



30 October 2025

Reference: EPBC 2019/8497

[REDACTED]  
Director – Tasmania Assessments Section  
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water  
John Gorton Building, King Edward Terrace  
Parkes ACT 2600

By email: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

**RE: St Patricks Plains Wind Farm – EPBC 2019/8497 Variation Request under Section 156A(1) of the EPBC Act**

## 1. Background

As the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the **Department**) is aware, the St Patricks Plains Wind Farm was referred to the Department under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (**EPBC Act**) in 2019 (EPBC 2019/8497) for a determination on whether it was a controlled action (**Original Proposal**).

On 8 October 2019 a determination was made, under section 75 of the EPBC Act, that the Project (**Original Proposal**) was a controlled action and would be assessed under the Bilateral Agreement between the State of Tasmania and the Commonwealth under section 45 of the EPBC Act (**Bilateral Agreement**).

In February 2023 the designated proponent of the referred Project was changed to St Patricks Plains Wind Farm Pty Ltd, a company owned by Ark Energy.

The Referred Project has since progressed through the assessment process under the Bilateral Agreement and has evolved since the **Original Proposal** was submitted. See section 2 below for further details.

The Project, as assessed under the Bilateral Agreement (**Varied Proposal**) includes the following changes from the description of the **Original Proposal** as referred:

- a reduction in the number of wind turbine generators (**WTGs**) from 67 to 47 (still with a total generating capacity of up to 300 megawatts (**MW**) of electricity);
- refinement of WTG and ancillary infrastructure layout;

- the inclusion of a battery energy storage system (**BESS**); and
- the inclusion of a turbine curtailment system (“**Identiflight**”) to minimise the potential impacts to eagles from the blades of WTGs.

The **Varied Proposal** was issued with a planning permit by the Central Highlands Council (**Council**) on 30 July 2024. This planning permit was the subject of a merits appeal to the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (**TASCAT**). Following the determination of TASCAT in *No Turbine Action Group Inc v Central Highlands Council* [2025] TASCAT 162 an updated planning permit, with Tasmanian Environment Protection Authority (**EPA**) conditions attached as Part B of the Permit, was issued on 25 September 2025 (**Planning Permit**).

The **Varied Proposal** is under consideration by the Department for approval under the EPBC Act.

The purpose of this letter is to request to vary the **Original Proposal** to ensure full alignment with the **Varied Proposal** as assessed under the Bilateral Agreement. This request is made under section 156A(1) of the EPBC Act, which states that if:

*(a) a proposal (the **original proposal**) by a person to take an action has been referred to the Minister under Division 1 of Part 7; and*

*(b) after the referral is made, the person wishes to change the original proposal;*

*the person may... request the Minister to accept a variation (a **varied proposal**) of the original proposal.*

We note that section 156B (2) of the EPBC Act provides that:

*The Minister must not accept a varied proposal under section 156A(1) unless the Minister is satisfied that **the character of the varied proposal is substantially the same as the character of the original proposal**.*

The **Varied Proposal**, as assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement, is of substantially the same character as the **Original Proposal**. It remains a proposal for a wind farm and ancillary infrastructure in the same location.

## 2. The Varied Proposal

The **Varied Proposal** has been comprehensively assessed under the Bilateral Agreement assessment process and in accordance with:

- the *St Patricks Plains Wind Farm Environmental Impact Statement* dated 29 June 2023 (**EIS**);
- the *St Patricks Plains Wind Farm Supplement to the Environmental Impact Statement* dated 27 March 2024 (**Supplement EIS**); and
- the *Environmental Assessment Report – St Patricks Plains Wind Farm* prepared by the EPA and dated July 2024) (**EPA EAR**).

Each of the EIS, the Supplement EIS and the EPA EAR are publicly available via the '*St Patricks Plains Wind Farm Pty Ltd, St Patricks Plains Wind Farm, Central Highlands Tasmania*' page on the EPA's website: <https://epa.tas.gov.au/business-industry/assessment/proposals-assessed-by-the-epa/st-patricks-plains-wind-farm-pty-ltd-st-patricks-plains-wind-farm-central-highlands-tasmania>.

In accordance with the requirements of the Bilateral Agreement and section 47(4) of the EPBC Act, the EPA provided the EPA EAR to the Minister for the Environment and Water prior to the planning permit being issued.

Following the receipt of the EPA EAR (and following the initial granting of the planning permit by the Council on 30 July 2024), the bilateral assessment and state approval process was complete and the project was then under consideration by the Department under Part 9 of the EPBC Act - *Decision on approval and conditions*. On 31 July 2024 the Department issued a request for further information (**RFI**).

The proponent provided additional information to the Department in response to this RFI by provision of the *Response to Request for Further Information St Patricks Plains Wind Farm* dated 6 March 2025 (**RFI Response**).

Subsequently, the proponent provided the following additional documentation to the Department, which was prepared by North Barker Ecosystem Services (**NBES**) based on the information in the RFI Response:

- the *St Patricks Plains Wind Farm Draft Bird and Bat Management Plan* dated 26 March 2025 (**Draft BBMP**); and
- the *St Patricks Plains Wind Farm Draft Offset Strategy* dated 17 April 2025 (**Draft Offset Strategy**).

On 12 May 2025, the Department advised the Proponent that 'adequate information' had been provided in Response to the RFI. This was confirmed by formal notification on 30 May 2025.

### 3. Variation Request

This section addresses the information required by regulation 5.08 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000* (Cth) (**EPBC Regulations**) in support of a variation request under section 156A of the EPBC Act:

#### **(a) Details of the proposed variation to the action as described in the Original Proposal**

As outlined above, the **Varied Proposal** relates to the same land identified in the **Original Proposal**, and is substantially the same as the **Original Proposal** being a wind farm with capacity of up to 300 MW with ancillary infrastructure within the same site boundary, with the following key changes:

- a reduction in the maximum number of WTGs proposed from 67 to 47;
- refinement of the turbine and ancillary infrastructure layout,

- the inclusion of a BESS, and
- the inclusion of "IdentiFlight".

The following table provides a summary of the key elements of the action and how they compare between the **Original Proposal** and **Varied Proposal**.

**Table 1 – Summary of key elements of the action comparing the Original Proposal and Varied Proposal**

Item		Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as assessed under the Bilateral Agreement)	Comparison
1	Number of turbines (WTGs)	Up to 67	Up to 47	Decrease of 20 WTG
2	Total generating capacity	Up to 300 MW	Unchanged	No change
3	WTG parameters	Max blade tip height 240 m Tower height 150 m  Proposed blade length 90 m Ground clearance 60 m	Max blade tip height 231 m Tower height 150 m (unchanged)  Proposed blade length 80 m Ground clearance 70 m	Very minor changes
4	WTG hardstand dimensions	Referred as 40 m x 120 m x 67 (which is a WTG hardstand area of approx. 32.16 ha)	Total WTG hardstand 0.92 ha x 47 = 43 ha (which includes temporary laydown area)	Very minor changes
5	Ancillary infrastructure	As the Original Proposal was referred early in the development process there was little information on ancillary infrastructure provided (i.e. no layout or footprint details), however the following elements were mentioned in the referral: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switchyard and substation</li> <li>• Underground and possibly overhead power lines and cables</li> </ul>	The <b>Varied Proposal</b> includes all the ancillary infrastructure mentioned in the referral for the <b>Original Proposal</b> , with further detail provided on location, design and footprint.  Note - the referral mentions one temporary concrete batching plant and one construction compound for the <b>Original Proposal</b> , however the <b>Varied Proposal</b> includes two	Very minor changes  (layout/footprint refinement and two instead of one temporary construction compound and batch plant)

Item		Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as assessed under the Bilateral Agreement)	Comparison
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent Operations and Maintenance Building and storage area</li> <li>• Permanent wind monitoring masts</li> <li>• Temporary construction compound (one) including site buildings, (toilets, office etc), laydown areas, car park</li> <li>• New roads and tracks</li> <li>• Temporary concrete batch plant (one).</li> </ul>	temporary concrete batching plants and two construction compounds to accommodate northern and southern parts of the site.	
6	BESS	Not specifically mentioned in the description of the proposed action in the <b>Original Proposal</b> .	<p>The BESS is proposed to be co-located with the substation (refer Figure 2-1a in EIS).</p> <p>The total footprint of the BESS is approximately 0.30 ha (refer Table 2-4 in the EIS).</p> <p>The location is within an area mapped as moderate Ptunarra brown butterfly habitat and within mapped protected Dasyurid denning habitat (noting almost the entire project site is considered habitat for these species).</p> <p>This location is not mapped as nesting habitat for the Tasmanian masked owl or Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle.</p> <p>The impact of the BESS is included in all the impact area calculations presented</p>	New feature

Item		Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as assessed under the Bilateral Agreement)	Comparison
			in the EIS, Supplement EIS and RFI Response.	
7	Curtailment system	<p>The description of the proposed action in the Original Proposal states that "Operational measures will be proposed to reduce the potential for wedge-tailed eagle collision."</p> <p>However, details on proposed measures were not available at the time.</p>	<p>The Varied Proposal includes the installation of a turbine curtailment system – "IdentiFlight" to reduce the potential for eagle collisions.</p> <p>The "IdentiFlight" system will achieve full coverage (refer Section 6.1.4.1 of the EIS and Section 3.7.1 of Supplement EIS).</p>	New feature required to minimise eagle collision risk
8	Disturbance footprint	<p>The Original Proposal text mentions an anticipated disturbance footprint of approximately 90 ha, noting this was intended as a reference estimate of the final operational footprint and excluded temporary construction impacts.</p>	<p>The Varied Proposal has a total disturbance footprint of up to 481.13 ha (inclusive of all permanent impacts, temporary impacts and canopy modifications).</p> <p>This total disturbance footprint includes an operational footprint consisting of approximately 102.79 ha of permanent infrastructure and approximately 91.09 ha of canopy modifications associated with overhead power lines and IdentiFlight view fields.</p> <p>Refer to Section 2.6 of the EIS for detailed footprint breakdown.</p>	<p>Permanent footprint slightly increased (90 ha <b>Original Proposal</b> to 102.79 ha <b>Varied Proposal</b>).</p> <p>Total disturbance footprint not specified for <b>Original Proposal</b>, up to 481.13 ha for <b>Varied Proposal</b></p>
9	Project Area/Project Land	<p>The proposed action area in the <b>Original Proposal</b> is approximately 10,300 ha,</p>	<p>The proposed project site in the EIS (<b>Varied Proposal</b>) is approximately 10,000 ha,</p>	Very minor reduction

Item	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as assessed under the Bilateral Agreement)	Comparison
	being the land within which the Project will be located.	being the land within which the Project will be located.	

***(b) The reasons for the proposed variation***

As outlined above (Section 2(a)) there are four key changes from the **Original Proposal** to the **Varied Proposal**, namely a reduction in WTG number, layout refinement and the addition of a BESS and of a curtailment system.

The key reasons for each of these changes is as follows:

- The total number of turbines has been reduced from 67 to 47 to minimise impacts to ecological values and human amenity. Many of the turbines removed from the **Original Proposal** were removed specifically to minimise potential collision risk to Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles. Others were removed to minimise visual amenity and in response to stakeholder feedback.
- The layout has been revised several times during the assessment process to minimise environmental impacts while maintaining practical construction options and connectivity into the grid.
- A BESS has been included in the ancillary infrastructure to address transmission system strength.
- The “IdentiFlight” curtailment system has been included to minimise the potential impact to eagles.

This request for a variation is being made under section 156A of the EPBC Act to fully align the **Varied Proposal** with the Project as assessed (Part 8 of the EPBC Act) under the Bilateral Agreement with the State of Tasmania. The Tasmanian approval has completed the State approvals process and bilateral assessment. All changes to the action were made prior to the final assessment and approval of the project under the State approvals (i.e. the state approval was issued for the **Varied Proposal**).

It is noted that the proponent contacted the Department in 2023 seeking advice on variation. At that time the proponent formed the view that the key changes (particularly the reduction in WTG number from 67 to 47) were generally reducing overall impact and therefore did not warrant a formal variation and none was sought. Subsequently, in mid-2025, the proponent reconsidered and formed an alternate view, that minimising impacts (i.e. reduction in WTG number), while necessary and expected, may change the Original Proposal such that it could no longer be considered substantially the same action. Therefore, to mitigate risk, the proponent elected to submit this variation request to ensure that the **Varied Project** is in full alignment with the requirements of the Act.

Please refer to Section 2 above for details of the assessments and reports prepared under the Bilateral Agreement process in relation to the **Varied Proposal**, which have already been made available to the Department.

***(c) how the impacts of the proposed variation on matters of national environmental significance (MNES) compare with those of the original proposal***

The **Original Proposal** referred in 2019 was determined to be a controlled action under the EPBC Act owing to potential impacts on *listed threatened species and communities*.

The potential impacts of the **Original Proposal** on MNES included potential for direct and indirect impacts on threatened ecological communities, listed flora, listed fauna and listed migratory species. Potential impacts identified included vegetation clearance, habitat loss, potential for denning or nesting disturbance, WTG collision risk for avifauna and roadkill risk for terrestrial species.

In 2019 when the **Original Proposal** was prepared, the potential quantum of impact was an estimate only, informed by available desktop information and limited field data.

Since that time, considerable additional ecological field data has been collected, and the Project has been revised to further reflect the outcomes of ongoing assessments to derive the **Varied Proposal**. The **Varied Proposal** has been the subject of detailed ecological impact assessment as set out in:

- the EIS (in particular, in Sections 6.1 *Avifauna*, 6.2 *Terrestrial fauna*, 7 *EPBC Act assessment*, Appendix B *Avifauna reports* and Appendix C *Terrestrial flora and fauna report*);
- the Supplement EIS (in particular, in Sections 3, 4 and 7 and associated Appendices);
- the EPA EAR (in particular, sections 6.2.6 *Tasmanian wedge tailed eagle*, 6.3.7 *Tasmanian masked owl* and 6.4.6 *Tasmanian devil, Eastern quoll, Spotted-tailed quoll* (collectively referred to as **protected dasyurids** in this letter) and the *Ptunarra brown butterfly*);

each of which have been previously provided to the Department.

As a result of site surveys, impact assessment and layout refinements the anticipated quantum of impact on MNES has changed, however relevant MNES and the scope and nature of impacts remain the same.

All relevant threatened species and ecological communities with potential to occur in the Project area have been assessed in detail (Appendix B and Appendix C of the EIS), with seven species known to occur on site and considered against the Significant Impact Criteria in Section 7.3 of the EIS. There were no EPBC Act-listed vegetation communities identified within the Project site (EIS, Section 6.3).

The species and communities potentially impacted by the **Varied Proposal**, as addressed in the EIS and Supplement EIS, are a subset of the species and communities identified in the referral for the **Original Proposal**. Some species and communities identified in the **Original Proposal** were found to either not occur within the Project site or not be at risk and, thus were not considered further in the assessment.

The following table provides a summary of the predicted impact to the seven species known to occur on site and how they compare between the **Original Proposal** (as documented in the referral) and the **Varied Proposal** (as assessed under the bilateral).

The differences in anticipated impacts on MNES between the **Original Proposal** and **Varied Proposal** are a result of obtaining further detail on each species during the site surveys, refinement of wind farm layout during the design and assessment process and developing a more fulsome understanding of the project footprint (e.g. construction impacts generally including canopy modifications required for the curtailment system). Most of the information came to light early in the site investigation phase (e.g. 2020) as field surveys were completed and layout was being refined; and the quantum of the **Varied Proposal** was documented in the EIS as part of the bilateral assessment process in 2023.

All impacts to MNES (as documented in the below table and further in the EIS and Supplement) of the **Varied Proposal** were assessed by the State and found to be acceptable under the State legislation.

**Table 2 – Summary of impact to key MNES for Original Proposal and Varied Proposal**

Species	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as documented and assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement)	Comparison
Tasmanian Wedge-tailed eagle	<p>The referral states that the species is known from the region and that the Project site contains known nests as well as areas mapped as nesting habitat.</p> <p>Impacts to the species through habitat clearance and collision risk were anticipated but not quantified.</p>	<p>This species was confirmed to occur and breed within the Project site.</p> <p>The Project is expected to impact up to 41.30 ha of mapped potential nesting habitat (including high, moderate and low habitat suitability, FPA categories &gt; 3) for the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent impacts – 5.33 ha</li> <li>• Canopy modifications - 18.57 ha</li> <li>• Temporary impacts – 17.39 ha</li> </ul> <p>Total impacts – 41.30 ha – this is the totality of all low, moderate and high modelled habitat within the permanent, temporary and canopy modification footprints.</p> <p>To minimise impacts to eagles, the <b>Varied Proposal</b> was designed to avoid all known eagle nests, with a minimum 1km buffer applied. Additionally, the <b>Varied Proposal</b> includes the installation of a best practice turbine curtailment system (namely</p>	<p>Potential impacts quantified in <b>Varied Proposal</b> as a result of investigation and assessment process.</p> <p>Nature and scope of impacts unchanged.</p>

Species	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as documented and assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement)	Comparison
		IdentiFlight) to reduce the potential for eagle collisions.	
Masked Owl	<p>The referral states that the species has previously been recorded on site and the Project site contains potential breeding and hunting habitat.</p> <p>Impacts to the species through habitat clearance and collision risk were anticipated but not quantified.</p>	<p>This species was not recorded within the Project site in the studies undertaken for the Project (the most recent record within the site being dated 1981) but was recorded outside the Project site in the vicinity. Although the Project site is outside the core range of the species, there is potential nesting habitat mapped within the site.</p> <p>The residual impact of the Project will result in the loss of up to 46.89 ha of suitable potential nesting habitat.</p> <p>Habitat types included in assessment of impacts include availability classes moderate and high with the following impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent impacts – 8.28 ha</li> <li>• Canopy modifications - 17.51 ha</li> <li>• Temporary impacts – 21.10 ha</li> </ul> <p>Total impacts – 46.89 ha – this is the totality of all moderate and high maturity forest within the permanent, temporary and canopy modification footprints.</p>	<p>Potential impacts quantified in <b>Varied Proposal</b> as a result of investigation and assessment process.</p> <p>Nature and scope of impacts unchanged.</p>
Dasyurids (spotted tailed quoll, eastern quoll, Tasmanian devil)	<p>The referral states that these species are known from the Project site, which contains denning and foraging habitat.</p> <p>Potential impacts to the species, via habitat clearance, are anticipated, noting the extent of impacts will be determined by the results of site surveys.</p>	<p>These species were confirmed to occur within the Project site.</p> <p>The <b>Varied Proposal</b> footprint overlaps with 481.13 ha of potential habitat (including all optimal and suboptimal denning habitat within the permanent, temporary and canopy modifications impacts footprint) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent impacts – up to 102.79 ha</li> <li>• Canopy modifications – up to 91.09 ha</li> <li>• Temporary impacts – up to 287.25 ha</li> </ul> <p>Canopy modifications are not anticipated to have any meaningful impact on dasyurid habitat as they will not require ground disturbance.</p>	<p>Total predicted area of habitat disturbance increased from 90 ha predicted in referral for the <b>Original Proposal</b> to up to approx. 390 ha (i.e. permanent and temporary impacts but excluding canopy modifications) in the EIS for the <b>Varied Proposal</b>.</p>

Species	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as documented and assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement)	Comparison
	<p>The referral anticipates in the order of 90 ha of habitat modification.</p> <p>The referral also notes potential for impact via fauna roadkill.</p>	<p>Thus, the totality of impact to dasyurid habitat (both temporary and permanent but excluding canopy modifications) is up to 390.04 ha.</p> <p>Potential impact via roadkill is also noted in the EIS, with mitigation measures proposed to minimise impacts.</p>	<p>This change in quantum of predicted impact was a result of increased understanding of site values (via survey) and inclusion of all construction impacts in the assessment of habitat disturbance.</p>
Ptunarra brown butterfly	<p>The referral states that this species is likely to occur only in Poa dominated habitats and that there is a total of 2.8 ha of Poa grasslands mapped within the Project site.</p> <p>The referral states that the mapped areas of Poa habitat (known at the time of referral) would be avoided.</p> <p>The referral notes that site surveys will be undertaken to quantify the extent of habitat within the Project site.</p>	<p>The figure of 2.8 ha of mapped Poa grasslands within the Project area noted in the <b>Original Proposal</b> was taken from desktop TasVeg mapping. Surveys were undertaken to inform the assessment and revealed site conditions very different to the TasVeg mapping (which was the only information available when the <b>Original Proposal</b> was made). Site surveys identified a total of 3,790 ha of habitat (including low, moderate and high) mapped within the Project site. The species was confirmed on site, with over 2,000 individuals recorded from the transects completed, and an additional 80 individuals counted as incidental observations during other surveys.</p> <p>The layout was refined to minimise impacts to mapped habitat, however total avoidance was not possible, given the extent of habitat on site.</p> <p>The <b>Varied Proposal</b> footprint overlaps with 229.40 ha of potential Ptunarra brown butterfly habitat (including all low, moderate and high-quality habitat within the permanent, temporary and canopy modifications impact footprint) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent impacts – 53.95 ha</li> <li>• Canopy modifications - 17.33 ha</li> <li>• Temporary impacts:</li> </ul>	<p>Total predicted area of habitat disturbance increased from 2.8 ha predicted in referral for the <b>Original Proposal</b> to up to approx. 212 ha (i.e. permanent and temporary impacts but excluding canopy modifications) in the EIS for the <b>Varied Proposal</b>.</p> <p>This change in quantum of predicted impact was predominantly due to limitations in the desktop data used to inform the referral (which showed only a very small area of potential habitat) and the results of site surveys (which demonstrated substantial areas of</p>

Species	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as documented and assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement)	Comparison
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 7.89 ha of longer-term temporary impacts, plus</li> <li>○ 150.24 ha of shorter-term temporary impacts</li> </ul> <p>Canopy modifications are not anticipated to have any meaningful impact on butterfly habitat as it will not require ground disturbance.</p> <p>Thus the totality of impact to species habitat (both temporary and permanent but excluding canopy modifications) is up to 212.08 ha.</p> <p>Potential impact to Ptunarra brown butterfly from European wasps was identified in the EIS and monitoring and management measures proposed to minimise risk.</p>	habitat within the site).
Liawenee Greenhood	<p>The referral indicated the Liawenee Greenhood was known from the area, and likely to be distributed across the main turbine area.</p> <p>The referral states avoidance would be preferred but potential impacts were possible (via direct loss of plants and habitat) but not quantified.</p>	<p>Detailed site surveys confirmed the presence of the Liawenee greenhood on site. The Project layout was refined to minimise impacts as far as possible. Additionally, exclusion zones were identified for the construction phase, to further minimise potential impact to the species.</p> <p>With these footprint refinements and exclusion areas in place, the <b>Varied Proposal</b> is expected to impact upon up to 28 individual plants, in the context of approximately 742 plants recorded within the Project Area (noting that the ecological assessment indicates the Project site is likely to contain considerably more plants outside the immediate survey footprint).</p>	<p>Potential impacts quantified in <b>Varied Proposal</b> as a result of investigation and assessment process (unknown quantum of impact for <b>Original Proposal</b>, up to 28 plants impacted for <b>Varied Proposal</b>).</p> <p>Nature and scope of impacts unchanged.</p>

**Annexure A** to this letter contains further information with respect to MNES and the differences between the potential impacts on MNES as described in the **Original Proposal** and the **Varied Proposal**.

*(d) If applicable, the impacts of the proposed variation on matters of national environmental significance not considered in the referral or assessment of the original proposal*

All impacts of the **Varied Proposal** on MNES have been considered in the assessment process (Part 8 of the EPBC Act) that was undertaken under the Bilateral Agreement.

There are no additional impacts on MNES that were not considered in the assessment of the project under the Bilateral Agreement.

***(e) If applicable, alternatives, mitigation measures and offsets to compensate for additional impacts on matters of national environmental significance.***

During the assessment process that was undertaken through the Bilateral Agreement, several avoidance, mitigation and offset measures were applied to address and compensate for impacts on MNES. This included layout adjustments to minimise loss of habitat, micro-siting commitments, traffic management to reduce roadkill risk, pre-clearance surveys and den and nest management protocols, pest control, full coverage Identiflight curtailment system and a suite of avifauna measures as documented in the Draft BBMP. Additionally, financial offsets were committed to for any mortality of eagles or Tasmanian devils from WTG or vehicle collisions respectively. All these measures are documented in full in the EIS and Supplement and formalised in the State Conditions of Approval.

At the conclusion of the assessment under the Bilateral Agreement (Part 8 of the EPBC Act), the Department issued an RFI (under Part 9 of the EPBC Act) seeking additional information including a BBMP and offsets to compensate for residual impacts to six listed species namely Tasmanian Wedge-tailed eagle, Tasmanian masked owl, Ptunarra brown butterfly, Tasmanian devil, spotted-tailed quoll and eastern quoll.

In response, the Proponent provided the following documents to the Department.

- the RFI Response;
- the Draft Offset Strategy; and
- the Draft BBMP,

The RFI Response and Draft Offset Strategy further articulate the anticipated residual impact to each species and offer proposed offsets accordingly.

- Dasyurids (Tasmanian devil, spotted-tailed quoll and eastern quoll)
  - The **Varied Proposal** footprint overlaps with 481.13 ha of potential habitat, including all optimal and suboptimal denning habitat within the permanent (102.79 ha), temporary (287.25 ha) and canopy modification (91.09 ha) footprints.
  - The Draft Offset Strategy proposes to offset impacts to up 91.08 ha of habitat being the permanent impact footprint excluding the areas of modified land.
- Ptunarra brown butterfly
  - The **Varied Proposal** footprint overlaps with 229.40 ha of potential Ptunarra brown butterfly habitat, including all low, moderate and high-quality habitat within the permanent (53.95 ha), longer-term temporary (7.89 ha) and shorter-term temporary (150.24 ha), and canopy modification (17.33 ha) footprints.

- The Draft Offset Strategy proposes to offset impacts to 61.84 ha of habitat, being the permanent impact footprint (53.95 ha) and the longer-term temporary disturbance (7.89 ha).
- Tasmanian Masked Owl
  - The **Varied Proposal** is anticipated to impact up to 46.89 ha of mapped moderate and high maturity nesting habitat within the permanent (8.28 ha), temporary (21.10 ha) and canopy modifications (17.51 ha) footprints
  - The Draft Offset Strategy proposes to offset impacts up to the full 46.89 ha of habitat.
- Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle
  - The **Varied Proposal** is anticipated to impact up to 41.30 ha of mapped low, moderate and high modelled nesting habitat (FPA categories >3) within the permanent (5.33 ha), temporary (17.39 ha) and canopy modifications (18.57 ha) footprints.
  - The Draft Offset Strategy proposes to offset impacts to the full 41.30 ha of habitat.

The Draft Offset Strategy proposes offsets, in full, for all predicted habitat impacts for Tasmanian masked owl and Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle.

For Ptunarra brown butterfly, the Draft Offset Strategy proposes offset to compensate for all permanent and longer-term temporary impacts (i.e. areas which will be subject to impact for the duration of construction, such as the construction compound) of the **Varied Proposal**. The proponent does not propose to offset the areas of canopy modification as these areas will not require ground level clearance, thus are not anticipated to meaningfully impact butterfly habitat. The quantum of shorter-term temporary impacts (construction impacts, that will be subject to progressive rehabilitation) will not be fully known until micro-siting and detailed design is complete. Thus, the proponent proposes to submit to the Department a Supplementary Offset Strategy (to be submitted post-approval) to compensate for any additional residual impacts to the species (associated with the temporary disturbance footprint) beyond those already compensated for in the Draft Offset Strategy.

For dasyurids, the Draft Offset Strategy proposes offset to compensate for all permanent impacts (aside from areas of already modified land) of the **Varied Proposal**. The proponent does not propose to offset the areas of canopy modification as these areas will not require ground level clearance, thus are not anticipated to meaningfully impact dasyurid habitat. Temporary impacts (i.e. during construction) similarly are not anticipated to meaningfully impact the functionality of dasyurid habitat as these areas will be subject to progressive rehabilitation, and these species are habitat generalists and will continue to use the landscape as construction occurs. Nonetheless the proponent proposes to submit to the Department a Supplementary Offset Strategy (to be submitted post-approval) which will articulate, and provide offsets to compensate for, any additional residual impact on dasyurid habitat associated with any areas of the temporary disturbance footprint that are not anticipated to be restored to be functional dasyurid habitat within 24 months of the carrying out of the clearing.

#### 4. Summary

This variation request is being submitted under section 156A of the EPBC Act to ensure full alignment with the **Varied Proposal** which has been comprehensively assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement.

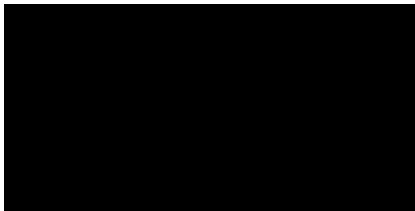
The **Varied Proposal** reflects years of survey, ongoing assessment and design evolution to avoid and minimise impacts to MNES.

The proposed St Patricks Plains Wind Farm has been included in the National Renewable Energy Priority List in recognition of its significance in helping to accelerate Australia's renewable energy transition.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries regarding the matters set out above.

Yours sincerely,



General Manager Developments, Tasmania

E



## Annexure A

All relevant threatened species and ecological communities with potential to occur in the Project area have been assessed in detail (Appendix B and Appendix C of the EIS), with the following species known to occur on site and considered against the Significant Impact Criteria in Section 7.3 of the EIS:

- Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax subsp. Fleayi*) – Endangered
- Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*) – Endangered
- Eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*) – Endangered
- Ptunarra brown butterfly (*Oreixenica ptunarra*) – Endangered
- Tasmanian masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae castanops*) – Vulnerable
- Spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus ssp. Maculatus*) – Vulnerable
- Liawenee greenhood (*Pterostylis pratensis*) – Vulnerable

There were no EPBC Act-listed vegetation communities identified within the Project site (EIS, Section 6.3).

The iterative and interactive nature of the ecological assessment process undertaken by the Proponent used the impact mitigation hierarchy of avoid, minimise, mitigate and manage impacts to species identified. Outside of the first six species listed above assessment demonstrated that impacts were nil, negligible or manageable to species identified.

The following sections summarise salient information with respect to these six key listed species described above.

The referral (of the **Original Proposal**) did not specify the quantum of impacts to each of these species from the proposed wind farm. It included an assessment of residual impacts of significance based on the available known information, making it challenging to quantify the changes to impacts predicted in the **Original Proposal** compared with the impacts predicted, avoided and minimised through the assessment process (**Varied Proposal**), other than a net reduction in impacts to each of the MNES following full assessment of the site habitat and species utilisation.

The **Original Proposal** included the following base information. Images showing the findings from subsequent assessments have been included.

1. Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle - Endangered
  - a. Mapped results of Feb 2019 eagle nest survey of the site (5 existing plus 3 new) plus nests within a buffer of 1 km
  - b. Assessment of nesting habitat within the site
  - c. Many eagles observed during week-long early survey of the site



*Example of an eagle nest in suitable habitat - east of the southern half of the site.  
See Threatened Avian Fauna – Site Utilisation report - NBES – Appendix B to the EIS*

## 2. Tasmanian masked owl - Vulnerable

- a. An assessment and List map search identified historic records of the species and only one recent record with further assessment required.



*Suitable hollow for Tasmanian masked owls on St Patricks Plains  
See-Threatened Avian Fauna – Site Utilisation report - NBES – Appendix B to the EIS*

## 3. Dasyurids:

- a. Tasmanian Devil - Endangered
  - i. Nocturnal species with requirement for denning and daytime shelter e.g. dense vegetation, hollow logs, burrows or caves; hunting habitat (consisting of open understorey mixed with patches of dense vegetation); breeding den

habitat (areas of burrowable, well-drained soil or sheltered overhangs such as cliffs, rocky outcrops, knolls, caves and earth banks, free from risk of flooding).



*Den in which a devil could be heard (snoring) during the day (March 2020)*

*See Flora and Fauna Assessment – NBES - Appendix C to the EIS*

b. Eastern Quoll - Endangered

- i. Known to occur on site. Dry grassland and forest mosaics which are bounded by agricultural land preferred. Central-north Tasmania (including Great Western Tiers to Narawntapu) identified in the National Recovery Plan for Spotted-tailed quoll as a “stronghold & research population”. Further assessment required



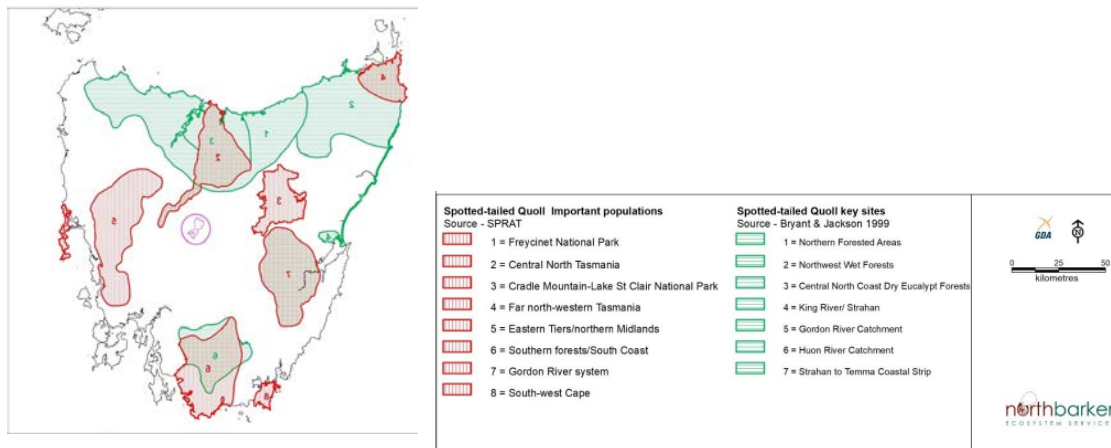
*Eastern quoll captured on camera trap near Arthurs Lake Road*

*See Plate 76 - Flora and Fauna Assessment – NBES - Appendix C to the EIS*

c. Spotted-tail quoll - Vulnerable

- i. dry grassland and forest mosaics which are bounded by agricultural land.

- ii. Central-north Tasmania (including Great Western Tiers to Narawntapu) identified in the National Recovery Plan for Spotted-tailed quoll as a “stronghold & research population”. Further assessment required.



*Important populations for the Spotted-tailed quoll (pink circle highlights Project area)*

*Appendix H in Flora and Fauna Assessment – NBES - Appendix C to the EIS*

#### 4. Ptunarra brown butterfly – Endangered

- This species is likely to occur only in Poa dominated habitats.
- There are 2.8 ha of mapped Poa grasslands within the Project area and the full extent of these will be confirmed during site survey. These areas will be avoided as part of the development.
- This species may also utilise other highland grassland communities, however, the extent of these and their suitability as potential habitat will be determined during survey.



*Sedgy grassland on site – preferred habitat for Ptunarra brown butterfly*

*Plate 1 – Flora and Fauna Assessment – NBES - Appendix C to the EIS*

This information in the referral (**Original Proposal**), while not providing details of the quantum of impact, does indicate that this species, or habitat suitable for it, has been recorded on site.

The **Original Proposal** highlighted species likely to be impacted, some of which have been subsequently found to have negligible impacts and some of which have impacts to be offset. However, at the time of the **Original Proposal**, the action described included a high-level initial assessment of the expected impacts on MNES without providing quantification of impacts. This is because there was not enough detail known, at the time, about the species and ecological communities on the site.

Table 2 below provides a comparison of the residual impacts to MNES from both the **Original Proposal** and the **Varied Proposal** as assessed under the Bilateral Agreement, including the quantum of residual significant impacts documented in the RFI Response.

**Table 3 - Impacts to MNES as noted in the Original Proposal compared to what was assessed via the Bilateral Agreement (Varied Proposal)**

Species	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as documented and assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement)
Tasmanian Wedge-tailed eagle	<p>The assessment of nesting habitat within the Project area determined that 6% of the site provided optimum nesting habitat, 20% of the site provided secondary nesting habitat and 74% was degraded and unlikely to be used as nesting habitat. There are extensive records of this species within the Project area and the wider locality (58 records on the Tasmanian Natural Values Atlas database).</p> <p>The proposed action described in the Original Proposal states that operational measures will be proposed to reduce the potential for wedge-tailed eagle collision; however, details on proposed measures were not available at the time.</p>	<p>This species was confirmed to occur and breed within the Project site.</p> <p>The Project is expected to impact up to 41.30 ha of mapped potential nesting habitat (including high, moderate and low habitat suitability, FPA categories &gt; 3) for the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent impacts – 5.33 ha</li> <li>• Canopy modifications - 18.57 ha</li> <li>• Temporary impacts – 17.39 ha</li> </ul> <p>Total impacts – 41.30 ha – this is the totality of all low, moderate and high modelled habitat within the permanent, temporary and canopy modification footprints.</p> <p>The Project area contains 838.41 ha of mapped low to high quality nesting habitat (Table 15), impacts to potential nesting habitat for the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle represent 4.93 % of this area.</p> <p>See Table 16 – Summary of residual impacts to TWTE nesting habitat classes in RFI Response also 4.3.6 Conclusion of the same report.</p> <p>See also Section 4.3 and Table 16 of RFI Response and Table 18 of Draft Offset Strategy.</p> <p>To minimise impacts to eagles, the Project was designed to avoid all known eagle nests, with a minimum 1km buffer applied.</p> <p>Additionally, the Varied Proposal includes the installation of a best practice turbine curtailment system (namely IdentiFlight) to reduce the potential for eagle collisions.</p> <p>The IdentiFlight system will be installed to achieve full coverage (refer Section 6.1.4.1 of the EIS and Section 3.7.1 of Supplement EIS).</p>

Species	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as documented and assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement)
Masked Owl	<p>This species has been recorded on site and will likely utilise a range of habitats including forest mosaics and open areas. This species nests in old growth trees with hollows which are likely to be present within the Project area. There is potential for impacts on the breeding and hunting habitats used by this species and the extent of these impacts will be determined by the results of full site survey and habitat modelling. Collision with turbine blades and resultant mortality is a potential threat.</p>	<p>This species was not recorded within the Project site in the studies undertaken for the Project (the most recent record within the site being dated 1981) but was recorded outside the Project site in the vicinity. Although the Project site is outside the core range of the species, there is potential nesting habitat mapped within the site.</p> <p>The residual impact of the Project will result in the loss of up to 46.89 ha of suitable potential nesting habitat.</p> <p>Habitat types included in assessment of impacts include availability classes moderate and high with the following impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent impacts – 8.28 ha</li> <li>• Canopy modifications - 17.51 ha</li> <li>• Temporary impacts – 21.10 ha</li> </ul> <p>Total impacts – 46.89 ha – this is the totality of all moderate and high maturity forest within the permanent, temporary and canopy modification footprints.</p> <p>Given the Project areas is within an already suboptimal quality environment outside the core range for this species and considering the low density of Tasmanian masked owls in the broader area, the assessment indicates that this level of impact is unlikely to significantly affect the overall population of Tasmanian masked owls.</p> <p>See 4.2 of RFI Response.</p>
Dasyurids	<p>The following three species were not grouped in the Original Proposal – see individual species initial information below and collective impact assessment from the Varied Proposal in the column to the right.</p>	<p>The Tasmanian devil, spotted-tailed quoll and eastern quoll are wide-ranging carnivores with foraging locations largely driven by prey occurrence rather than habitat types or conditions, on this basis the entire site is potentially suitable habitat (excluding permanently inundated areas), with all three species known to be present.</p>

Species	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as documented and assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement)
Spotted tailed quoll	<p>This species is present on site and is likely to utilise a range of habitats for denning and hunting / foraging. There is potential for impacts on the habitats used by this species and the extent of these impacts will be determined by the results of full site survey and habitat modelling. Given the extent of suitable habitats available for this species, it is considered that the modification of 90 ha across the Project area is unlikely to have a significant impact.</p>	<p>See section 4.1.6 of RFI Response.</p> <p>The Project is expected to impact on a total area of up to 481.13 ha of potential habitat (including all optimal and suboptimal denning habitat within the permanent, temporary and canopy modifications impacts footprint) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent impacts – up to 102.79 ha*</li> <li>• Canopy modifications – up to 91.09 ha</li> <li>• Temporary impacts – up to 287.25 ha</li> </ul> <p>Canopy modifications are not anticipated to have any meaningful impact on dasyurid habitat as it will not require ground disturbance.</p> <p>The residual impact area (used to inform Offset Strategy) is 91.08 ha which is the totality of all permanent impacts in optimal and suboptimal habitat (102.79 ha) minus the area of modified land (11.71 ha).</p>
Eastern quoll	<p>Species prefers dry grassland and forest mosaics which are bounded by agricultural land and is known to occur on site. There is potential for impacts on the habitats used by this species and the extent of these impacts will be determined by the results of full site survey and habitat modelling. Given the extent of suitable habitats available for this species, it is considered that the modification of 90 ha across the Project area is unlikely to have a significant impact.</p>	<p>*Note – The 102.79 ha identified in the RFI Response was subsequently reduced to 91.08 ha, in the calculation of residual significant impact, by the removal of 11.71 ha of modified land and as per discussions with the Department.</p> <p>See Section 4.1 &amp; Table 2 of RFI Response and Table 14, 15, 16 of Draft Offset Strategy.</p>

Species	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as documented and assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement)
Tasmanian Devil	<p>This species is present on site and is likely to utilise a range of habitats for denning and hunting / foraging.</p> <p>Extensive survey of suitable habitats, and implementation of appropriate devil den identification and management protocols prior to construction are frequently used to minimise impacts on this species.</p> <p>The potential for impacts on active breeding sites of this species is considered to be low due to the ability to detect and avoid these or render future den sites unusable.</p> <p>Given the extent of suitable habitats available for this species, it is considered that the modification of 90 ha across the Project area is unlikely to have a significant impact.</p> <p>Tasmanian devils are susceptible to collision with motor vehicles and the implementation of appropriate signage and management across the Project area during construction and operation will mitigate the risks associated with roadkill mortality.</p>	

Species	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as documented and assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement)
Ptunarra brown butterfly	<p>This species is likely to occur only in Poa dominated habitats.</p> <p>There are 2.8 ha of mapped Poa grasslands within the Project area and the full extent of these will be confirmed during site survey. These areas will be avoided as part of the development. This species may also utilise other highland grassland communities, however, the extent of these and their suitability as potential habitat will be determined during survey.</p>	<p>The figure of 2.8 ha of mapped Poa grasslands within the Project area noted in the Original Proposal was taken from TasVeg mapping. Targeted surveys for the Ptunarra brown butterfly were concentrated on suitable habitat within the Project area, which included the various forms of grassland and sedgeland throughout the northern half of the Project area. The surveys revealed site conditions very different to the TasVeg mapping which was the only information available when the Original Proposal was made.</p> <p>Over 2,000 individuals were recorded from the transects completed, with an additional 80 individuals counted as incidental observations during other surveys. The analysis of survey results confirmed that relative abundance varies between habitat types, with sedgy grassland supporting the highest density of individuals and very short grasslands the lowest, with over 90 % of surveys in this habitat type yielding no observations.</p> <p>The Project is expected to impact up to 229.40 ha of potential Ptunarra brown butterfly habitat (including all low, moderate and high-quality habitat within the permanent, temporary and canopy modifications impact footprint) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent impacts – 53.95 ha</li> <li>• Canopy modifications - 17.33 ha</li> <li>• Temporary impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 7.89 ha of longer-term temporary impacts, plus</li> <li>○ 150.24 ha of shorter-term temporary impacts</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Some parts of the temporary impact footprint will contain construction facilities for the entire duration of construction (7.89 ha), namely the construction compound, batch plant and main laydown area (longer-term temporary impacts). These areas were included in the calculation of residual impacts.</p> <p>The residual impact area used to inform the Offset Strategy was 61.84 ha.</p>

Species	Original Proposal	Varied Proposal (as documented and assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement)
		See Section 4.4 of the Response to Request for Further Information and Table 19.
Liawenee Greenhood	<p>There is a fairly even distribution of records of grassland cupflower and Liawenee greenhood across the main turbine area.</p> <p>Detailed site survey will be required to confirm the location of the species within the project area to allow refinement of turbine locations where possible to avoid disturbance.</p>	<p>Detailed site surveys confirmed the presence of the Liawenee greenhood on site. The Project layout was refined to minimise impacts as far as possible. Additionally, exclusion zones were identified for the construction phase, to further minimise potential impact to the species.</p> <p>With these footprint refinements in place, the Project is expected to impact upon up to 28 individual plants, in the context of approximately 742 plants recorded within the Project Area (noting that the ecological assessment indicates the Project site is likely to contain considerably more plants outside the immediate survey footprint).</p> <p>This was assessed against EPBC Act Significant Impact Criteria (documented in Table 7-2 of the EIS) and summarised:</p> <p><i>The impact to the approximately 28 mapped will not have a significant impact on this species given its localised abundance on site, the extent of retained plants and habitat, and the existing size of the St Patricks Plains subpopulation (3,500 ha) as documented in Appendix C.</i></p> <p><i>The Project is therefore considered unlikely to trigger any of the Significant Impact Criteria, and offsets under the EPBC Act are not expected to be required.</i></p>





19 November 2025

Reference: EPBC 2019/8497

**RE: APPENDIX to:  
St Patricks Plains Wind Farm – EPBC 2019/8497 Variation Request under Section 156A(1)  
of the EPBC Act**

## 1. Background

On 30 October 2025 Ark Energy submitted a request to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the **Department**) under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (**EPBC Act**) to vary the **Original Proposal** for the St Patricks Plains Wind Farm as documented in the 2019 referral (EPBC 2019/8497) to the **Varied Proposal** as assessed under the Bilateral Agreement.

The request to vary letter dated 30 October describes the project and what was known of the impacts to MNES at the time of the referral and considers differences between the **Original Proposal** and the **Varied Proposal** as assessed under the Bilateral Agreement between the State of Tasmania and the Commonwealth under section 45 of the EPBC Act (**Bilateral Agreement**).

This Appendix addresses the temporal element of the request to vary, which was not addressed in the request dated 30 October 2025, and seeks to amend the end date for the approval to 2090. This appendix details the request to vary the duration of the activity from that documented in the referral for the **Original Proposal** (namely 2023 to 2053) to a varied approval period of 2026 to 2090 (the **Varied Proposal**).

This Appendix only addresses the proposed change to the duration of the activity, and all other matters are separately addressed under the previous variation request letter dated 30 October 2025.

The Project, as assessed under the Bilateral Agreement (**Varied Proposal**) includes the construction, operation and decommissioning of a wind farm and associated infrastructure.

## 3. Variation Request

This section addresses the information required by regulation 5.08 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000* (Cth) (**EPBC Regulations**) in support of this Appendix to the variation request under section 156A of the EPBC Act.

### **(a) Details of the proposed variation to the action**

The 2019 referral (the **Original Proposal**) provided an estimated start and end date for the proposed action as 2023 and 2053 respectively (30-year total duration). This estimate was provided very early in the application process and didn't fully consider the likely lifespan of the wind farm, nor the other pre and post operational tasks that form part of the action (construction, commissioning and decommissioning).

The **Varied Proposal** seeks a start date of 2026 and an end date of 2090 (total 64 years). This change includes an adjustment to the start date (to accommodate the current stage of the assessment) and an extension to the end date to allow for a longer wind farm life span and the inclusion of all pre and post operational tasks that form part of the action.

The **Varied Proposal** includes the potential for refurbishments of wind farm infrastructure on an as needs basis up to 2090. The **Varied Proposal** is consistent with the project as assessed under the bilateral and documented by the EPA in the Environmental Assessment Report, which states the “*Wind Farm is expected to have an operational life of up to 30 years, however the EIS states that is expected to be extended through upgrade and replacement of infrastructure*”. The EIS and Supplement to the EIS included the potential for upgrade and replacement of infrastructure to prolong the wind farm life beyond 30 years but did not provide a detailed assessment of specific refurbishment activities or the potential impacts of a full wind farm re-powering. Thus, the **Varied Proposal** limits any refurbishment to extend the life span of the wind farm to works that can be undertaken without additional impacts to MNES. This will be achieved by using the existing road and hardstand features (and retaining existing underground cables) such that there is no new clearance of MNES habitat and ensuring any WTG upgrades do not increase collision risk.

Any more substantial refurbishment, or repowering, involving potential additional impact to MNES would be considered outside the scope of the **Varied Proposal** and warrant new and separate consideration under the EPBC Act.

In summary this Appendix (which relates only to the timeframe aspect of the variation) seeks a variation to the duration of the activity from 30 years (as documented in the 2019 referral) to up to 64 years (to accommodate construction, commissioning, decommissioning and some refurbishment during the life of the wind farm).

***(b) The reasons for the proposed variation***

There are two key reasons for the proposed increase in duration of the activity.

Firstly, the estimated duration of the activity as provided in the referral (**Original Proposal**) (30 years) was based on the average life span of a wind turbine (at that time) and did not give due consideration to the other tasks required pre and post operation. Additional tasks, not considered in the original estimate, include construction, commissioning, decommissioning and ensuring compliance with any pre-construction and decommissioning approval conditions. The 30-year duration provided in the referral did not allow for any of these additional tasks and therefore underestimated the duration of the activity and the **Varied Proposal** seeks to address the matter.

Secondly, the **Varied Proposal** includes provision for refurbishment of wind farm infrastructure on an as needs basis to prolong the operational life of the wind farm, thus the proponent is seeking a revised end date of the activity of 2090, to accommodate a longer operational life.

***(c) how the impacts of the proposed variation on matters of national environmental significance (MNES) compare with those of the original proposal***

The difference between the **Original Proposal** and **Varied Proposal** addressed in this Appendix is the change in duration of the action, from approximately 30 years to up to 64 years (inclusive of construction, commissioning, operation and decommissioning).

As outlined above, the **Varied Proposal** includes the potential for refurbishment of wind farm infrastructure on an as needs basis to extend the operational life. Refurbishment activities have the potential to impact on MNES through vegetation and habitat clearance or changes to infrastructure that increase operational impacts (e.g. larger WTGs that could have an increased avifauna collision risk). To address this risk, the **Varied Proposal** includes only refurbishment activities where they can be undertaken without any additional impact to MNES. This will be achieved by using the existing road and hardstand features (and retaining existing underground cables) and ensuring any WTG upgrades do not increase collision risk.

In the event that future refurbishment (or repowering) activities are proposed which have the potential to impact on MNES (e.g. via habitat disturbance or increased WTG size) then this would be outside the scope of the **Varied Proposal** and require separate consideration under the EPBC Act (e.g. via variation to the approval or a new referral if required).

The extended duration of the **Varied Proposal** has a commensurate increase in the duration of operational impacts to MNES, namely avifauna collision risk and operational phase roadkill risk. The project proposes considerable mitigation measures to minimise the potential collision risk including full coverage Identiflight curtailment system to minimise eagle collisions, Roadkill Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan and detailed measures in the Draft BBMP to manage, monitor and compensate for any operational impacts to avifauna. Although a longer operational wind farm lifespan has a commensurate increase in duration of collision risk, with the proposed management measures in place, mortalities are expected to be very low and the commensurate increase is minimal.

It is noted that all relevant pre and post operational tasks (e.g. construction, commissioning and decommissioning) were included in the **Original Proposal** (it was only the time to allow for these that was not properly accommodated in the referral).

***(d) If applicable, the impacts of the proposed variation on matters of national environmental significance not considered in the referral or assessment of the original proposal***

All impacts of the **Varied Proposal** on MNES have been considered in the assessment process (Part 8 of the EPBC Act) undertaken through the bilateral agreement with the State of Tasmania.

The EIS states *“The Project is proposed to have a design life of approximately 30 years but is likely to be extended beyond this with equipment upgrades as required”*. The Tasmanian EPA undertook their assessment on this basis and state in their Environment Assessment Report *“The wind farm has a 30 year design life, however the EIS states it is likely to extend beyond this with upgrades”*.

Although the assessment included potential upgrades to prolong the wind farm beyond 30 years, detailed assessment of specific refurbishment or repowering activities was not included in the assessment. Unlike EPBC Act approvals, the permit issued under the Tasmanian approvals process is perpetual and the details of any future refurbishment activities are dealt with on a case-by-case basis in accordance with Condition G3 of the Tasmanian approval. Condition G3 requires the proponent to notify the Director (EPA) of any changes to the activity (e.g. upgrade or replacement of infrastructure) in the event that it may cause or increase emissions of a pollutant or may result in environmental harm or nuisance.

Because the assessment undertaken to date contemplates a wind farm life beyond 30 years but does not provide a detailed assessment of specific refurbishment tasks, the proponent has limited the temporal scope of the **Varied Proposal** to refurbishment activities that do not have an increased impact on MNES.

As started above, any future refurbishment (or repowering) that may increase impacts to MNES would be considered beyond the scope of the **Varied Proposal** and dealt with separately.

***(e) If applicable, alternatives, mitigation measures and offsets to compensate for additional impacts on matters of national environmental significance.***

As outlined above, the **Varied Proposal** includes potential refurbishment activities but only where these do not have additional impacts on MNES.

As outlined above the increased life span of the wind farm (from the **Original Proposal** to the **Varied Proposal**) presents a commensurate increase in duration of operational impacts to MNES (i.e. collision risk). However, all relevant mitigation and offset measures associated with the operational phase (eg BBMP, eagle collision financial offset etc) will remain in place for the life of the wind farm. Thus, there are no new alternatives, mitigation measure or offsets proposed.

#### **4. Summary**

This appendix to the variation request (dated 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025) is being submitted under section 156A of the EPBC Act to address a change in the duration of the life of the wind farm to ensure full alignment with the **Varied Proposal** which has been comprehensively assessed in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement.