Four Mile Creek Wind Farm

Application Number: **03250** Commencement Date: **03/12/2025** Status: **Locked**

1. About the project

1.1 Project details

1.1.1 Project title *

Four Mile Creek Wind Farm

1.1.2 Project industry type *

Energy Generation and Supply (renewable)

1.1.3 Project industry sub-type

Wind Farm

1.1.4 Estimated start date *

31/03/2029

1.1.4 Estimated end date *

31/03/2061

1.2 Proposed Action details

1.2.1 Provide an overview of the proposed action, including all proposed activities. *

Four Mile Creek Pty Limited (FMCWF Pty Ltd) proposes to develop the Four Mile Creek Wind Farm Project (the Proposed Action, the Project) to provide a reliable and affordable source of energy for the people of NSW and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with energy generation.

The Project is located within Canobolas State Forest, which is predominantly a softwood plantation managed by the Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW), approximately 6.7 km southwest of Orange in the Central Tablelands region of New South Wales (NSW), within the Cabonne Shire Local Government Area (LGA). The City of Orange is the closest large population centre with an estimate population of 43,512. Smaller townships of Spring Terrace, Spring Hill and Millthorpe are nearer to the Project Area.

Off-site works (i.e., outside the main wind farm Project Area) will be required, for example, for targeted road network upgrades that will facilitate the delivery of large infrastructure items (e.g., wind turbines). The location of these off-site works will be confirmed during future stages of the NSW development application process, but are generally anticipated to be in already disturbed areas within the road reserve.

The Proposed Action includes the installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of up to 21 wind turbine generators (WTGs) with a generating capacity of up to approximately 157.5 MW, ancillary civil and electrical engineering infrastructure, permanent operational facilities and temporary construction facilities.

The key components of the Proposed Action include:

- Up to 21 (three blade) WTGs, with a maximum blade-tip height of up to 250 m above ground level and a hub height of 150 m above ground level.
- Power infrastructure providing connection to the national energy market (NEM), including:
    - An internal electrical reticulation network consisting of underground transmission lines connecting all WTGs to an on-site 33 kV / 132 kV substation.
    - An overhead 132 kV transmission line extending from the 33 kV / 132 kV substation to a new 132 kV switching station, to provide a connection to the existing 132 kV Cadia to Orange North transmission line.
- Permanent ancillary infrastructure, including:
    - An operation and maintenance facility.
    - Hardstands.
    - Telecommunications facilities and utility services.
    - Water storage tanks.
    - Additional access tracks.
    - Upgrades to existing access tracks.
    - Primary and secondary access point from the public road network.
- Temporary construction facilities including
    - Construction compounds, site office buildings, storage areas, fencing and screening.
    - Concrete batching plants, rock crushing facilities, on-site borrow pits, construction water storage dam, stockpiles, and materials storage compounds for used during the construction phase.
    - Laydown areas for WTG installation and storage of WTG components.
    - Provision for Temporary Workers Accommodation (TWA) facilities (on-site, offsite or a combination thereof), if required.
- Targeted road network upgrades to facilitate delivery of over-size and over-mass (OSOM) WTG components to (and within) the Project Area, as required.
- Subdivision and boundary adjustments.

Proposed infrastructure and turbine blades would be contained within the Disturbance Footprint, for reference (refer to the mapping data provided in response to Section 2.1, Location Details, “Project area” of this referral). The proposed layout will allow for micro-siting and will be subject to further design as the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) progresses.

Off-site TWA facilities are being considered as part of the Proposed Action, but their location/s are yet to be identified. Should off-site TWA facilities be identified as a viable and preferred option, they will be subject to detailed assessment and documentation within the EIS. This will include a comprehensive evaluation of potential impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES).

It is anticipated that works will commence within one year of obtaining all necessary approvals. The timing of construction will be driven by additional permits and authorisations, contractor selection, detailed design and procurement processes and a final investment decision. The construction phase of the Proposed Action is anticipated to be 24 months. The Proposed Action has an estimated operational life of 30 years after which it may be decommissioned or re-powered.

The position of the primary access point off Four Mile Creek Road will allow the transport of major turbine components and other project-related materials to the Project Area from two proposed transport routes: being the Port of Newcastle or Port Kembla. The transport routes are from the north via Molong and Dubbo utilising the Hunter Expressway / Golden Highway from the Port of Newcastle, or from the south via Goulburn utilising Goulburn Road, Crookwell Road, the Mid Western Highway, Lachlan Valley Way and the Hume Highway towards Port Kembla.
OSOM vehicles will be required to transport WTGs and ancillary infrastructure to the Project Area. The preferred transport route of WTG components and other Project-related materials will be confirmed via a transport route assessment, to be prepared as part of the EIS. It is noted that road upgrades are proposed for a range of nearby projects throughout the region which are further progressed through the approvals process than the Project. It is expected that the Project will rely on these roads, which is expected to reduce the requirement for the Project to upgrade roads between the Project Area and the nominated port (once known).

The Project Area for the purposes of the EPBC Referral encompasses an area of approximately 5,910.93 hectares (ha). The Disturbance Footprint is located within the Project Area, is defined as the area within which all WTG and associated infrastructure will be placed, providing the necessary flexibility for the detailed design of the Project whilst also allowing a detailed environmental assessment process to be completed. The proposed Disturbance Footprint associated with the Proposed Action is approximately 536.04 ha based on the current indicative Project layout, which will be subject to further design refinement and revision as the Project progresses. This represents 9.07% of the total Project Area. The Disturbance Footprint mapping data has been provided in Section 2.1 of this referral.

An actual Disturbance Area for the Proposed Action i.e., the area proposed to be disturbed as a result of the Project, will be within the Disturbance Footprint and is subject to further design as the assessment process progresses. Currently, the actual Disturbance Area is anticipated to be approximately 320.90 ha, or approximately 5.43% of the total Project Area.

It is noted that the indicative ‘Disturbance Footprint’ is a conservative area for early assessment purposes and the actual Disturbance Area will be significantly smaller but is subject to further detailed assessments and design. Direct impacts associated with the Proposed Action would be contained to a refined impact area within the final Disturbance Footprint (i.e. the actual Disturbance Area), but the total extent of this area has not yet been determined.

The extent of this reduction to the Disturbance Footprint presented in this referral will be confirmed during the EIS phase because the design work for the Proposed Action is ongoing and will be finalised upon completion of additional detailed design work and further environmental surveys.

The Proposed Action is expected to involve the following activities that may have a direct or indirect impact on the environment:

- Construction works to enable the installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of WTGs, ancillary infrastructure and establishment of any temporary facilities
- Upgrade and construction of access tracks and access points, substation/switchyard and other parts of the Proposed Action, where required

- Cut and fill works to create level areas for crane hardstands and turbine laydown areas at each WTG location
- Installation of underground and overhead transmission lines and cabling
- Delivery of wind turbines that may require targeted road network upgrades
- Clearance of vegetation associated with the abovementioned works within the Project Area and Disturbance Footprint
- Delivery of other materials, including but not limited to, concrete and gravel
- Delivery of the substation and transformers
- Testing and commissioning activities
- Removal of construction equipment and rehabilitation of construction areas.

For the purposes of this referral, direct impacts may include removal of native vegetation, removal of threatened species and their habitat and fauna mortality. Indirect impacts may include inadvertent impacts on adjacent habitat or vegetation, reduced viability of adjacent habitat due to edge effects, reduced viability of adjacent habitat due to noise, dust, or light spill, transport of weeds and pathogens from the site to adjacent vegetation and changed fire regimes. Prescribed impacts may include impacts from WTG strike, impacts to waterbodies, water quality and hydrological processes, impacts to habitat connectivity and impacts from vehicle strike. Further information regarding potential direct and indirect impacts is provided in Attachment 1 '31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final', Section 4.0 and Appendix C (pages 46-50)).

The Proposed Action will contribute to meeting Commonwealth and NSW Government objectives, in an environmentally sensitive and sustainable manner and will provide significant renewable energy generation capacity to the National Energy Market (NEM) during a period when the states existing coal fired power stations are progressively closing. These power stations currently provide approximately three quarters of NSW's electricity supply and two thirds of the capacity required during peak demand.

1.2.2 Is the project action part of a staged development or related to other actions or proposals in the region?

No

1.2.6 What Commonwealth or state legislation, planning frameworks or policy documents are relevant to the proposed action, and how are they relevant? *

The Proposed Action requires approval under Part 4 of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act). Being development for the purpose of electricity generation with a capital investment value of more than $30 million, the Project is declared to be State Significant Development (SSD) under the provisions of the NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021.

A State Significant Development Application (SSDA) will be lodged with the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), along with an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A range of other NSW environmental legislation will also apply and will be considered in the assessment process. If the project is determined to be a controlled action under the EPBC Act, assessment under the Assessment Bilateral Agreement between the NSW and Commonwealth governments is anticipated.

In addition to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), the Commonwealth Civil Aviation Regulations 1988 and Heavy Vehicle National Law will also apply to the Proposed Action.

Under the Civil Aviation Regulations 1988, a detailed assessment in accordance with the regulations and consultation with the relevant agencies will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the EIS. Approvals would be required for the transport of wind turbines and associated infrastructure by OSOM vehicles under the Heavy Vehicle National Law.

The NSW Forestry Act was amended in 2021 to allow renewable energy projects in softwood plantations. The Project is a response to this change and there are specific requirements in the Forestry Act 2012 that need to be met to facilitate a section 60 forest permit for renewable energy infrastructure.

1.2.7 Describe any public consultation that has been, is being or will be undertaken regarding the project area, including with Indigenous stakeholders. Attach any completed consultation documentations, if relevant. *

FMCWF Pty Ltd recognises that respectful, inclusive, and meaningful engagement is fundamental to the development of wind projects. FMCWF Pty Ltd recognises that effective engagement is a key component of the SSD process, in line with the Engagement Guidelines (DPHI, 2024).
FMCWF Pty Ltd acknowledges that effective engagement requires everyone involved to do their part, at the appropriate stage in the process. FMCWF Pty Ltd has and aims to continue providing engagement that is meaningful, proportionate and tailored to the needs of the community, Councils and government agencies as well as outlining the statutory context that ensures the community can participate in planning and assessment.

Umwelt (on behalf of FMC Pty Ltd) has prepared a Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) for the Project to outline the objectives and approach to community engagement throughout the life of the Project from development through construction and operation. The CSEP provides an overview of FMCWF Pty Ltd's approach to stakeholder engagement, outlines the Project and the relevant stakeholders, provides detail on the consultation undertaken to date and outlines various community benefits. The CSEP is attached at '24355_R09_Iberdola_Four Mile Creek WF Proposed Project_CSEP_V2'.

Additionally, FMCWF Pty Ltd has undertaken early engagement with Host Landholders, Neighbouring Landholders, the broader community, state government agencies, federal government agencies, local councils, the forest industry and forest user groups, community, development and special interest groups and Aboriginal Stakeholders to build relationships in relation to the Project, as well as to inform stakeholders of the Project design and development. This has assisted in identifying and understanding the perceived issues and impacts early in the planning and assessment process.

Stakeholder and community engagement has been undertaken early in the scoping phase to:

- Proactively inform Project design and development.
- Identify perceived issues/impacts to be addressed in the assessment process.
- Establish stakeholder relationships with hosts, near neighbours and key stakeholders for the Project.

Iberdrola Australia commenced stakeholder engagement as part of the preliminary Project design in 2024 and continued that engagement throughout the scoping phase (March 2024 - November 2025). Stakeholder engagement has utilised a broad range of mechanisms and has included but not been limited to 38 face-to-face meetings with nearby landholders / residents, phone calls with 29 community and special interest group members, 13 formal briefing meetings to local government, community and special interest groups, with Project Information Sheets and / or slide decks to formally introduce the Projects, 413 letters sent in August 2024, two (2) community information sessions at Spring Hill Community Hall on 2 August 2024, attended by 80 people and one community information sessions at Millthorpe Pioneers Museum on 24 September 2024 attended by 17 people, four (4) campaigns to an email list which grew from 85 to 125 in August to December 2024 and an attempt to doorknock all 50 properties within 4.95 km of the Project, with 29 face-to-face conversations resulting directly from the doorknocking. The following key community views were identified in engagement conducted for the social scoping phase.

When stakeholders and community members were asked directly about potential negative impacts of the Project, both prompted and unprompted, the top issues raised included:

- Impacts on surrounds, in particular the potential for the Project to impact on the visual amenity of the social locality and generate unwanted noise and vibration.
- Impacts relating to traffic and conditions on local roads.
- Impacts on livelihoods, in particular the potential decline in property values resulting from the introduction of the Project to the community.

When community members were asked directly to identify potential positive impacts of the Project, the most frequently cited responses related to:

- Provision of renewable energy to the national electricity market.

- The improvement of livelihoods with the inclusion of employment and contracting opportunities required to construct and operate the Project.
- The sharing of Project benefits through direct investment in the local community, as well as improvement to roads, and the stability of electricity affordability.

Consultation with agencies and stakeholder groups to date has been primarily to commence engagement, introduce the Project and key Project team members. Consultation with further agencies and stakeholder groups will be undertaken throughout the assessment process, in accordance with the NSW Government Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the Project. The Project SEARs (issued 23 January 2026) are attached at Issued "SEARs - 2026-04-22T111108.021".

The formal notification process for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment will commence in Q1 2026 as required by the Project SEARs. Once commenced, detailed consultation will be undertaken with the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) for the Proposed Action.

1.3.1 Identity: Referring party

Privacy Notice:

Personal information means information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

By completing and submitting this form, you consent to the collection of all personal information contained in this form. If you are providing the personal information of other individuals in this form, please ensure you have their consent before doing so.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) collects your personal information (as defined by the Privacy Act 1988) through this platform for the purposes of enabling the department to consider your submission and contact you in relation to your submission. If you fail to provide some or all of the personal information requested on this platform (name and email address), the department will be unable to contact you to seek further information (if required) and subsequently may impact the consideration given to your submission.

Personal information may be disclosed to other Australian government agencies, persons or organisations where necessary for the above purposes, provided the disclosure is consistent with relevant laws, in particular the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act). Your personal information will be used and stored in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles.

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Alternatively, email us at privacy@dcceew.gov.au.

☑ **Confirm that you have read and understand this Privacy Notice ***

1.3.1.1 Is Referring party an organisation or business? *

Yes

Referring party organisation details

ABN/ACN	18059519041
Organisation name	UMWELT (AUSTRALIA) PTY. LTD.
Organisation address	75 York Street, Teralba, NSW, 2284

Referring party details

Name	Nathan Baker
Job title	Principal Environmental Consultant
Phone	0477 713 478
Email	nbaker@umwelt.com.au
Address	Level 11, 213 Miller Street

1.3.2 Identity: Person proposing to take the action

1.3.2.1 Are the Person proposing to take the action details the same as the Referring party details? *

No

1.3.2.2 Is Person proposing to take the action an organisation or business? *

Yes

Person proposing to take the action organisation details

ABN/ACN	66677193305
Organisation name	Four Mile Creek Wind Farm Pty Limited
Organisation address	Governor Phillip Tower, Iberdrola Australia, Level 22, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000

Person proposing to take the action details

Name	Emily Brebner
Job title	Development Manager NSW Development
Phone	0428684197
Email	emily.brebner@iberdrola.com.au
Address	L22 Governor Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW

1.3.2.14 Are you proposing the action as part of a Joint Venture? *

No

1.3.2.15 Are you proposing the action as part of a Trust? *

No

1.3.2.17 Describe the Person proposing the action's history of responsible environmental management including details of any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against the Person proposing to take the action. *

The Proponent for the Project is FMCWF Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Iberdrola Australia Development Pty Ltd, referred to as Iberdrola Australia in this EPBC Act Referral, and is ultimately owned by Iberdrola, S.A. (Iberdrola). Iberdrola Australia are one of the leading renewables companies globally with over 44GW of installed renewable capacity as of the end of 2024. Iberdrola Australia is a long-term owner, operator and developer of renewable generation in Australia. Iberdrola Australia has renewable and firming assets with a total capacity of 2.4GW and a large pipeline of future opportunities with the aim of driving the country's energy transition. With existing investments made totalling over AU$2 billion, Iberdrola Australia continues to pursue growth through the investment into additional renewables projects.

Previously Infigen Energy, Iberdrola Australia has been operational in the Australian market for over 20 years, successfully developing a number of wind, solar and battery projects. These assets are located across the states of New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia. Iberdrola Australia remain responsible for its assets across their full project lifecycle, with dedicated teams working on the development, construction management, and operations and maintenance of our projects.

Iberdrola Australia has experience implementing and complying with both state and Commonwealth environmental approvals in the pre-construction, construction and operations phases of its previous projects.

Iberdrola Australia is a signatory to the Australian Clean Energy Council's Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Projects, a voluntary commitment to engage respectfully with communities, be sensitive to environmental and cultural values, and make a positive contribution to the regions in which it operates. As a subsidiary to Iberdrola Australia, FMCWF Pty Ltd, will implement the same best practice commitments with regard to the Proposed Action. To avoid doubt, any statements or commitments made with regard to Iberdrola Australia within this EPBC Act referral apply to FMCWF Pty Ltd.

Iberdrola Australia is also the ‘person proposing to take the action’ in relation to the Kingswood Battery Energy Storage System (BESS): Application Number: 03400. The Kingswood BESS proposed action is for the construction, operation and maintenance of large battery energy storage at 744 Burgmanns Lane, Kingswood, NSW 2340; with a capacity of up to 270 Megawatts (MW) / 1,080 Megawatt-hours (MWh). A Referral for that proposed action (refer 03400) was lodged in April 2026 and further identifies Iberdrola Australia experience implementing and complying with Commonwealth environmental approval requirements in the pre-construction phases of its projects.

Iberdrola Australia (and as a result FMCWF Pty Ltd) has not been subject to any past or present proceedings Commonwealth, State or Territory Law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

1.3.2.18 If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation’s environmental policy and planning framework

Iberdrola Australia is part of the Iberdrola Group, and is ultimately owned by Iberdrola, S.A. (Iberdrola). Iberdrola Australia's Environment Policy (refer Att 7-Environmental Policy) reflects the guidance provided by Iberdrola Group's Environment Policy (refer Att 9-Environmental Policy) to implement the Group's commitment to the environment and boosting environmental sustainability, through the application of the following principles to all its activities:

- Develop a sustainable model that is respectful of nature, biodiversity, and historical and cultural heritage.
- Meeting or exceeding legal and applicable environmental standards.
- Apply the principles of avoid, mitigate, or offset in all activities.
- Promote innovation through research and support for the development of new technologies and best environmental practices.
- Use natural capital sustainably.

Conserve, protect and promote the development and growth of natural heritage Iberdrola Group's policies include the Iberdrola Group Environmental Policy detailed further below, and the Biodiversity Policy which is intended to establish a framework of reference for integrating the protection and promotion of biodiversity into the Group-level strategy. This helps to define the principles of conduct for the development of a business model that is sustainable and contributes to a nature-positive society, such that the activities of Iberdrola's companies protect and promote the development and growth of the natural heritage and a global commitment to being "nature positive" by 2030.

Iberdrola Group's policies include the Iberdrola Group Environmental Policy detailed further below, and the Biodiversity Policy which is intended to establish a framework of reference for integrating the protection and promotion of biodiversity into the Group-level strategy. This helps to define the principles of conduct for the development of a business model that is sustainable and contributes to a nature-positive society, such that the activities of Iberdrola's companies protect and promote the development and growth of the natural heritage and a global commitment to being "nature positive" by 2030.

Iberdrola's Environmental Policy, approved by the Board of Directors of Iberdrola, S.A., outlines the company's commitment to environmental protection and sustainability. It establishes guidelines for integrating environmental concerns into the company's strategy, investments, and operations, emphasising the importance of renewable energy, efficiency, emissions reduction, and digital transformation. Key points of the policy include:

- Purpose: The policy aims to integrate environmental protection into the company's strategy, investments, and operations, emphasising the importance of renewable energy and environmental management principles.
- Scope of Application: The policy applies to all companies within the Iberdrola Group and investees over which the company has effective control. It also encourages alignment with the policy for companies in which Iberdrola has an interest.
- Main Principles of Conduct: The policy outlines principles such as respect for nature and biodiversity, compliance with legal provisions and environmental standards, promotion of innovation and sustainable technologies, sustainable use of natural capital, and integration of biodiversity protection into the business model.
- Priority Lines of Action: The policy focuses on three priority areas: climate action, protection of biodiversity, and the circular economy, emphasising the application of the main principles of conduct in these areas.

Overall, the policy underscores FMCWF Pty Ltd’s commitment to environmental sustainability, legal compliance, innovation, and stakeholder engagement, with a focus on addressing climate change, protecting biodiversity, and promoting circular economy principles.

Iberdrola’s Biodiversity Policy which is intended to establish a framework of reference for integrating the protection and promotion of biodiversity into the Group-level strategy. This helps to define the principles of conduct for the development of a business model that is sustainable and contributes to a nature-positive society, such that the activities of the Group’s companies protect and promote the development and growth of the natural heritage and a global commitment to being "nature positive" by 2030 (refer Att 7-Environmental Policy for the full Biodiversity Policy).

Iberdrola Australia's annual sustainability report outlines its environmental and biodiversity policies in the fight against climate change and protection of biodiversity (refer Iberdrola-sustainability-report-2024-master-digital-spreads (1)). As a wholly owned subsidiary within the Iberdrola Group, Iberdrola Australia also reports under the Iberdrola Group’s global Sustainability Report in accordance with the European Union Directive 2022/2464 on Corporate Sustainability Reporting, (refer IB_Sustainability_Report, ESRS E4 Biodiversity and ecosystems, pp 130-167: Consolidated Non-Financial Information Statement (NFIS) and the Sustainability Reporting 2024).

1.3.3 Identity: Proposed designated proponent

1.3.3.1 Are the Proposed designated proponent details the same as the Person proposing to take the action? *

Yes

Proposed designated proponent organisation details

ABN/ACN	66677193305
Organisation name	Four Mile Creek Wind Farm Pty Limited
Organisation address	Governor Phillip Tower, Iberdrola Australia, Level 22, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000

Proposed designated proponent details

Name	Emily Brebner
Job title	Development Manager NSW Development
Phone	0428684197
Email	emily.brebner@iberdrola.com.au
Address	L22 Governor Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW

1.3.4 Identity: Summary of allocation

Confirmed Referring party's identity

The Referring party is the person preparing the information in this referral.

ABN/ACN	18059519041
Organisation name	UMWELT (AUSTRALIA) PTY. LTD.
Organisation address	75 York Street, Teralba, NSW, 2284
Representative's name	Nathan Baker
Representative's job title	Principal Environmental Consultant
Phone	0477 713 478
Email	nbaker@umwelt.com.au
Address	Level 11, 213 Miller Street

Confirmed Person proposing to take the action's identity

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual, business, government agency or trustee that will be responsible for the proposed action.

ABN/ACN	66677193305
Organisation name	Four Mile Creek Wind Farm Pty Limited
Organisation address	Governor Phillip Tower, Iberdrola Australia, Level 22, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000
Representative's name	Emily Brebner
Representative's job title	Development Manager NSW Development
Phone	0428684197
Email	emily.brebner@iberdrola.com.au
Address	L22 Governor Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW

Confirmed Proposed designated proponent's identity

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual or organisation proposed to be responsible for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act during the assessment process, if the Minister decides that this project is a controlled action.

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

1.4 Payment details: Payment exemption and fee waiver

1.4.1 Do you qualify for an exemption from fees under EPBC Regulation 5.23 (1) (a)? *

No

1.4.3 Have you applied for or been granted a waiver for full or partial fees under Regulation 5.21A? *

No

1.4.5 Are you going to apply for a waiver of full or partial fees under EPBC Regulation 5.21A?

No

1.4.7 Has the department issued you with a credit note? *

No

1.4.9 Would you like to add a purchase order number to your invoice? *

Yes

1.4.10 Enter purchase order number *

XXX

1.4 Payment details: Payment allocation

1.4.11 Who would you like to allocate as the entity responsible for payment? *

Person proposing to take the action

2. Location

2.1 Project footprint

Project Area: 5910.93 Ha **Disturbance Footprint:** 536.04 Ha

2.2 Footprint details

2.2.1 What is the address of the proposed action? *

Glengariffe Road, Canobolas, NSW, 2800

2.2.2 Where is the primary jurisdiction of the proposed action? *

New South Wales

2.2.3 Is there a secondary jurisdiction for this proposed action? *

No

2.2.5 What is the tenure of the action area relevant to the project area? *

The Project and supporting infrastructure are proposed to be located within the Canobolas State Forest that is managed by FCNSW, with the wind farm development (i.e., Proposed Action) being developed under an investigation permit between FMCWF Pty Ltd and FCNSW. Under the terms of the investigation permit FMCWF Pty Ltd is permitted to investigate the feasibility of the Proposed Action within the softwood plantation in the Project Area. The NSW Forestry Act 2012 restricts the construction and operation of renewable energy infrastructure to the softwood plantation area.

3. Existing environment

3.1 Physical description

3.1.1 Describe the current condition of the project area’s environment.

The Project Infrastructure is located within Canobolas State Forest, approximately 6.7 km south-west of Orange in the Central Tablelands region of New South Wales (NSW). The Project Area is split across the Cabonne Council LGA and the Orange City Council LGA. A total of 21 WTGs are proposed to be located in the Cabonne Council LGA, with the northern portion of the Project Area being located within the Orange LGA containing no WTGs or Project infrastructure.

The majority of the Project Area is zoned RU3 Forestry under the Cabonne LEP 2012 (NSW Government, 2012). A portion of the Project Area to the north-west over 2 km from the Disturbance Footprint is zoned C3 (Environmental Management) under the Orange LEP 2011 (NSW Government, 2011). Land to the west of the Project Area is similarly zoned RU3 (Forestry) while the land to the east of the Project Area is zoned RU1 (Primary Production). Land to the north of the Project Area is zoned C1 (National Parks and Nature Reserves), noting that none of the Project Area is located within this zoned area. Land zoned C1 under the Cabonne LEP 2012 is more than 1 km from the Disturbance Footprint. South of the Project Area, land is zoned RU1 (Primary Production), including a nature corridor to the south-east zoned RU3 (Forestry).

The Project Area is dominated by exotic pine plantation, with approximately 90–98% of the Project Area consisting of plantation forests, access tracks, and heavily managed forestry land. This forestry land use has resulted in a highly modified and degraded ecological condition across the majority of the site. Native vegetation is limited and fragmented, occurring mainly as small grassy forest patches and riparian remnants, primarily within the southern transmission line and parts of the northern/central Subject Land. Twelve Plant Community Types (PCTs) were recorded within the Project Area, though native vegetation occupies only a very small proportion relative to its total area. A single federally listed Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) was mapped within the Project Area which was White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland. A single patch within the southern transmission corridor correspond to the TEC, White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland within the Referral Area, but this is generally small, isolated, and in poor to moderate condition due to historical disturbance. The broader landscape context is substantially altered, providing low ecological connectivity between remaining native remnants. Fauna habitat quality is generally low, reflecting the dominance of plantation forest, although limited higher quality habitat (e.g. hollow-bearing trees) may occur in remnant native patches. Overall, with the exception of small isolated remnants, the ecological condition of the Project Area is best described as low quality and heavily degraded.

The Project Area is dissected by several hydro lines including the fourth order Strahler Stream Cadiangullong Creek in the south-east. There are also several third order tributaries of the Belubula River, located 16 km south of the Project Area. The Project Area sits within the Murray Darling Basin, with rainfall on the western side of the Canobolas State Forest draining into the Lachlan River catchment and the eastern side draining into the Macquarie-Bogan catchment. No flood prone land or flood management areas are identified within the Project Area.

Access to the Project Area is proposed via the existing road network with road upgrade works being anticipated as a component of the Project. Primary access currently considered for the Project will be via an access point proposed off Four Mile Creek Road in the southern-most portion of the Project Area. The position of the primary access point off Four Mile Creek Road would allow the transport of Project-related materials to the Project Area from two (2) potential transport routes; being the Port of Newcastle or Port Kembla. A secondary access point is located further along Four Mile Creek Road in a north-easterly direction, which is located to the eastern portion of the Project Area, approximately 5.7 km away from the Primary access point.

The transport routes under consideration are from the north via Molong and Dubbo, utilising the Hunter Expressway / Golden Highway from the Port of Newcastle, or from the south via Goulburn utilising Goulburn Road, Crookwell Road, the Mid Western Highway, Lachlan Valley Way and the Hume Highway towards Port Kembla.

Project access and transport routes will continue to be investigated by FMCWF Pty Ltd throughout future stages of Project development and design. Access points will be gated and secured, and appropriate warning signs erected warning of the movement of heavy vehicles, particularly during the construction phase. The local access road connections and approach routes to the Project will be developed in combination with site planning and WTG location selection.

3.1.2 Describe any existing or proposed uses for the project area.

The establishment of a wind farm within the State Forest aligns with both Commonwealth and New South Wales government commitments to enhance renewable energy generation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across NSW and Australia. This development directly supports national and state objectives for transitioning toward cleaner energy sources and mitigating climate change impacts.

State Forests are well-suited to accommodate renewable energy projects due to their established infrastructure. The presence of a network of existing roads and access points ensures that the area is already suitable for both light and heavy vehicles, facilitating construction and ongoing operations. Furthermore, the wind farm will be situated within a homogenous pine plantation, making use of land that is uniform and readily accessible.

- FCNSW manages the Canobolas State Forest as part of its broader mandate to oversee more than two million hectares of state forests across New South Wales. Their operations in the Canobolas State Forest include:
- Plantation Management: The area includes plantations of *Pinus radiata*, which are managed for timber production. These plantations contribute significantly to the local and regional economy by providing raw materials for various industries.
- Sustainable Timber Harvesting: The plantation is part of a sustainable timber production system, which involves the planning and execution of timber harvesting for long-term timber supply to customers.
- Conservation Efforts: Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW) also undertakes conservation activities to protect the biodiversity and ecological health of the forest. This includes managing habitats for native wildlife and implementing measures to prevent and control bushfires.

Economically, the forestry operations in Canobolas State Forest support local employment and contribute to the regional economy through the production and sale of timber. The sustainable management practices ensure that the forest remains a valuable resource for both current and future generations.

The Canobolas State Forest is a multifaceted area that supports a range of commercial and recreational activities. It hosts companies with mining exploration licences, beekeepers who utilise the area for honey production, and recreational hunters. Additionally, the forest is a prime location for birdwatching & hiking, attracting nature enthusiasts. Its diverse landscape also supports activities such as scenic picnics and challenging mountain bike trails, making it an asset for both business operations and leisure pursuits (e.g. bushwalking, hiking, wildlife watching and scenic views).

There are eight (8) current mining and / or exploration licence applications within the Project Area, including exploration licences EL6588, EL3856, EL6562, EL6040, EL6249, EL8817, EL1472 and EL4616. Consultation with exploration licence holders has been attempted and will be undertaken during the preparation of the EIS.

Under the terms of the investigation permit issued by FCNSW, FMCWF Pty Ltd is required to investigate the feasibility of the Proposed Action within the Project Area.

3.1.3 Describe any outstanding natural features and/or any other important or unique values that applies to the project area.

The Project Area and nearby region offers many popular recreation areas and regionally significant points of interest. There are numerous mountain bike trails in Canobolas State Forest, Mount Canobolas State Conservation Area and Glenwood State Forest maintained by Orange Mountain Bike Club, and walking trails including Mount Towac and Federal Falls. Mount Canobolas State Conservation Area has management strategies in place to protect and conserve the values of the park. Federal Falls Campground is a key tent-only campground on the eastern slopes of Mount Canobolas State Conservation Area, easily accessible by Mount Canobolas Road and offers picnic tables, barbecues and toilet facilities. Key lookouts include Mount Canobolas Summit Lookout, The Walls Lookout and Pinnacle Lookout, each of which are characterised by expansive views across vegetated hills and the rural agricultural properties near Orange. The only value/feature described above that will interact with project infrastructure are small sections of the mountain bike trails within Canobolas State Forest. All other values/features will not directly interact with the Project.

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

The Project Area is at an elevation of ~760 m to ~1,260 m above sea level, generally sloping from north to south, and comprising forestry softwood plantation which has been logged in patches across the southern and central regions of the Project Area. The topography of the Project Area features steep hills with gradients steeper than 25 degrees. There are multiple crests across the Project Area and WTGs are proposed to be located along the peaks and ridges in the central portion of the Project Area. The steepest terrain across the Project Area is in the eastern portion while the western portion of the Project Area has a slightly lower gradient.

3.2 Flora and fauna

3.2.1 Describe the flora and fauna within the affected area and attach any investigations of surveys if applicable.

Lands within the Project Area were largely cleared years ago for softwood plantation establishment but some areas of biodiversity value were retained. Preliminary biodiversity surveys were undertaken in August 2024. The following sections summarise the existing threatened flora and fauna identified, and those likely to occur, within the Project Area.

Flora

Preliminary biodiversity desktop assessment identified that the Project Area is likely to contain one (1) Threatened Ecological Community (TEC), being the critically endangered TEC White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland (associated with NSW Plant Community Type (PCT) 3376 and PCT 3387) under the EPBC Act. No other EPBC Act listed TECs are likely to occur in the Project Area.

Further information regarding threatened ecological community mapping and assessment is provided in Attachment 1 '31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED', Section 3.2, Table 3.5 and Figure 3.2 (page 48)'.

There are 15 threatened flora species that have been identified within a 10 km radius of the Project Area. Of these, three (3) threatened flora species are assessed as having a moderate likelihood of occurrence within the Project Area.

These species are:

- Silver-Leaf Candlebark (*Eucalyptus canobolensis*)
- Black Gum (*Eucalyptus aggregata*)
- *Prostanthera gilesii*

Additional surveys will be undertaken as part of the EIS to target and map EPBC Act listed threatened communities and threatened flora species. Further information regarding threatened flora is provided in Attachment 1 '31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED', Section 3.23, Table 3.6 and Figure 3.6 (page 49 and 50)'.

Fauna

The Commonwealth PMST search identified recorded 36 threatened fauna species within a 10 km radius of the Project Area. Of these, seven (7) species were assessed as having a medium or high likelihood of occurrence in the Project Area.

- Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*)
- Brown treecreeper (eastern subspecies) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)
- Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*)
- White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)
- Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*)
- Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)
- Large-eared Pied Bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)

Additional surveys will be undertaken as part of the EIS to target EPBC Act listed threatened fauna species. Further information on threatened fauna is provided in Attachment 1 '31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED, Section 3.2.4, Table 3.7 and Figure 3.7 (page 50)'.

3.2.2 Describe the vegetation (including the status of native vegetation and soil) within the project area.

The Disturbance Footprint is almost entirely located on areas dominated by softwood (pine) plantation or existing forestry roads. The existing forestry roads are completely cleared i.e., void of any vegetation. Based on preliminary vegetation surveys, approximately 98% of the Disturbance Footprint (the area considered for development, within the Project Area) is considered to be non-native vegetation (i.e., softwood plantation) or existing tracks; with small, embedded patches of native vegetation (2% of the Disturbance Footprint) remaining.

Regarding native vegetation, there are 12 PCTs within the Project Area, with the following five (5) PCTs recorded or mapped in the Disturbance Footprint:

- PCT 3303 Central Tableland Ribbon Gum Sheltered Forest (which is partly associated with Mt Canobolas Xanthoparmelia Lichen which is listed as an Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) under the Biodiversity Conservation (BC) Act).
- PCT 3370 Central Tableland Red Stringybark Grassy Forest (associated with Mt Canobolas Xanthoparmelia Lichen Community which is listed as an EEC under the BC Act and associated with Prostanthera gilesii which is listed as Critically Endangered under both the BC Act and EPBC Act)).
- PCT 3366 Central Tableland Clay Apple Box Grassy Forest (associated with Tableland Basalt Forest in the Sydney Basin and South Eastern Highlands Bioregions which is listed as an EEC under the BC Act).
- PCT 3387 Central West Creekflat Grassy Woodland (associated with White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland which is listed as an CEEC under the BC Act and EPBC Act).
- PCT 4134 Mount Canobolas Rockplate Shrubland (associated with Mt Canobolas Xanthoparmelia Lichen Community which is listed as an EEC under the BC Act).

Refer to Attachment 1 '31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED', Section 3.2.1, Table 3.4 (page 42)'. for detail on the total extent of each PCT within the Project Area.

Within the Disturbance Footprint, the following PCTs have been assessed as conforming to the White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland listed as a CEEC under the EPBC Act. Further survey and detailed analysis will be undertaken to refine the extent of these communities:

- PCT 3376 Southern Tableland Grassy Box Woodland
- PCT 3387 Central West Creekflat Grassy Woodland

Further information regarding TEC mapping and assessment is provided in Attachment 1 '31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED', Section 3.2.1, Table 3.5 (page 43)'.

Land within the Project Area is mapped as Class 3, 4 and 7 under the NSW Land and Soil Capability Assessment Scheme (LSC). Regionally mapped Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) overlaps with the Disturbance Footprint. Additional soil surveys and assessment will occur to address this matter as part of the EIS, though there is potential that not all areas of BSAL will comply with relevant verification criteria i.e. a smaller portion of the Project Area may be determined to be potential or verified BSAL.

Rocky outcrops occur sporadically through the Project Area and are likely to contain crevices and small caves.

3.3 Heritage

3.3.1 Describe any Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas or other places recognised as having heritage values that apply to the project area.

There are no listed World Heritage properties within 10 km of the Project Area. As such, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on these properties as a result of the Proposed Action.

There are no listed National Heritage places within 10 km of the Project Area. As such, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on these places as a result of the Proposed Action.

There is one State Heritage item within the Project Area and eight (8) non-Aboriginal State Heritage items within 20 km of the Project Area. The nearest State Heritage item within the heritage area is Cadia Engine House & Surrounds located along the southern boundary of the Project Area.

Given the presence of registered non-Aboriginal heritage items being located within the Study Area, an Historic Heritage Assessment (HHA) will be conducted as part of the EIS.

3.3.2 Describe any Indigenous heritage values that apply to the project area.

The Project Area lies within the administrative boundaries of Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC).There are no known native title schedule, applications, determinations, or Indigenous Land Use Agreements over the Project Area.

The Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database search (conducted 24 July 2025) was defined as 5 km from the centre of the Project Area and identified 55 Aboriginal sites. The identified artefacts include:

- Open Artefact Site - 39
- Culturally Modified Tree - 8
- Stone Quarry - 2
- Aboriginal Resource Gathering (Stone Quarry) - 1
- Restricted site - 5

Given the known presence of Aboriginal sites within the Project Area, a detailed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) will be undertaken to assess potential impacts in consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) for the Proposed Action.

Further information regarding Indigenous heritage values is provided in Attachment 1 ‘31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final’, Section 3.1 and Appendix B.

3.4 Hydrology

3.4.1 Describe the hydrology characteristics that apply to the project area and attach any hydrological investigations or surveys if applicable. *

The Project Area falls within the Macquarie-Bogan catchment (which is part of the Murray-Darling Basin) and is located approximately 50 km north of Wyangala Reservoir and 70 km south of Lake Burrendong. The most prominent watercourse network that traverses the Project Area is Cadiangullong Creek (a fourth order stream). There are also several third order tributaries of the Belubula River, located 16 km south of the Project Area. The topography of the Project Area features steep hills with gradients steeper than 25 degrees. The Project Area is at an elevation of approximately 760 m to 1,260 m above sea level and generally slopes from north to south. There are multiple crests across the Project Area and WTGs are proposed to be located along the peaks and ridges in the central portion of the Project Area.

As no flood studies have been undertaken within the Project Area, it is not mapped as flood prone. The most recent flood event in the Cabonne Council LGA was in November 2022. This flood event impacted the residents of Eugowra, Canowindra, Molong, Manildra and Cudal. It is noted that the region also experienced significant flooding in 1955–1956. Potential for flood-related impacts will also be assessed in detail during preparation of the EIS.

According to the Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (GDE)Atlas (Bureau of Meteorology, 2017), the Project Area is not mapped as containing GDE. Further desktop investigation will be undertaken during the EIS phase to understand groundwater characteristics (including groundwater levels) within the Project Area.

As there are several watercourse (i.e. creek) crossings that will need to occur to facilitate the construction and ongoing operation of the Project, the Proposed Action will be subject to detailed assessment during the EIS in the form of a Water Resources Impact Assessment (WRIA) to understand the potential for surface water impacts and to develop appropriate, Project-specific management measures and strategies to avoid, minimise and then manage any residual impacts. The WRIA will consider potential impacts on surface water and the catchment, including flooding, erosion and sediment control, water quality, water users, water sourcing, and licensing.

4. Impacts and mitigation

4.1 Impact details

Potential Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) relevant to your proposed action area.

EPBC Act section	Controlling provision	Impacted	Reviewed
S12	World Heritage	No	Yes
S15B	National Heritage	No	Yes
S16	Ramsar Wetland	No	Yes
S18	Threatened Species and Ecological Communities	Yes	Yes
S20	Migratory Species	Yes	Yes
S21	Nuclear	No	Yes
S23	Commonwealth Marine Area	No	Yes
S24B	Great Barrier Reef	No	Yes
S24D	Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas	No	Yes
S26	Commonwealth Land	No	Yes
S27B	Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas	No	Yes
S28	Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency	No	Yes

4.1.1 World Heritage

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.1.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.1.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

There are no listed World Heritage properties within 10 km of the Project Area. As such, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on these properties as a result of the Proposed Action.

4.1.2 National Heritage

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.2.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.2.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The MNES search did not identify any national heritage places within the feature area or the buffer area. As such, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on these places as a result of the Proposed Action.

4.1.3 Ramsar Wetland

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Ramsar wetland
Yes		Banrock Station Wetland Complex
Yes		Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes
Yes		Riverland
Yes		The Coorong, and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland
Yes		The Macquarie Marshes

4.1.3.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.3.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

There are four wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Wetlands) located at least 200 km from the Project Area. These include:

- The Macquarie Marshes – 200-300 km downstream.
- Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes – 600–700 km downstream of the Referral Area
- Riverland– 700-800 km upstream.
- Banrock Station Wetland Complex– 800-900 km downstream.
- The Coorong, and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland– 900-1000 km downstream.

All four wetlands provide valuable habitat for water birds and migratory bird species, which in turn provides justification for the listing criteria as a Ramsar site. Further information regarding these wetlands can be found at the provided link for Australian Ramsar Wetlands - Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Impacts to threatened and migratory bird species are addressed in Section 4.1.4 and 4.1.5 of this referral.

Direct or indirect impacts on these Ramsar wetlands are not anticipated due to their large distances from the Project Area. Appropriate sediment and erosion controls, as well as contamination control measures, will be identified in the EIS and then implemented throughout the construction and operation of the Proposed Action, which will minimize any potential risks of impacts to drainage or water quality for these wetlands.

4.1.4 Threatened Species and Ecological Communities

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Threatened species

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Ammobium craspedioides	Yass Daisy
No	No	Anthochaera phrygia	Regent Honeyeater
No	No	Aphelocephala leucopsis	Southern Whiteface
No	No	Aprasia parapulchella	Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, Pink-tailed Legless Lizard
No	No	Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	Callocephalon fimbriatum	Gang-gang Cockatoo
No	No	Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami	South-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo
No	No	Chalinolobus dwyeri	Large-eared Pied Bat, Large Pied Bat
No	No	Climacteris picumnus victoriae	Brown Treecreeper (south-eastern)
No	No	Dasyurus maculatus maculatus (SE mainland population)	Spot-tailed Quoll, Spotted-tail Quoll, Tiger Quoll (southeastern mainland population)
No	No	Delma impar	Striped Legless Lizard, Striped Snake-lizard
No	No	Eucalyptus aggregata	Black Gum
No	Yes	Eucalyptus canobolensis	Silver-leaf Candlebark, Mt Canobolas Candlebark
No	No	Eucalyptus pulverulenta	Silver-leaved Mountain Gum, Silver-leaved Gum
No	No	Falco hypoleucos	Grey Falcon
No	No	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	Grantiella picta	Painted Honeyeater
Yes	Yes	Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail
No	No	Lathamus discolor	Swift Parrot

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Leipoa ocellata	Malleefowl
No	No	Lepidium hyssopifolium	Basalt Pepper-cress, Peppercress, Rubble Pepper-cress, Pepperweed
No	No	Leucochrysum albicans subsp. tricolor	Hoary Sunray, Grassland Paper-daisy
No	No	Litoria booroolongensis	Booroolong Frog
No	No	Litoria castanea	Yellow-spotted Tree Frog, Yellow-spotted Bell Frog
No	No	Litoria raniformis	Southern Bell Frog, Growling Grass Frog, Green and Golden Frog, Warty Swamp Frog, Golden Bell Frog
No	No	Macquaria australasica	Macquarie Perch
No	No	Melanodryas cucullata cucullata	South-eastern Hooded Robin, Hooded Robin (south-eastern)
No	No	Neophema chrysostoma	Blue-winged Parrot
No	No	Nyctophilus corbeni	Corben's Long-eared Bat, South-eastern Long-eared Bat
No	No	Petauroides volans	Greater Glider (southern and central)
No	No	Petaurus australis australis	Yellow-bellied Glider (south-eastern)
No	No	Phascolarctos cinereus (combined populations of Qld, NSW and the ACT)	Koala (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory)
No	No	Polytelis swainsonii	Superb Parrot
Yes	Yes	Prostanthera gilesii	
No	No	Pteropus poliocephalus	Grey-headed Flying-fox
No	No	Pycnoptilus floccosus	Pilotbird
No	No	Rostratula australis	Australian Painted Snipe
No	No	Stagonopleura guttata	Diamond Firetail
No	No	Swainsona recta	Small Purple-pea, Mountain Swainson-pea, Small Purple Pea
No	No	Synemon plana	Golden Sun Moth

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Thesium australe	Austral Toadflax, Toadflax
No	No	Tympanocryptis mccartneyi	Bathurst Grassland Earless Dragon

Ecological communities

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Ecological community
No	No	Natural Temperate Grassland of the South Eastern Highlands
Yes	Yes	White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland

4.1.4.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

Yes

4.1.4.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

When identifying the potential direct and indirect impacts to threatened species and TECs, a precautionary approach has been taken to include all potential impacts at this early stage of design. The presence and extent of these species and ecological communities and direct and indirect impacts will be further investigated during the EIS phase and ongoing Projects design. The Disturbance Footprint will also be refined throughout these phases and the total clearing area reduced where possible. The EIS will include appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, minimize or offset any impacts that are identified in a NSW Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) that will be prepared in support of the EIS.

Threatened Ecological Communities

White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland

The Proposed Action would likely involve the direct and indirect disturbance of areas of vegetation conforming to the White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland listed as a CEEC under the EPBC Act.

Desktop assessments and preliminary ecological survey data shows that the White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland has the potential to occur in an area up to approximately 22.96 ha within the Project Area, of which 0.69 ha falls within the current Disturbance Footprint. At these early stages of design development, it has been conservatively assumed that all vegetation within the Disturbance Footprint will be directly impacted through clearing works. It is expected that the total clearing area for this CEEC will be reduced as design progresses during the EIS stage.

Additionally, this CEEC may be indirectly impacted through inadvertent impacts on adjacent native vegetation and dispersion of weeds.
The Proposed Action is likely to have a significant indirect and direct impacts on White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland.

Natural Temperate Grassland of the South Eastern Highlands

No direct or indirect impacts are anticipated, as this TEC does not occur within the Project Area or Disturbance Footprint.

Threatened Species

The Proposed Action may involve direct or indirect impacts for the following species based on the MNES Significant Impact Assessments. Further details of the significance of impacts for each community/species is provided in Attachment 1 '31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED, Section 3.2 (pages 43).

Silver-Leaf Candlebark (*Eucalyptus canobolensis*)

The Proposed Action is unlikely to reduce the area of occupancy of the *Eucalyptus canobolensis* as no individuals have been recorded in the Disturbance Footprint.

The Disturbance Footprint is dominated by exotic pine plantation, with some small areas of fragmented woodland. Impacts to these small areas of native woodland area unlikely to modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline.

Black Gum (*Eucalyptus aggregata*)

The Proposed Action is unlikely to reduce the area of occupancy of the *Eucalyptus aggregata* as no individuals have been recorded in the Disturbance Footprint.

The Disturbance Footprint is dominated by exotic pine plantation, with some small areas of fragmented woodland. Impacts to these small areas of native woodland area unlikely to modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline.

The movement of plant, equipment and people during the construction and operation of the proposed works have the potential to introduce and spread weeds and exotic species into the potential habitat of the *Eucalyptus aggregata*.

Prostanthera gilesii

It is likely that the proposed works could result in a significant impact to any population of *Prostanthera gilesii*. The Disturbance Footprint is dominated by exotic pine plantation, with some small areas of fragmented woodland. The Disturbance Footprint has precautionarily been assessed and there is some likelihood that the Project may modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline.

Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*)

The Project Area is located mostly within an exotic pine plantation, although would involve the clearing of 9.42 ha of native woodland vegetation however it is unlikely that this vegetation provides important habitat for the Superb Parrot. The Superb Parrot has a low turbine collision risk as it usually flies below the rotor sweep area of a wind turbine. The Project is unlikely to lead to a long-term decrease in the size an important Superb Parrot population.

Brown treecreeper (eastern subspecies) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)

The Disturbance Footprint would result in the removal of 9.42 ha potential suitable habitat. However, there are larger areas of suitable habitat present within the adjoining Mount Canobolas State Conservation Area.

Given the extent of suitable habitat in the locality, impacts to the native vegetation within the Disturbance Footprint are unlikely to modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the Brown Treecreeper is likely to decline. No breeding habitat has been identified to date and given the extent of suitable habitat for the Brown Treecreeper in the locality it is considered unlikely that the Project would result in a significant impact to any local population.

White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)

The Disturbance Footprint almost aligns entirely with an established exotic pine plantation, although 9.42 ha of native woodland is proposed to be cleared. It is likely that the white-throated needletail forages above the pine forest as well as the native woodland. White-throated needletails are mostly aerial species, the impacts to woodland vegetation are unlikely to reduce the area of occupancy of an important White-throated Needletail population. The turbine location may reduce the aerial area of occupancy for the species.

However, site specific surveys at a suitable time of year have not been completed, so there is considerable uncertainty in this estimate. Accordingly, the Proposed Action may have a significant impact on the White-throated Needletail.

Diamnd Firetail (*Stagonopleua guttata*)

The Disturbance Footprint is dominated by exotic pine plantation with 9.42 ha of native woodland however, does not contain an important population of the Diamond Firetail and the Project would not form a barrier to movement across the landscape or fragment woodland vegetation into isolated patches.

No breeding camps have been identified on site and suitable foraging habitat (9.42 ha) only occurs with the transmission line area. The direct impacts to vegetation are unlikely to result in a long-term decrease in the size of an important population.
Diamond Firetail in the locality it is considered unlikely that the Project would result in a significant impact to the local population.

Fork-tailed swift (*Apus pacificus*)

The Disturbance Footprint is dominated by exotic pine plantation with 9.42 ha of native woodland, it is likely that the white-throated needletail forages above the pine forest as well as the native woodland. The Project is unlikely to modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the Fork-tailed swift is likely to decline.

Site specific surveys at a suitable time of year have not been completed, so there is considerable uncertainty in this estimate. Accordingly, the Proposed Action may have a significant impact on the Fork-tailed swift.

Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)

There are 16 records of the Grey-headed Flying-fox in the locality, the high mobility of the species and presence of two known camps in Orange 9 km to the north-east suggests that the species is likely to occur in Eucalypt-dominated areas of the Project Area.

No breeding camps have been identified on site and suitable foraging habitat (9.42 ha) only occurs with the transmission line area. The direct impacts to vegetation are unlikely to result in a long-term decrease in the size of an important population.

The Grey-headed Flying-fox has a moderate turbine collision risk when it is present in the Project Area. As no foraging habitat occurs near the turbines it is considered unlikely that turbine strike would lead to a long-term decrease in the size of an important Grey-headed Flying-fox population.

The Project would not fragment vegetation into isolated patches or form a barrier to movement for the Grey-headed Flying Fox. Given the highly mobile nature of the Grey-headed Flying-fox, the Project is unlikely to fragment an important Grey-headed Flying-fox population.

Large-eared Pied Bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)

The large-eared pied bat has a moderate likelihood to occur in the Project Area and 9.42 ha of foraging habitat would be directly impacted by the Project. When moving between roosting and foraging areas, the large-eared pied bat would be vulnerable to turbine strike. The presence of the species within the Project Area has not yet been established and the low number of WTG proposed (21) suggest that the mortality risk is low.
As a precaution, it is tentatively concluded that the Project may lead to a long-term decrease in the size of a large-eared pied bat population. If maternity caves are present in the Project Area, the Project may interfere with the breeding cycle of the large-eared pied bat if it causes mortality of breeding females.

Threatened Species - Low Likelihood of Occurrence

All other threatened species listed in Section 4.1.4, Table ‘Impact details - Threatened species’ of this EPBC Act Referral have been assessed as having low likelihood of occurrence within the Project Area.

4.1.4.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact? *

Yes

4.1.4.5 Describe why you consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

At these early stages of design development, it has been conservatively assumed that all vegetation within the Disturbance Footprint will be directly impacted through clearing works. These impacts will be further investigated during the EIS phase and then detailed design, where the Disturbance Footprint will be refined and the total clearing area reduced. The EIS will include appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, minimize or offset any impacts that are identified in the supporting BDAR.

The following TECs and threatened species were identified as requiring an assessment of significance due to the potential for significant impacts arising from the Proposed Action. These impacts may occur directly through the removal or modification of habitat, or indirectly through changes to habitat condition or function:

- White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland (Critically Endangered)
    - The Project may impact 0.69 ha of White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC, which would not be considered a significant impact.
- Silver-leaf Candlebark (*Eucalyptus canobolensis*) (Endangered EPBC Act
    - The Disturbance Footprint is dominated by exotic pine plantation, with some small areas of fragmented woodland. Impacts to these small areas of native woodland area unlikely to modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline.
    - Given the above considerations, and that no known individuals or populations would be impacted by the Project, it is unlikely that the proposed works would result in a significant impact to any population of *Eucalyptus canobolensis*.
- Black Gum (*Eucalyptus aggregata*) (Vulnerable EPBC Act)
    - The Disturbance Footprint is dominated by exotic pine plantation, with some small areas of fragmented woodland. Impacts to these small areas of native woodland area unlikely to modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline.
    - Given the above considerations, and that no known individuals or populations would be impacted by the Project, it is unlikely that the proposed works would result in a significant impact to any population of *Eucalyptus aggregata*.
- *Prostanthera gilesii* (Vulnerable EPBC Act)
    - The Disturbance Footprint is dominated by exotic pine plantation, with some small areas of fragmented woodland. While Impacts to these small areas of native woodland are small in extent, the local, and very restricted known extent of the species and its habitat has meant that any suitable habitat in the Disturbance Footprint may be important to the species.
    - It has been precautionarily assessed that there is some likelihood that the Project may modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline.
    - As such, it is likely that the proposed works could result in a significant impact to any population of *Prostanthera gilesii*.
- Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*) (Vulnerable EPBC Act)
    - The native woodland in the transmission line area is likely to provide habitat for the superb parrot.
    - No breeding habitat has been identified to date and given the extent of suitable habitat for the superb parrot in the locality it is considered unlikely that the Project would result in a significant impact to the local population.
- Brown treecreeper (eastern subspecies) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*
    - Given there are no breeding camps of habitat critical to the survival of the species, the Project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Brown treecreeper
- Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*)

    - No breeding habitat has been identified in the Disturbance Footprint for the Diamond Firetail, however it is likely that there is suitable breeding and foraging habitat within the vegetation in the transmission line area. The Project is unlikely to introduce disease that may cause the Diamond Firetail to decline.
    - The native woodland in the transmission line area is likely to provide habitat for the Diamond Firetail. No breeding habitat has been identified to date and given the extent of suitable habitat for the Diamond Firetail in the locality it is considered unlikely that the Project would result in a significant impact to the local population
- White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) – vulnerable
    - While the White-throated Needletail is highly susceptible to mortality due to turbine strike, the small number of Locality records (3) and the low number of turbines proposed (21) suggest that the mortality risk is low.
    - However, site specific surveys at a suitable time of year have not been completed, so there is considerable uncertainty in this estimate.
    - Accordingly, the Project may have a significant impact on the White-throated Needletail if it recorded in the Project Area.
- Fork-tailed swift (*Apus pacificus*) – migratory species
    - While the Fork-tailed swift is highly susceptible to mortality due to turbine strike, the small number of locality records (2) and the low number of turbines proposed (21) suggest that the mortality risk is low. Site specific surveys at a suitable time of year have not been completed, so there is considerable uncertainty in this estimate. It is unlikely that the project will disrupt an ecologically significant portion of the population of this migratory species, unless, driven by weather systems and insect behaviour, large feeding flocks were to interact with the proposed development. Accordingly, the Project may have a significant impact on Fork-tailed swift.
- Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) (Vulnerable EPBC Act)
    - Given there are no breeding camps of habitat critical to the survival of the species, the Project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Grey-headed Flying-fox.
- Large-eared Pied Bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*) (Endangered EPBC Act)
    - The large-eared pied bat may roost and possibly breed in rocky outcrops within the Project Area and commute to nearby areas of Eucalypt forest for foraging. In doing so, it would fly through the Project Area, making it susceptible to turbine strike.
    - The presence of the species within the Project Area has not yet been established and the low number of turbines proposed (21) suggest that the mortality risk is low. However, site specific surveys at a suitable time of year have not been completed, so there is considerable uncertainty in this estimate. Accordingly, the Project may have a significant impact on the large-eared pied bat.

These TECs and species have not been identified or recorded on site as only preliminary ecological surveys have been undertaken to date.
An assessment of the significance of impacts for these TECs and threatened species was undertaken, which concluded that the Proposed Action may have a significant impact on the White-throated Needletail (Hirundapus caudacutus), the Fork-tailed swift (Apus pacificus), Prostanthera gilesii and the Large-eared Pied Bat (Chalinolobus dwyeri). These species are susceptible to turbine strike and the clearing of native vegetation and to confirm the potential impact, site specific surveys at a suitable time of year are required.

Subsequently, the Proposed Action has been assessed as having a significant impact.

Refer to Attachment 1 ‘Attachment ‘31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED, Appendix C’.

4.1.4.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

Yes

4.1.4.8 Please elaborate why you think your proposed action is a controlled action. *

The Proposed Action may have a significant impact on White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*), the Fork-tailed swift (*Apus pacificus*), *Prostanthera gilesii* and the Large-eared Pied Bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*).

It is therefore considered that the Proposed Action is likely to constitute a controlled action.

It is noted that the Disturbance Footprint is a conservative area for early assessment purposes and the proposed disturbance area will be significantly smaller, but is subject to further detailed assessments and design.

4.1.4.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

The removal of three (3) WTGs and associated Project-related infrastructure have been removed from the north-eastern portion of the Project Area, resulting in the avoidance of a crossing across Cadiangullong Creek, a 3rd order Strahler stream and identified on the Biodiversity Values Map as containing high biodiversity value, particularly sensitive to impacts from development and clearing.

A range of mitigation measures are proposed to reduce any potential impacts on MNES, which are detailed in Attachment 1 '31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED, Section 5.2 (pages 58-59)'.

Furthermore, a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) will be developed for the Proposed Action in accordance with the relevant NSW and Commonwealth legislation and/or policies. It is expected that the BMP will detail the following for activities that impact native vegetation:

- A pre-clearing procedure to be implemented to minimise the potential for impacts on native fauna species (focusing on threatened species, hollow-dependent and other microhabitat-dependent fauna) as a result of the clearing of hollow-bearing trees.
- Staged progressive clearance limits clearly demarcated to prevent unnecessary disturbance.
- Salvage of resources and habitat features (e.g. seed collection, topsoil, timber and native mulch) and translocation to a re-establishment site.
- Placement of habitat features (e.g. hollow logs, tree hollows, fallen timber and rocks/boulders) for quarry rehabilitation.
- Weed management.
- Traffic control measures.
- Pathogen management.
- Pest animal control.
- Fencing and access control.
- Bushfire management.
- Erosion and sedimentation control.
- Providing appropriate environmental management measures as part of the operations to minimise the potential for indirect impacts including:
    - Water management systems that seek to minimise the potential for damage to flora and fauna and their habitats from erosion, sedimentation and unnatural flooding events
    - Noise control systems and dust control measures to minimise noise/dust impacts
    - Lighting controls to minimise nighttime light impacts, and
    - Blasting controls to minimise blast overpressure and vibration impacts.
- Employee education and training.

The Project will be subject to further refinement during the EIS and further design development to minimise impacts on biodiversity, as well as other factors affecting the environment and community. It will be revised as biodiversity information is received, constraints are identified, further technical studies and environmental assessments occur and further feedback from stakeholder and community engagement is received.

4.1.4.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

The BDAR will include a preliminary offset strategy which complies with relevant requirements under the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and the BC Act. A comprehensive Biodiversity Offset Strategy (BOS) will then be developed for the Project in accordance with relevant NSW legislation and/or policies, currently being assessed under the BAM in accordance with the BC Act. Final offsetting arrangements would then made following the determination of the Project. Accordingly, the offset strategy for the Proposed Action will be developed in consultation with DPHI.

The NSW and Commonwealth governments agree that endorsement of the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme to avoid, minimise and offset biodiversity impacts on both NSW and Commonwealth listed entities provides for the best biodiversity and streamlining outcomes. The Commonwealth government supports the use of the BAM as the underpinning methodology for calculating biodiversity credit requirements.
To meet offsets required for Commonwealth listed entities for controlled actions under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme, proponents retain the ability to:

- retire biodiversity credits based on the like-for-like provisions in the Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 (NSW)
- fund biodiversity conservation actions that are listed in the Ancillary rules: Biodiversity conservation actions and directly benefit the threatened entity impacted
- pay into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund (BCF), noting it is the proponent's responsibility to notify the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) that their payment is for a controlled action.

The potential for purchasing credits from landowners selling appropriate credits on the market will be investigated as part of the BOS during the EIS phase, including searches of the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme public registers, namely the credits supply register, which details of the number, type and location (in terms of their IBRA subregion) of credits available for purchase.

Under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme, proponents may choose to pay into the BCF to meet their offset obligation. This option transfers the responsibility of finding an offset from the client to the BCT. The BCF Charge System was recently introduced to replace the BOPC and is now used to determine the cost of meeting biodiversity offset obligations for proponents who choose to pay into the BCF. Proponents, including those with approval under Part 5.1 of the EP&A Act, which includes a requirement to retire biodiversity credits or have submitted an REF to the determining authority, can request a quote from the BCT to make a payment into the BCF. This option will be considered during the EIS phase.

While not specifically required, it is anticipated that Government agencies will encourage the establishment of local, land-based offsets secured by a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement (BSA) as the primary offsetting mechanism, rather than payment into the BCF and/or purchasing credits from the open market.

During the preparation of the EIS, offset options (including identifying and securing suitable land for the purpose of a BSA), will be considered. This is a lengthy and complex process, especially the sourcing and security of biodiversity offsets, and will be prioritised so that all offset options can be comprehensively addressed.

All direct impacts associated with the Proposed Action will be offset in accordance with the requirements of the NSW Biodiversity Assessment Method. The BOS is detailed in Attachment 1 ‘31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED', Section 5.3 (pages 59-60)’.

4.1.5 Migratory Species

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Actitis hypoleucos	Common Sandpiper
Yes	Yes	Apus pacificus	Fork-tailed Swift
No	No	Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris melanotos	Pectoral Sandpiper
No	No	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
Yes	Yes	Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail
No	No	Motacilla flava	Yellow Wagtail

4.1.5.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

Yes

4.1.5.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

When identifying the potential direct and indirect impacts to threatened species and ecological communities, a precautionary approach has been undertaken to include all potential impacts at this early stage of design. These impacts will be further investigated during the EIS phase and Project design, where the Disturbance Footprint will be refined and the total clearing area reduced. The EIS will include appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, minimize or offset any impacts that are identified in the supporting BDAR and BBUS.

The Project Area is located within a region that has the potential to be used by the following species during their migration:

- Fork-tailed Swift (Apus pacificus)
- White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)

Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*)

While the Fork-tailed swift is highly susceptible to mortality due to turbine strike, the small number of locality records (2) and the low number of turbines proposed (21) suggest that the mortality risk is low. Site specific surveys at a suitable time of year have not been completed, so there is considerable uncertainty in this estimate. It is unlikely that the project will disrupt an ecologically significant portion of the population of this migratory species, unless, driven by weather systems and insect behaviour, large feeding flocks were to interact with the proposed development. Accordingly, the Project may have a significant impact on Fork-tailed swift.

White-throated Needletail (Hirundapus caudacutus)

While the White-throated Needletail is highly susceptible to mortality due to turbine strike, the small number of Locality records (3) and the low number of turbines proposed (21) suggest that the mortality risk is low. However, site specific surveys at a suitable time of year have not been completed, so there is considerable uncertainty in this estimate. Accordingly, the Project may have a significant impact on the White-throated Needletail if it is recorded in the Project Area.

Further details of the impact on migratory species are provided in Attachment 1 ‘31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED', Appendix C’.

4.1.5.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact? *

Yes

4.1.5.5 Describe why you consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

An assessment of the significance of impacts for nominated migratory species was undertaken, which concluded that the Proposed Action will potentially have a significant impact on the identified migratory species due to unknown consequences of wind turbine strike.

Further details of the impact on migratory species is provided Attachment 1 ‘31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED', Appendix C’

4.1.5.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

Yes

4.1.5.8 Please elaborate why you think your proposed action is a controlled action. *

An assessment of the significance of impacts for nominated migratory species was undertaken, which concluded that the Proposed Action will potentially have a significant impact on the identified migratory species due to unknown consequences of wind turbine strike.
It is therefore considered that the Proposed Action is likely to constitute a controlled action.

A detailed assessment of the significance of impacts for migratory species is provided in Attachment 1 ‘31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED',, Appendix C’.

4.1.5.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

The removal of three (3) WTGs and associated Project-related infrastructure have been removed from the north-eastern portion of the Project Area, resulting in the avoidance of a crossing across Cadiangullong Creek, a 3rd order Strahler stream and identified on the Biodiversity Values Map as containing high biodiversity value, particularly sensitive to impacts from development and clearing.

A range of mitigation measures are proposed to reduce any potential impacts on MNES, which are detailed in Attachment 1 ‘‘31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED',, Appendix C’’.

Furthermore, a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) will be developed for the Proposed Action in accordance with the relevant NSW and Commonwealth legislation and/or policies. It is expected that the BMP will detail the following for activities that impact native vegetation:

- A pre-clearing procedure to be implemented to minimise the potential for impacts on native fauna species (focusing on threatened species, hollow-dependent and other microhabitat-dependent fauna) as a result of the clearing of hollow-bearing trees.
- Staged progressive clearance limits clearly demarcated to prevent unnecessary disturbance.
- Salvage of resources and habitat features (e.g. seed collection, topsoil, timber and native mulch) and translocation to a re-establishment site.
- Placement of habitat features (e.g. hollow logs, tree hollows, fallen timber and rocks/boulders) for quarry rehabilitation.
- Weed management.
- Traffic control measures.
- Pathogen management.
- Pest animal control.
- Fencing and access control.
- Bushfire management.
- Erosion and sedimentation control.
- Providing appropriate environmental management measures as part of the operations to minimise the potential for indirect impacts including:
    - Water management systems that seek to minimise the potential for damage to flora and fauna and their habitats from erosion, sedimentation and unnatural flooding events
    - Noise control systems and dust control measures to minimise noise/dust impacts
    - Lighting controls to minimise nighttime light impacts, and
    - Blasting controls to minimise blast overpressure and vibration impacts.
    - Employee education and training.

The Project will be subject to further refinement during the EIS and further design development to minimise impacts on biodiversity, as well as other factors affecting the environment and community. It will be revised as biodiversity information is received, constraints are identified, further technical studies and environmental assessments occur and further feedback from stakeholder and community engagement is received.

4.1.5.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

The BDAR will include a preliminary offset strategy which complies with relevant requirements under the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and the BC Act. A comprehensive Biodiversity Offset Strategy (BOS) will then be developed for the Project in accordance with relevant NSW legislation and/or policies, currently being assessed under the BAM in accordance with the BC Act. Final offsetting arrangements would then made following the determination of the Project. Accordingly, the offset strategy for the Proposed Action will be developed in consultation with DPHI. The NSW and Commonwealth governments agree that endorsement of the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme to avoid, minimise and offset biodiversity impacts on both NSW and Commonwealth listed entities provides for the best biodiversity and streamlining outcomes. The Commonwealth government supports the use of the BAM as the underpinning methodology for calculating biodiversity credit requirements.

To meet offsets required for Commonwealth listed entities for controlled actions under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme, proponents retain the ability to:

- retire biodiversity credits based on the like-for-like provisions in the Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 (NSW)
- fund biodiversity conservation actions that are listed in the Ancillary rules: Biodiversity conservation actions and directly benefit the threatened entity impacted
- pay into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund (BCF), noting it is the proponent's responsibility to notify the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) that their payment is for a controlled action

The potential for purchasing credits from landowners selling appropriate credits on the market will be investigated as part of the BOS during the EIS phase, including searches of the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme public registers, namely the credits supply register, which details of the number, type and location (in terms of their IBRA subregion) of credits available for purchase.

Under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme, proponents may choose to pay into the BCF to meet their offset obligation. This option transfers the responsibility of finding an offset from the client to the BCT. The BCF Charge System was recently introduced to replace the BOPC and is now used to determine the cost of meeting biodiversity offset obligations for proponents who choose to pay into the BCF. Proponents, including those with approval under Part 5.1 of the EP&A Act, which includes a requirement to retire biodiversity credits or have submitted an REF to the determining authority, can request a quote from the BCT to make a payment into the BCF. This option will be considered during the EIS phase.

While not specifically required, it is anticipated that Government agencies will encourage the establishment of local, land-based offsets secured by a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement (BSA) as the primary offsetting mechanism, rather than payment into the BCF and/or purchasing credits from the open market.

During the preparation of the EIS, offset options (including identifying and securing suitable land for the purpose of a BSA), will be considered. This is a lengthy and complex process, especially the sourcing and security of biodiversity offsets, and will be prioritised so that all offset options can be comprehensively addressed.

All direct impacts associated with the Proposed Action will be offset in accordance with the requirements of the NSW Biodiversity Assessment Method. The BOS is detailed in Attachment 1 ‘31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED',, Section 5.3 (pages 60-61).

4.1.6 Nuclear

4.1.6.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.6.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The Proposed Action is not a nuclear action and will not involve any nuclear activities. As such, there will be no impact as a result of nuclear action.

4.1.7 Commonwealth Marine Area

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.7.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.7.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The Project Area is located over 200 km from the nearest coastline. As such, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on Commonwealth Marine Areas as a result of the Proposed Action.

4.1.8 Great Barrier Reef

4.1.8.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.8.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The Project Area is located over 1,000 km from the Great Barrier Reef. As such, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on the Great Barrier Reef as a result of the Proposed Action.

4.1.9 Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas

4.1.9.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.9.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The Proposed Action is not a coal seam gas or large coal mining development and will not involve any coal mining activities.

4.1.10 Commonwealth Land

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.10.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.10.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

There are no Commonwealth Lands within the Project Area and as such, no direct or indirect impacts are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action.

4.1.11 Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.11.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.11.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The Project Area is located over 200 km from the nearest coastline. As such, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on Commonwealth heritage places overseas as a result of the Proposed Action.

4.1.12 Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency

4.1.12.1 Is the proposed action to be taken by the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth Agency? *

No

4.2 Impact summary

Conclusion on the likelihood of significant impacts

You have indicated that the proposed action will likely have a significant impact on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance:

- Threatened Species and Ecological Communities (S18)
- Migratory Species (S20)

Conclusion on the likelihood of unlikely significant impacts

You have indicated that the proposed action will unlikely have a significant impact on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance:

- World Heritage (S12)
- National Heritage (S15B)
- Ramsar Wetland (S16)
- Nuclear (S21)
- Commonwealth Marine Area (S23)
- Great Barrier Reef (S24B)
- Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas (S24D)
- Commonwealth Land (S26)
- Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas (S27B)
- Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency (S28)

4.3 Alternatives

4.3.1 Do you have any possible alternatives for your proposed action to be considered as part of your referral? *

No

4.3.8 Describe why alternatives for your proposed action were not possible. *

Three (3) alternative options have been considered to date by FMCWF Pty Ltd, with the first being a 'do nothing' approach. This option would not meet FMCWF Pty Ltd's commercial objectives to develop renewable energy projects in NSW, would fail to achieve FCNSW's objectives, and would not support Commonwealth and NSW commitments to increase renewable energy generation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the NSW and Australian economies.

FMCWF Pty Ltd investigated the option of designing a wind farm of up to 23 WTGs, with three (3) WTGs located in the north-eastern portion of the Project Area. However, the presence of the WTGs in this location increased the number of dwellings within close proximity to Project-related infrastructure to an undesirable amount for the Project, which resulted in a decision to remove these WTGs.

Options to develop a wind farm of a similar size and scale in alternative locations were also explored throughout the planning process. Two (2) notable alternative locations included:

- Vittoria State Forest: This option was originally considered but was ultimately rejected as a potential option for the Project due to proximity to dwellings and anticipated extent of land agreements being required.
- Glenwood State Forest: This option also encountered restricted connection options to the existing transmission network and as such was excluded as a viable location for the Project.

Options to develop wind projects in these locations were ultimately deemed unfeasible due to social, environmental and infrastructure constraints.

The option to develop a wind farm of up to 21 WTGs within the Disturbance Footprint in Canobolas State Forest is currently preferred as it optimises the layout with respect to other key environmental matters (e.g. visual, noise, biodiversity and heritage constraints), whilst maintaining a feasible wind farm project that can contribute to both Commonwealth and NSW commitments to increase renewable energy generation and reduce GHG emissions across the NSW and Australian economies.

This option (as represented by the Disturbance Footprint) is proposed to progress to the EIS stage following the receipt of the Project SEARs (issued on 23 January 2026), noting that the preliminary Project layout will be subject to further refinement during the EIS and ongoing design development to minimise impacts on the environment and community. This will be informed by further technical and environmental studies and continued community and stakeholder engagement.

At time of lodgement of the EIS, the specific technology provider for the WTGs may not have been selected and may change during future stages of development. As such, reasonable worst-case assumptions will be used to facilitate impact assessment in the EIS.

5. Lodgement

5.1 Attachments

1.2.1 Overview of the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	24355_R09_Iberdola_Four Mile Creek WF Proposed Project_CSEP_V2.pdf Four Mile Creek CSEP	01/12/2025	No	High

1.2.7 Public consultation regarding the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	24355_R09_Iberdola_Four Mile Creek WF Proposed Project_CSEP_V2.pdf Four Mile Creek CSEP	30/11/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Issued SEARs - 2026-04-22T111108.021.pdf Project SEARs	23/01/2026	No	High

1.3.2.18 (Person proposing to take the action) If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation’s environmental policy and planning framework

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 7-Environmental Policy.pdf Iberdrola Australia's Environment Policy	01/10/2022	No	High
#2.	Document	Att 9-Biodiversity Policy.pdf Iberdrola Australia's Biodiversity Policy	19/03/2024	No	High
#3.	Document	IB_Sustainability_Report.pdf Iberdrola Australia's Sustainability Report	10/06/2025	No	High
#4.	Document	Iberdrola-sustainability-report-2024-master-digital-spreads (1).pdf Iberdrola Australia 2024 Sustainability Report	06/01/2025	No	High

3.2.1 Flora and fauna within the affected area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final UNREDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Unredacted	31/03/2026	Yes	High
#2.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Redacted	31/03/2026	No	High

3.2.2 Vegetation within the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final UNREDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Unredacted	01/04/2026	Yes	High
#2.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Redacted	01/04/2026	No	High

3.3.2 Indigenous heritage values that apply to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final UNREDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Unredacted	31/03/2026	Yes	High
#2.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Redacted	31/03/2026	No	High

4.1.4.2 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on the identified protected matters

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final UNREDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Unredacted	31/03/2026	Yes	High
#2.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Redacted	31/03/2026	No	High

4.1.4.5 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Why you consider the direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final UNREDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Unredacted	31/03/2026	Yes	High

#2.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Redacted	31/03/2026	No	High

4.1.4.10 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final UNREDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Unredacted	31/03/2026	Yes	High
#2.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Redacted	01/04/2026	No	High

4.1.4.11 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Proposed offsets relevant to avoidance or mitigation measures

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final UNREDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Unredacted	31/03/2026	Yes	High
#2.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Redacted	31/03/2026	No	High

4.1.5.2 (Migratory Species) Why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on the identified protected matters

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final UNREDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Unredacted	31/03/2026	Yes	High
#2.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Redacted	31/03/2026	No	High

4.1.5.8 (Migratory Species) Why you think your proposed action is a controlled action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence

#1.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final UNREDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Unredacted	31/03/2026	Yes	High
#2.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Redacted	31/03/2026	No	High

4.1.5.11 (Migratory Species) Proposed offsets relevant to avoidance or mitigation measures

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final UNREDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Unredacted	31/03/2026	Yes	High
#2.	Document	31363_R08_Four Mile Creek_MNES_V3_Final_REDACTED.pdf Four Mile Creek MNES Report_Redacted	31/03/2026	No	High

5.2 Declarations

Completed Referring party's declaration

The Referring party is the person preparing the information in this referral.

ABN/ACN	18059519041
Organisation name	UMWELT (AUSTRALIA) PTY. LTD.
Organisation address	75 York Street, Teralba, NSW, 2284
Representative's name	Nathan Baker
Representative's job title	Principal Environmental Consultant
Phone	0477 713 478
Email	nbaker@umwelt.com.au
Address	Level 11, 213 Miller Street

☑ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☑ Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. *

☑ By checking this box, I, **Nathan Baker of UMWELT (AUSTRALIA) PTY. LTD.**, 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. *

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

Completed Person proposing to take the action's declaration

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual, business, government agency or trustee that will be responsible for the proposed action.

ABN/ACN	66677193305
Organisation name	Four Mile Creek Wind Farm Pty Limited
Organisation address	Governor Phillip Tower, Iberdrola Australia, Level 22, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000
Representative's name	Emily Brebner

Representative's job title	Development Manager NSW Development
Phone	0428684197
Email	emily.brebner@iberdrola.com.au
Address	L22 Governor Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW

☑ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☑ Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. *

☑ I, **Emily Brebner of Four Mile Creek Wind Farm Pty Limited**, 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. *

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

✔ Completed Proposed designated proponent's declaration

The Proposed designated proponent is the individual or organisation proposed to be responsible for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act during the assessment process, if the Minister decides that this project is a controlled action.

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

☑ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☑ Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. *

☑ I, **Emily Brebner of Four Mile Creek Wind Farm Pty Limited**, the Proposed designated proponent, consent to the designation of myself as the Proposed designated proponent for the purposes of the action described in this EPBC Act Referral. *

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.