability

Report developed an approach to determine the species at potential risk from the impacts of wind turbine collisions, at the state-wide population level.



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Uncertainties

None – State Government publication.

Reference source

DEWHA 2009a. Significant impact guidelines for 36 migratory shorebird species: Migratory species. Draft EPBC Act policy statement 3.21. Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage & the Arts. Australian Government, Canberra.

Reliability

These guidelines are the standard to which the Commonwealth government expect impacts to Migratory Birds are to be assessed. Hence the reliability is high.

Uncertainties

None – Commonwealth Government publication.

Reference source

DEWHA 2009b. Significant impact guidelines for the critically endangered golden sun moth (*Synemon plana*). Nationally threatened species and ecological communities EPBC policy statement 3.12. Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage & the Arts. Australian Government, Canberra.

Reliability

These guidelines are the standard to which the Commonwealth government expect targeted surveys for Golden Sun Moth are undertaken. Hence the reliability is high.

Uncertainties

None – Commonwealth Government publication.

Reference source

DEWHA 2009c. Significant impact guidelines for the vulnerable Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*). Nationally threatened species and ecological communities EPBC policy statement 3.14. Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage & the Arts. Australian Government, Canberra.

Reliability

These guidelines are the standard to which the Commonwealth government expect targeted surveys for Growling Grass Frog are undertaken. Hence the reliability is high.

Uncertainties

None – Commonwealth Government publication.

Reference source

DSE 2010b. Biodiversity Precinct Structure Planning Kit. Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne.

Reliability

The kit identifies the information required by State government to identify biodiversity assessments for precinct structure planning. Hence the reliability is high.

Uncertainties

None – State Government publication.

Reference source

DSEWPac 1999. Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened reptiles: Guidelines for detecting reptiles listed as threatened under the EPBC Act. Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population & Communities. Australian Government, Canberra.



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Reliability

These guidelines are the standard to which the Commonwealth government expect targeted surveys for Threatened Reptiles are undertaken. Hence the reliability is high.

Uncertainties

None – Commonwealth Government publication.

Reference source

DSEWPaC 2011a. Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 referral guidelines for the vulnerable striped legless lizard, *Delma impar*. Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population & Communities. Australian Government, Canberra.

Reliability

These guidelines are the standard to which the Commonwealth government expect targeted surveys for Striped Legless Lizard are undertaken. Hence the reliability is high.

Uncertainties

None – Commonwealth Government publication.

Reference source

DSEWPaC 2011b. Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened fish: Guidelines for detecting fish listed as threatened under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population & Communities. Australian Government, Canberra.

Reliability

These guidelines are the standard to which the Commonwealth government expect targeted surveys for Threatened Aquatic Species are undertaken. Hence the reliability is high.

Uncertainties

None – Commonwealth Government publication.



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Section 8
Proposed alternatives
Do you have any feasible alternatives to taking the proposed action? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No



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Section 9

Person proposing the action

9.1.1 Is the person proposing the action a member of an organisation?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Organisation

Organisation name	Woolnorth Wind Farm Holding Pty Ltd
Business name	
ABN	91154051617
ACN	
Business address	Level 1, 59 Cameron Street, Launceston, 7250, Tasmania, Australia
Postal address	
Main Phone number	1800 870 776
Fax	
Primary email address	INFO@WOOLNORTHWIND.COM.AU
Secondary email address	

9.1.2 I qualify for exemption from fees under section 520(4C)(e)(v) of the EPBC Act because I am:

☐ Small business
☒ Not applicable

9.1.2.2 I would like to apply for a waiver of full or partial fees under Schedule 1, 5.21A of the EPBC Regulations *

☐ Yes ☒ No

9.1.3 Contact

First name	Stephen
Last name	Ross
Job title	General Manager
Phone	
Mobile	
Fax	
Email	stephen.ross@woolnorthwind.com.au
Primary address	Level 1, 59 Cameron St, Launceston, 7250, TAS, Australia
Address	

Declaration: Person proposing the action

I, _____, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to the EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. I declare that I am not taking the action on behalf or for the benefit of any other person or entity.

Signature: Date:

I, _____, the person proposing the action, consent to the designation of _____ as the proponent for the purposes of the action described in this EPBC Act Referral.

Signature:.....Date:



Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Proposed designated proponent

9.2.1 Is the proposed designated proponent a member of an organisation?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Organisation

Organisation name	Woolnorth Wind Farm Holding Pty Ltd
Business name	
ABN	91154051617
ACN	
Business address	Level 1, 59 Cameron St, Launceston, 7250, TAS, Australia
Postal address	
Main Phone number	1800 870 776
Fax	
Primary email address	INFO@WOOLNORTHWIND.COM.AU
Secondary email address	

9.2.2 Contact

First name	Stephen
Last name	Ross
Job title	General Manager
Phone	1800 870 776
Mobile	
Fax	
Email	stephen.ross@woolnorthwind.com.au
Primary address	Level 1, 59 Cameron St, Launceston, 7250, TAS, Australia
Address	

Declaration: Proposed Designated Proponent

I, _____, the
proposed designated proponent, consent to the designation of
myself as the proponent for the purposes of the action described in this EPBC Act Referral.

Signature: Date:



Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Referring party (person preparing the information)

9.3.1 Is the referring party (person preparing the information) a member of an organisation?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Organisation

Organisation name	Woolnorth Wind Farm Holding Pty Ltd
Business name	
ABN	91154051617
ACN	
Business address	Level 1, 59 Cameron St, Launceston, 7250, TAS, Australia
Postal address	
Main Phone number	1800 870 776
Fax	
Primary email address	INFO@WOOLNORTHWIND.COM.AU
Secondary email address	

9.3.2 Contact

First name	Stephen
Last name	Ross
Job title	General Manager
Phone	1800 870 776
Mobile	
Fax	
Email	stephen.ross@woolnorthwind.com.au
Primary address	Level 1, 59 Cameron St, Launceston, 7250, TAS, Australia
Address	

Declaration: Referring party (person preparing the information)

I, _____, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to this EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence.

Signature: Date:



Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Appendix A

Attachment

Document Type	File Name
action_area_images	Attachment 3 - EPBC MFWF Site Locality. sec.pdf
action_area_images	Attachment 1 - EPBC MFWF Development Plan Overview and Maps.sec Page 1.pdf
action_area_images	Attachment 1 - EPBC MFWF Development Plan Overview and Maps.sec Page 2.pdf
action_area_images	Attachment 1 - EPBC MFWF Development Plan Overview and Maps.sec Page 3.pdf
action_area_images	Attachment 1 - EPBC MFWF Development Plan Overview and Maps.sec Page 4.pdf
action_area_images	Attachment 1 - EPBC MFWF Development Plan Overview and Maps.sec Page 5.pdf
action_area_images	Attachment 1 - EPBC MFWF Development Plan Overview and Maps.sec Page 6.pdf
govt_approval_conditions	Attachment 2 - EPBC MFWF Environment Effect Statement Decision 2017R06.pdf
supporting_tech_reports	Attachment 4 - EPBC MFWF Existing Conditions.sec Part A. pdf
supporting_tech_reports	Attachment 4 - EPBC MFWF Existing Conditions.sec Part B. pdf
supporting_tech_reports	Attachment 5 - EPBC MFWF Targeted Surveys Report.sec Part A.pdf
supporting_tech_reports	Attachment 5 - EPBC MFWF Targeted Surveys Report.sec Part B.pdf
supporting_tech_reports	Attachment 5 - EPBC MFWF Targeted Surveys Report.sec Part C.pdf
supporting_tech_reports	Attachment 6 - EPBC MFWF SBWB Survey Supplementary Report.sec.pdf
impact_reduction_docs	Attachment 7 - Land in Development Area and Titles.sec.pdf
impact_reduction_docs	Attachment Detailed Answers EPBC MFWF.pdf

Appendix B

Coordinates

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