Golden Plains Wind Farm

WestWind Energy Pty Ltd

Preliminary Planning and Approvals Assessment

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Project Manager:	Phil Burn
Author:	Anna Raftery
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Jacobs Group (Australia) Pty Limited
ABN 37 001 024 095
Floor 11, 452 Flinders Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
PO Box 312, Flinders Lane
Melbourne VIC 8009 Australia
T +61 3 8668 3000
F +61 3 8668 3001
www.jacobs.com

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Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to provide a preliminary planning and approvals assessment to support a referral under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

The project involves the development of a wind energy facility and associated permanent and temporary infrastructure. The wind energy facility will comprise of up to 235 wind turbines within the three to five megawatt (MW) class and up to 230m in height. The project will also consist of substations, collector stations, power lines, anemometers, access tracks and temporary site offices. The wind farm will have a total capacity of approximately 800 MWs and produce approximately 2500 GWH of electricity each year while saving 2.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

The Golden Plains Wind Farm site is irregular in shape and covers an area of 17,345 hectares. It is located on land to the south, south east and west of Rokewood, within the localities of Werneth, Rokewood and Barunah Park. Situated approximately 60 kilometres north west of Geelong and approximately 60 km to the south of Ballarat, the project site is located within a sparsely populated area. The subject site for the most part is highly altered from its natural state. The land is currently used for cropping and grazing which has resulted in historic removal of native vegetation and the clearing of rocks. The Moorabool to Heywood 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line runs east – west through the southern portion of the wind farm site. The project site is within the Golden Plains Shire and the Cressy-Shelford Road, located adjacent to the southern boundary of the site, forms the boundary between Golden Plains and Colac Otway Shires.

This report has found that Commonwealth, State and local policies support the uptake of renewable energy and recognise the suitability of this area for a wind energy facility. The project will give effect to and is entirely consistent with Clause 19.01 (Renewable Energy) of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme. The assessment demonstrates that the project will give effect to the State and Local Planning Policy Framework, the objectives and decision guidelines of the zones and overlays applying to the site.

The review of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme, together with the findings of the preliminary site investigations carried out by Jacobs, Brett Lane and Associates, Heritage Insight, Marshall Day Acoustics, DNV GL and XUrban has enabled early identification of the environmental values and constraints within the site. This work has been informed by early and ongoing consultation with key government and referral agencies.

Through a number of informed iterations the proponent has modified the siting and design of the development to respond to these constraints including:

- Removal of 17 proposed wind turbines to provide for a turbine exclusion buffer to ensure a ‘zero net impact’ to the Victorian Brolga population, avoid native vegetation and identified cultural heritage places
- Avoiding areas of high quality native vegetation and habitat identified during the habitat hectare assessment of the project site
- Avoiding cultural heritage places of significance, which have been identified to date, and
- Siting the majority of wind turbines (227 wind turbines) a minimum of 100 metres and for the remaining four wind turbines a minimum of 85 metres from a watercourse or waterbody.

In addition the following design measures will avoid and reduce impacts including:

- a minimum distance of 40 metres from the ground to the lowest point of the rotor sweep has been provided to avoid the majority of bird flight paths, as confirmed by bird utilisations surveys, and
- the reduction of new track widths to minimise the impact footprint while still maintaining functionality and safety.

In addition to layout and design changes, potential native vegetation offset sites have been identified within the project site and in the immediate area surrounding the project. Furthermore, draft mitigation measures have been identified to be included within future environmental management plans for the site including salvage and translocation protocols to be approved by the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP).

The assessment has concluded that a number of planning and environmental approvals will be required for the proposed use and development. Key primary approvals will include:

- A planning permit for a wind energy facility, utility installation, native vegetation removal and associated buildings and works, which will be assessed by the Minister for Planning against the provisions of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme
- A planning permit in accordance with clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation) (and the Vegetation Protection Overlay) and of the Colac Otway Planning Scheme, should the removal of native vegetation be required within Colac Otway Shire
- A Cultural Heritage Management Plan which will need to be prepared in conjunction with and assessed by the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation and Aboriginal Victoria, and
- Approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* as a controlled action.

A referral is being made to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* as a 'controlled action' requiring further Commonwealth assessment and approval. A referral to the Minister for Planning under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* is also being made to determine whether an Environment Effects Statement is required. Commonwealth assessment could be undertaken in accordance with a relevant bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Victoria. The planning permit process under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* is one of the three accredited Victorian assessment processes for this purpose.

This report also notes that other consents and approvals are likely to be required including:

- A Permit to Take listed flora under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- A Works on Waterway Permit under the *Water Act 1989*, and
- Consents under the *Road Management Act 2004*.

Important note about your report

The purpose of this report is to provide WestWind Energy with a preliminary land use planning and approvals assessment of the proposed Golden Plains Wind Farm.

The assessment has been made on the site information made available to Jacobs from WestWind Energy as well as publically available information. The information within this report will help guide future planning and environmental assessments and approvals.

The report has been prepared exclusively for WestWind Energy and no liability is accepted for any use or reliance on the report by third parties

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1. Purpose of this Report

Jacobs Group (Australia) Pty Ltd (Jacobs) acts on behalf of WestWind Energy Pty Ltd (the Proponent). The proponent proposes to develop a wind energy facility, comprising of up to 235 wind turbines, south of Rokewood, within the localities of Werneth, Rokewood and Barunah Park. The project site is located within the Golden Plains Shire and subject to the provisions of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme. The Cressy-Shelford Road is managed by Colac Otway Shire and forms the southern boundary of the project site. The road forms the boundary between the Golden Plains Shire and the Colac Otway Shire.

Jacobs has assessed the project against the Golden Plains Planning Scheme and identified that, as a minimum, planning approval will be required for:

- Use and development of the land for the purpose of a wind energy facility including associated ancillary temporary and permanent infrastructure
- Use and development of the land for the purpose of a utility installation
- Removal of vegetation pursuant to Clauses 42.01, 42.02, 44.02 and 52.17 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme
- Removal of vegetation pursuant to clauses 42.02 (Vegetation Protection Overlay) and 52.17 (Native Vegetation) of the Colac Otway Planning Scheme, and
- To create or alter access to a road in a Road Zone under Clause 52.29 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme

This planning report provides background to the project and an assessment of the proposal against the provisions of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme. It is informed by supporting documentation provided within the referral to the Minister for Planning under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* including:

- Jacobs 2017 *Golden Plains Wind Farm Surface Water Desktop Assessment*
- Jacobs 2017 *Golden Plains Wind Farm Preliminary Geomorphology Report*
- Jacobs 2017 *Golden Plains Wind Farm Hydrogeological Assessment*
- Jacobs 2017 *Golden Plains Wind Farm Traffic Assessment.*
- BL&A 2017 *Golden Plains Wind Farm Flora and Fauna Assessment Report*
- BL&A 2017 *Golden Plains Wind Farm Brolga Impact Assessment Report*
- Heritage Insight 2016 *Golden Plains Wind Energy Facility Preliminary Cultural Heritage Assessment*
- XURBAN 2017, *Golden Plains Wind Farm EES Referral Preliminary Landscape and Visual Assessment*
- Marshall Day Acoustics 2017, *Golden Plains Wind Farm Noise Review*

This report is structured to outline the:

- Site and its context
- Project details
- Existing policy context relevant to wind energy facilities in Victoria
- Assessment of the project against the Golden Plains Planning Scheme
- Identification of other Commonwealth and State environmental approvals, and
- Support for the project to be assessed through a bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Victoria under the accredited Victoria planning permit process under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

2. Site and surrounds

The project site is located on land to the south, south east and west of Rokewood, within the localities of Werneth, Rokewood and Barunah Park. It is situated approximately 60 kilometres north west of Geelong, Victoria and approximately 60 km to the south of Ballarat (refer Figure 2.1).

2.1 The project site

The project site is irregular in shape and covers an area of 17, 345 hectares. It is bounded by road frontage to Pitfield-Cressy Road and Boyles Road to the west; Rokewood-Skipton Road, Clear-Rokewood Road and Rokewood-Shelford Road to the north; Wingeel Road to the east; and Cressy-Shelford Road and Ledwells Road to the south.

The project site can be characterised as an open agricultural landscape which has been significantly modified. It is largely cleared of trees and screening vegetation except along some creeks, roadsides, fences or around dwellings. It is currently used for cropping and grazing and contains scattered farm houses, access tracks and other agricultural infrastructure such as sheds. The site contains small stony rises within the landscape and harvested rock has been used to form rock walls or is stored in rock piles.

The north-western corner of the site, south of Littlehales Road is located at an elevation of approximately 210 m AHD. The site is generally flat and slopes from north to south with levels around the most southern section of the site (along Cressy-Shelford Road) at around 140 m AHD.

The main waterways that traverse the site are Ferrers Creek, Mia Mia Creek, Kuruc a Ruc Creek (Meadows Creek) and Mount Misery Creek (also known as Little Woady Yallock Creek) which flow north to south. There are also a number of other minor smaller unnamed channels and drainage lines and wetland areas.

The project area is currently located within the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) boundary of the Wadawurrung (Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (WWAC)) and partly in an area not currently administered by a RAP. The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) and the Guligad Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) both have an interest in the area. To date, a total of 19 surface Aboriginal Places have been located during the standard assessment on the WWAC side of the activity area and 12 Aboriginal Places were located as a result of the first stage of the complex assessment on the EMAC/GAC side. One heritage place, listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory, have been identified within the project site, however the development avoids this site.

The site is bisected north-south by Geggies, Bells, Eastern Access, Gumley South, Meadows, Two Bridges, Colac-Ballarat, Mill and Boyles,Roads. It is also bisected in an east west direction by Littlehales, Jacka's, Gilletts, Kennersleys Roads and by the Moorabool-Heywood double circuit 500kV high voltage transmission line and its easement, towards the southern end of the site. Apart from the public roads, there are also two small Crown land parcels located at the intersection of Eastern Access Road and Cressy Shelford Road and to the east side of Geggies Road.

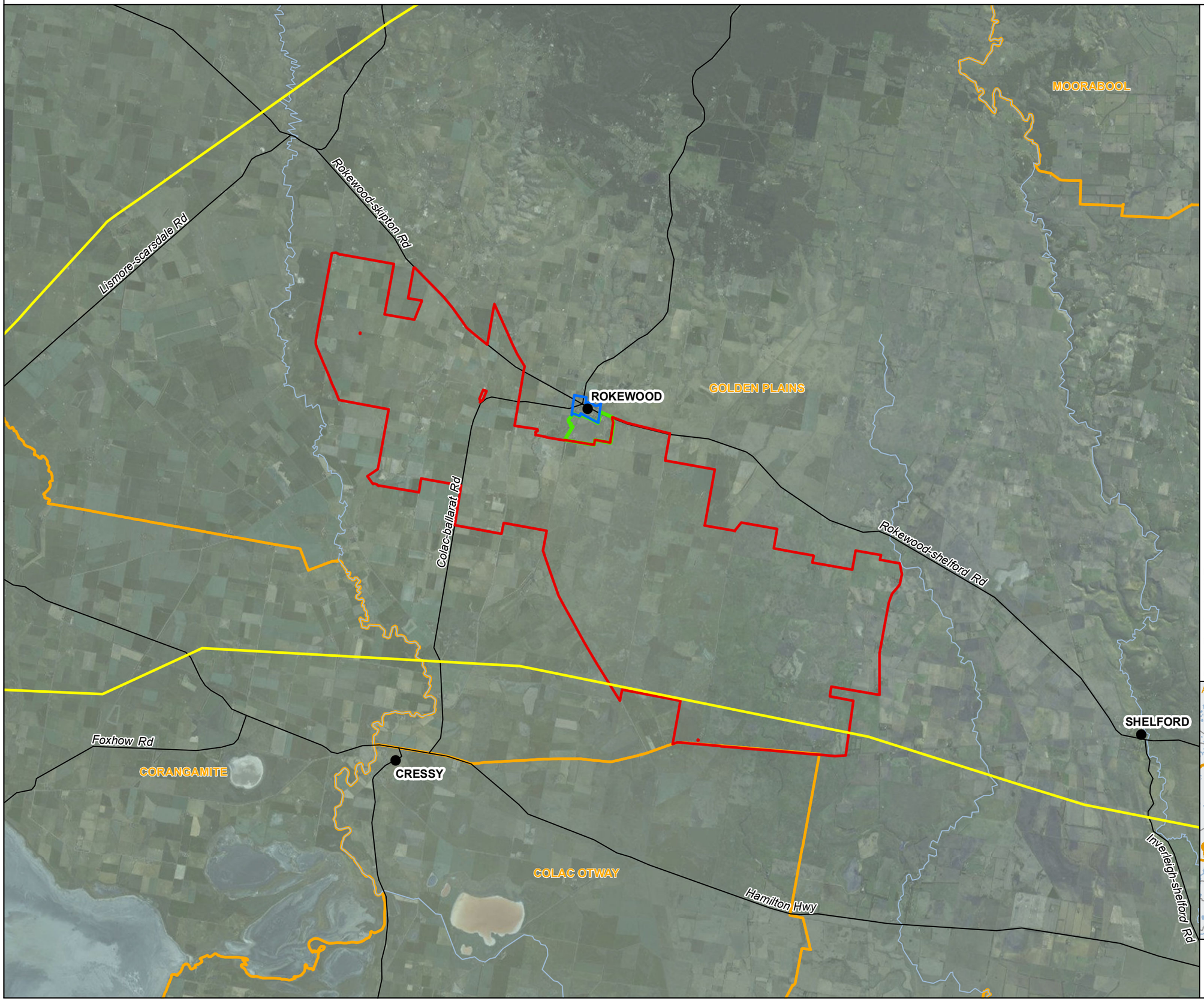
There are 39 participant landowners located within the site.

2.2 Site Context

The pre-European settlement landscape that existed within this region has been greatly modified through human settlement, agricultural practices and the clearance of native vegetation. There is a uniform spread of farmland across this landscape, interspersed with many man made elements that include farm houses and outbuildings; settlements with residential, commercial and public buildings; transmission line towers; public roads and other man made infrastructure.

Site Location

Golden Plains Wind Farm



Legend

- Towns
- Residential/Commerical Area
- Conservation and Recreation Area
- Revised Site Boundary (West Wind Energy, 05/05/2017)
- LGA Boundary
- Transmission Line
- Road
- Watercourse

N

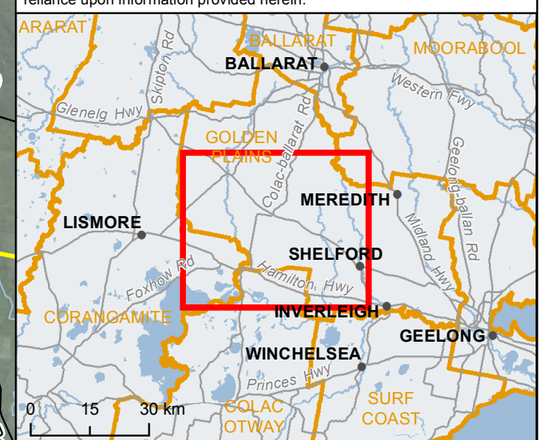
IS164500

GDA 1994 MGA Zone 54

0 3 6

kilometres

DATA SOURCES



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Date Published: 09 Jun 2017

The project site sits within this rural landscape approximately one kilometre to the south, south east and west of Rokewood. While Rokewood is the nearest town, the site is relatively isolated from other urban centres as it is located more than 10km from Cressy, Shelford, Inverleigh, Dereel and Teesdale and over 60km from Geelong and Ballarat. A small portion of the northern boundary abuts Rokewood Common Nature Conservation Reserve and Rokewood Golf Course. Shelford –Cressy Road is the southern boundary of the site and forms the boundary between Golden Plains and Colac Otway Shires.

The area is sparsely populated with only 86 dwellings located within 2 km of the site as shown in Figure 2.2[1].

[1] As desktop information this plan will contain some farm buildings which are not dwellings or sensitive receptors.

Sensitive Receptors

Golden Plains Wind Farm

Legend

Sensitive Receptors (DELWP, 2016)

- Building
- Community Centre
- Community Venue
- Tower
- 1Km Site Buffer
- 2Km Site Buffer
- Revised Site Boundary (West Wind Energy, 05/05/2017)
- Rail
- Major road
- Minor road
- Watercourse

N

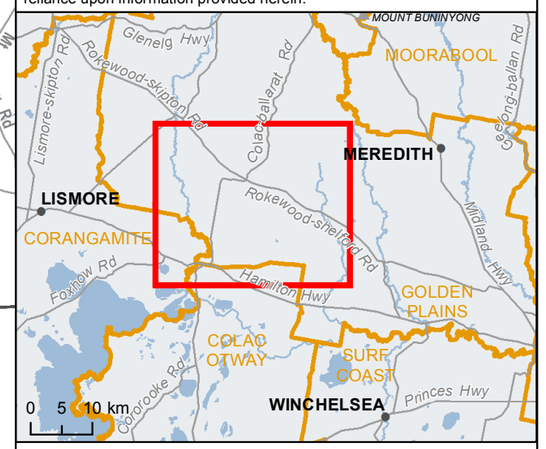
IS164500

GDA 1994 MGA Zone 54

0 2 4

kilometres

DATA SOURCES



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Date Published: 08 May 2017

3. The project

The proponent proposes to develop a wind energy facility comprising up to 235 wind turbines within the 3MW to 5MW class, with a tip height of 230 metres and associated permanent and temporary infrastructure. Permanent associated infrastructure would include internal site access tracks including upgrades to access; upgrades to intersections; hardstand and lay down areas; underground electricity cabling, overhead powerlines (up to 220kV), four (4) electricity collector stations, one (1) terminal sub-station (including operations building), connection to the 500kV high voltage electricity transmission line; car parking; business identification signage; six (6) met masts; and removal of native vegetation. Temporary infrastructure includes four (4) co-located construction compounds and concrete batching plants; car parking, site buildings and amenities.

3.1 Wind Resource

The proponent has conducted wind monitoring from the project site since 2012 utilising a 10 metre mast initially and increasing the height to 60 metres during the prospecting phase. Two (2) SODAR systems were used, in conjunction with the monitoring masts to measure wind speed at various heights and to confirm the spread of the wind resource across the large project area. Three (3) by 100 metre masts have recently been installed in May 2017.

Wind monitoring has confirmed the following key characteristics of the site which contribute to the suitability of the site for the proposed wind farm:

- Consistently strong wind with a fairly even spread over the entire year
- Low turbulence and significantly less wind shear which is expected to improve energy yield and will favour large rotor wind turbines, and
- Typically the strongest and consistent winds over the year are from the north to westerly winds.

A wind rose has been developed for the site which provides a succinct view of how wind speed and direction is typically distributed over the project area. This has been used to inform the layout of the proposed wind turbines to maximise energy yield.

3.2 Site Suitability

The Golden Plains project site is well suited for a wind energy facility. One of the key advantages for siting this project is the Moorabool-Heywood double circuit 500kV electricity transmission line which allows for the layout and design of the wind farm to incorporate a direct, on-site connection into the electricity grid. Built to supply the Portland Aluminium Smelter, this electricity transmission line has significant available capacity to take the electricity generated from the proposed Golden Plains Wind Farm. Connecting to the 500kv line is costly, and the generation capacity of the proposed wind farm needs to be of a size which makes the connection into this line feasible.

Key factors which also determine the suitability of the site include:

- Strong consistent winds combined with a strong grid connection option
- Supportive host landowners. WestWind established relationships with these landowners during the development of the Mount Mercer wind farm and have built a good working relationship with them over time
- The site is used for farming and the wind energy facility is compatible with this use
- The surrounding area has a very low population density
- Access to suitable local and regional road network
- Access to a skilled workforce (largely drawn from Ballarat and Geelong), and
- Environmental constraints can be managed within the site.

3.3 Project Components

The various components of the project are provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 : Project components[2]

Project Component	Discussion
Wind Turbines	The project will involve the installation and operation of up to 235 wind turbines within the three to five megawatt (MW) class with a maximum tip height of 230 metres above ground level. The wind turbine rotor will generally be in the order of 150 metres in diameter and the wind turbine lower rotor sweep will be a minimum of 40 metres from natural ground level. The total installed capacity will be approximately 800MW and an indicative generation capacity of >2500 GWH per annum. It is expected that wind turbine foundations will consist of an approximate depth of 3.5 metres and diameter of 20-25 metres. The wind turbines will be constructed using non-reflective materials.
Hardstands	Hard stand and lay down areas of approximately (40 metres by 40 metres) comprising crushed rock as a base layer (potentially sourced from the site) and a top layer of imported material. These will provide a stable operating platform for cranes during construction, heavy maintenance and decommissioning of the wind turbines.
Transmission Infrastructure	Approximately 207km of underground (approximately 33kV electricity cables with the depth of cable trench up to 1 metre will connect the wind turbines to four (4) internal electricity collector stations with a footprint of 80 by 80. Approximately 26km of overhead powerlines (up to 220kV) will connect the electricity collector stations to the terminal station. The terminal station will have a footprint of approximately 400 by 400 metres (including the operations building) and connect directly to the existing high voltage 500 kV electricity transmission line.
Ancillary Permanent Infrastructure	The project will also include a range of on-site associated permanent and temporary infrastructure to support the wind farm operation. Permanent on-site ancillary facilities may include: intersection upgrades; site access improvements; six (6) permanent anemometers, main site access and approximately 152 km of internal access track which would be constructed to a minimum of 5 metres increasing to 7 metres on corners; car parking and business identification signage. Temporary construction facilities may include four co-located compounds and concrete batching plants at each collector electricity station site. The main compound would host site parking, storage, office and amenities.

[2] Provided by WestWind

4. Policy context

Commonwealth and State Government policies demonstrate significant support for the uptake of renewable energy to support international commitments to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and beyond. The decision to establish clear emissions reduction targets enables the Commonwealth and State Governments to develop initiatives to support these overarching climate change goals.

Commonwealth Government has established the Large Scale Renewable Energy Target (LRET) and the State Government has recently announced its commitment to ensure that at least 25% of Victoria's electricity will come from Victorian built renewable generation by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025.

This section of the report provides an overview of the public policy response to the growth of the renewable energy sector recognising the significant benefit these projects can provide to:

- Position Victoria as a leader in climate change by reducing emissions and addressing the social, economic and environmental implications
- Build a strong future for Victoria in the renewable energy sector to create jobs growth and investment in regional Victoria, and
- Transition the state to clean electricity generation to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

4.1 International agreements

International action on climate change dates back to the Rio, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol placed legally binding emissions reduction targets of 5 per cent emissions reduction below 1990 levels on developed countries. In 2010, the Cancun Agreements resulted in countries making voluntary emissions reduction targets to 2020. In December 2015, the UNFCCC held the 21st Conference of the Parties in Paris to develop a legally binding protocol. Prior to the conference national and sub-national governments pledged their commitments to reduce emissions to meet a 2 degree limit in warming goal, with each country nominating an emissions reduction target. Australian's current international commitment is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28%, from 2005 levels by 2030. Australia's international commitments will need to be delivered in cooperation with all States and territories with the commitments extending to State and local government policy, regulation and decision making.

4.2 Commonwealth

Renewable energy is strongly encouraged by Commonwealth legislation and policy. The key policy initiatives are the Emissions Reduction Fund (so called 'Direct Action'), the Carbon Farming Initiative and the Large Scale Renewable Energy Target (LRET). LRET builds upon the national renewable energy target first introduced by the Howard Government in 2000 and augmented in later years to absorb State schemes and expand. The LRET specifies the amount of renewable energy to be generated by renewables for each year, ramping up to 33,000 gigawatt hours by 2020. LRET creates a financial incentive for the establishment and growth of renewable energy power stations, such as wind and solar farms, or hydro-electric power stations. It does this through the creation of large-scale generation certificates. Certificates are created based on the amount of eligible renewable electricity produced and can be sold and traded in addition to the sale of electricity. Victoria has a competitive advantage of excellent wind resource areas and in proximity to the electricity grid. Ensuring high quality wind energy sites are developed will enable investment to flow to the project sites that can deliver LRET at the lowest cost.

4.3 State

Relevant legislation which governs climate change and the growth of the renewable energy sector is reviewed below.

4.3.1 Climate Change Act 2017

In 2015, the Victorian Government commissioned an independent review of the *Climate Change Act 2010* and the independent review committee's report was tabled in parliament on the 11 February 2016. The review made 33 recommendations to strengthen Victoria's climate change laws. The Victorian Government's response to the review was recently released on the 9 June 2016 and generally accepted the majority of these recommendations.

On 8 December 2016 the Climate Change Bill 2016 was passed by the Legislative Assembly and on 23 February the bill was passed by the Legislative Council to create the new Climate Change Act 2017.This Act:

- Embeds a long term emission reduction target of zero net emissions by 2050
- Require five yearly interim targets to keep Victoria on track to meet this long-term target
- The introduction of a 5 yearly Climate Change Strategy which details how Victoria will meet its targets and adapt to the impacts of Climate Change
- The establishment of a periodic reporting system to ensure transparency and accountability
- The introduction of a 5-yearly Adaption Action Plans that focus on key areas, such as health and human services, transport, water cycle, and the natural environment, and
- The development of a whole of government and individual sector pledging system to reduce emissions from across the economy and government.

4.3.2 Planning and Environment Act 1987

The objectives for planning in Victoria as set out under Section 4(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (P&E Act) relevant to the uptake of renewable energy are:

- *To protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and coordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community.*
- *To balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.*

The P&E Act gives effect to the planning scheme which provides a framework within which decisions about the use and development of land can be made. The project has been assessed against the Golden Plains Planning Scheme within section 3 of this report.

4.3.3 Policy and planning guidelines for development of wind energy facilities in Victoria 2016

These guidelines recognise Victoria's abundant wind resources that will support a large scale grid of connected wind energy facilities which can contribute to the sustainable delivery of Victoria's future energy needs. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide:

- *A framework for a consistent and balanced approach to the assessment of wind energy projects*
- *A set of consistent operational performance standards to inform the assessment and operation of a wind energy facility project, and*
- *Guidance how planning permit applications might be met.*

4.3.4 Renewable Energy Road Map 2015

In August 2015, the Government released Victoria's Renewable Energy Road Map which identifies four priority areas for Government which are:

- Transforming Victoria's generation stock towards renewable energy
- Addressing barriers to distributed generation and storage
- Encouraging household and community renewable generation, and
- Expanding the Government's role in facilitating the uptake of renewable energy.

The Roadmap is essentially a discussion paper which will feed into the development of the Victorian Renewable Energy Action Plan, which will set long-term actions to drive renewable energy investment in Victoria.

4.3.5 New energy technologies sector strategy – Victoria's future industries

This strategy together with the *Renewable Energy Action Pla*n and *Energy Efficiency and Productivity Strategy*, form the Victorian Governments approach to transforming the energy sector. The strategy highlights that the new energy technologies sector is a small but growing part of Victoria's economy. New energy technologies include forms of renewable energy, innovations that make energy system more efficient, and the products and services that increase consumers' control over their energy needs. This strategy is supported by the *New Energy Jobs Fund* (NEJF), which provides $20 million in funding for new energy technology projects under four categories – community, manufacturing, technology and energy storage.

In August 2015, the Victoria Government announced an initiative to source renewable energy certificates for its electricity use direct from new Victorian wind farm projects. Two projects were selected from a tender process. It is anticipated that these projects will generate 100 MW of capacity which will contribute to Victoria's renewable energy targets.

The focus of this strategy in relation to the renewable energy sector is to:

- Deliver a clear and focused Renewable Energy Action Plan
- Attract investment and facilitate access to new capital
- Facilitate renewable energy projects and technologies in Victoria
- Develop emerging energy industries
- Collaborate with universities and businesses on energy policies and programs
- Support the development of a local electricity storage industry, and
- Secure international investment and strengthen our global supply chain.

4.3.6 Take2 Pledge

The Take2 Pledge program is a recent initiative of the Victorian Government for government, individuals and businesses to pledge their contributions to reduce emissions to achieve the 2050 target. The Victorian Government will lead by example by committing to mandatory pledges across every government department and key emission producing sectors.

4.3.7 Victoria's regional statement

Victoria's *Regional Statement – Your Voice, Your Region Your State* (the statement) acknowledges the contribution of regional Victoria to the broader economy. The statement is focused on strategies to create jobs and to support a sustainable future for families and communities. The statement outlines the Government's support for the growth of the renewable energy sector within regional Victoria to support jobs growth and investment and to address climate change impacts. The statement recognises that:

- Victoria is taking the lead on climate change action and becoming a low-carbon economy; and
- That there are significant job opportunities expected to emerge in the new energy industries that will drive this transition.

4.3.8 Victoria's renewable energy target

The Victorian Government has indicated its strong support for the growth of the renewable energy sector with the recent announcement (June 2016) of its commitment to ensure that at least 25% of Victoria electricity will come from Victorian built renewable generation by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025. This will see up to 5400 megawatts of new renewable energy generation capacity. The State Government is establishing the framework for an auction scheme which will allow companies to bid for long term contracts to provide additional renewable energy. The objective is to provide revenue for the development of large scale renewable energy projects. The Victorian Government has committed to a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 with a pledge program to help deliver 5 year interim targets. Victoria's renewable energy targets will be a major contributor to the sectoral pledge for the energy sector.

4.3.9 Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan, 2014

This plan sets the strategic framework for the future development of the Central Highlands. Section 12.5 Energy of the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan establishes the future direction for renewable energy in this region (including the subject site) which is:

- *Support opportunities for local energy generation from renewable sources in locations where amenity, landscape and environmental assets and values can be protected and local infrastructure can support this activity.*

The Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan, 2014 (the Plan) directs that the area can capitalise on renewable energy opportunities to increase energy security and support a low carbon economy. The Plan identifies that the continued growth of the renewable energy sector over the next 30 years presents opportunities for the region, which has some of the best wind resources in Victoria. The plan also identifies that opportunities exist for a range of land uses in rural areas that are complementary to agricultural production, including tourism, carbon offset schemes and renewable energy generation, which could provide alternative income streams for farmers.

Locational requirements for power generation within the region include:

- *Proximity to the energy source and to parts of the electricity grid with spare capacity*
- *The ability to create buffers to sensitive land uses, and*
- *Access to appropriate transport infrastructure.*

Future land use policies, strategies and actions identified within the plan include:

- *Encourage planning schemes to provide for the expansion of energy supply infrastructure where it is feasible and would support the establishment of new industry or the expansion of existing industry*
- *Encourage planning schemes to recognise the benefits of local energy generation to support economic development, diversify the local economy and achieve improved sustainability outcomes, and*
- *Identify suitable land, protected by appropriate buffers, for the development of renewable energy generators.*

Future principles and directions for regional growth relevant to the project include:

- *The region's economy should be strengthened so that it is more diversified and resilient*
- *Encourage greater economic self-sufficiency for the region*
- *Pursue economic development opportunities based on the emerging and existing strengths of the region*
- *Support growth through the development of employment opportunities in towns identified for population growth, and*

- *Where appropriate, build on opportunities associated with the region's natural resources including sand and stone, minerals, timber and renewable energy.*

4.3.10 Golden Plains Rural Land Use Strategy 2008

This strategy was prepared in response to the changes to the rural zones introduced by the Victorian Government. The strategy identified several widespread trends that are currently impacting on land use and communities within Golden Plains Shire, they can be summarised as:

- Changes in agriculture (traditional farming) – decline/diversification/value adding/need to be larger
- Shift from sheep farming to grain production
- Growth in horticultural and intensive animal industries
- Home based industry – changes in land use/workforce trends, and
- Lifestyle/rural style: proximity to Geelong and Ballarat, land is generally cheaper in Golden Plains than these other municipalities, the area is becoming increasingly popular due to lifestyle reasons and there are pressures for subdivision and excision of existing houses.

The Strategy recommended rezoning the land within the project site from the Rural Zone to Farming Zone and recommended changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement and the Local Planning Policies.

5. Golden Plains and Colac Otway Planning Schemes

The project site is located within the municipality of Golden Plains Shire (the shire) and is subject to the provisions of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme (GPPS). The GPPS sets out the relevant planning policies which guide decision makers when administering the use and development of land and provides specific guidance on the development of wind energy facilities. Cressy-Shelford Road is managed by Colac Otway Shire Council and abuts the southern boundary of the project site. This road is subject to the provisions of the GPPS and the Colac Otway Planning Scheme (COPS). The State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks are reviewed below.

5.1 State Planning Policy Framework

The purpose of the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) within planning schemes is to inform planning authorities and responsible authorities of those aspects of State planning policy which need to be considered when responsible authorities are considering the planning permit application. The project has been assessed against the relevant planning policies of the SPPF and provided in Appendix A.

5.1.1 Clause 11.08 Central Highlands Regional Growth

Clause 11.08 provides the strategic policy framework for the future growth of the Central Highlands. The site is located within the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan Area and planning must consider the *Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan (Victorian Government, 2014)* (CHRGP). A review of Clause 11.08 has been undertaken and demonstrates that the project will comply with the strategy's relevant objectives and strategies. These objectives and strategies are summarised and provided within Appendix A.

A key focus of the CHRGP is to strengthen the region's economy through diversification, making it more resilient to change. The plan recommends that future economic development should focus on emerging and existing strengths of the region. The Central Highlands region has some of the best wind resources in Victoria and this land use can be established on agricultural land without significantly compromising the productivity of the land. Development of wind farms in this region provides a significant opportunity to broaden the economic base and provide employment opportunities.

The plan requires that the design and siting of the proposed development should manage and protect:

- Environmental assets
- Agricultural productivity, and
- Cultural Heritage and Landscapes.

Early and appropriate consideration has been given to these factors by the proponent and as a result the design of the proposed development has been modified substantially to response to the need to avoid, minimise and manage potential impacts. This is discussed in more detail within the specialist reports provided with the referral documentation.

5.1.2 Clauses 12 to 19 of the SPPF

The key relevant objectives of the SPPF include:

- Protection and conservation of Victoria's Biodiversity including important habitat for Victoria's flora and fauna and other strategically valuable biodiversity sites (Clause 12.01 Biodiversity)
- To ensure that permitted clearing of native vegetation results in no net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity (Clause 12.01-2 Native Vegetation Management)
- To protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contributes to character, identity and sustainable environments (Clause 12.04-2 Landscapes)

- Floodplain management is to assist the protection of the natural flood carrying capacity of rivers, streams and floodways and the flood storage function of floodplains and waterways (Clause 13.02 Floodplains)
- Minimise the impact of salinity and rising water tables on land uses, buildings and infrastructure in rural and urban areas and areas of environmental significance and reduce salt load in rivers (Clause 13.03-2 Salinity)
- To assist the control of noise effects on sensitive land uses (Clause 13.04-1 Noise Abatement)
- To protect productive farmland which is of strategic significance in the local or regional context (Clause 14.01 Agriculture)
- To assist the protection and restoration of catchments, waterways, water bodies, groundwater and marine environments (Clause 14.02-1 Catchment Planning and Management)
- Protect water quality (Clause 14.02-2 Water Quality)
- To encourage land use and development that is consistent with the efficient use of energy and the minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions (Clause 15.02 Sustainable Development)
- To ensure the protection and conservation of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance (Clause 15.03-2 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage)
- Planning is to contribute to the economic wellbeing of communities and the State as a whole by supporting and fostering economic growth and development by providing land, facilitating decisions and resolving land use conflicts so that each district may build on its strengths and achieve its economic potential (Clause 17 Economic Development), and
- To promote the provision of renewable energy in a manner that ensures appropriate siting and design considerations are met (Clause 19.01 Renewable Energy).

This project will give effect to the SPPF as it will provide an important renewable energy resource for the region in a manner that ensures all relevant aspects of state planning policy are considered in the siting and design of the development. This is entirely consistent with Clause 19.01 Renewable Energy.

A key benefit of the site is that the development, including electricity transmission connection, can be contained within the project site, avoiding impacts extending beyond the project boundary. It will connect into an existing 500kV high voltage electricity transmission line which has contributed to the modification of the landscape within this region. The GPPS does not afford any landscape significance to the site or the majority of the view shed.

The project must give effect to objectives of Clause 12 of the SPPF relating to biodiversity and native vegetation. The maximum area of native vegetation which may be impacted is 81.290ha. Of this 81.009ha of native vegetation represents remnant patches and 0.281ha represents 4 scattered trees (converted to extent in the BIOR report provided in BL&A 2017. This removal represents less than 2% of the native vegetation on the site (of which there are several thousand hectares). The project will be assessed under the high risk pathway under the *Permitted Clearing of Native Vegetation – Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines (DEPI 2013)*. Potential offset sites have been identified in wind farm host and neighbouring properties, and are likely to meet all offset requirements. Further desktop and field assessments will be undertaken to confirm offset availability. If these sites do not meet all requirements, suitable sites are also available at Warrambeen and Bannockburn as outlined within the *Preliminary Offset Strategy* prepared by Biodiversity Offsets Australia 2017.

This project may impact on the potential habitat for 17 EPBC Act and FFG Act listed flora species. Targeted surveys in areas of suitable habitat for these listed flora species will be undertaken in winter and spring. Should significant numbers (i.e. greater than five individuals) of threatened flora species be found in any part of the proposed development footprint, the survey area will be expanded to identify a more appropriate location that avoids the removal of the population of that species. Site specific measures can be developed for this location to ensure no impact occurs to the population, such as permanent fencing and inductions for personnel.

Brett Lane and Associates has undertaken a detailed impact assessment of the impacts of the project on the State threatened Brolga (*Grus rubicunda*) within the BL&A (2017b) Brolga Impact Assessment Report. A total of 17 wind turbines have been removed to avoid native vegetation and cultural heritage and to reduce the collision risk to Brolga to an acceptable level. Removal of these wind turbines to create appropriate buffers and setbacks

indicates that less than one bird per year will be affected by the turbines and powerlines associated with the project. A Brolga compensation plan, to be developed for the planning application will ensure that the government policy objective for wind farms and Brolgas in Victoria of 'zero net impact' on the Victorian Brolga population is met. DELWP has approved the methodology and approach adopted within the Brolga Impact Assessment.

Other relevant clauses of the SPPF are addressed within Appendix A.

5.2 Local planning policy framework

The Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) sets out the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and Local Planning Policies (LPP) that apply to the shire. The use and development has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the LPPF and this assessment is provided in Appendix B.

5.2.1 Municipal Strategic Statement

A key focus of the MSS is to establish a sustainable future, diversify and encourage economic development, provide efficient and environmentally sensitive essential infrastructure and to protect natural resources and ecosystems.

Officers from Golden Plains Shire Council have indicated that the use and development of the land for a wind farm to the south of Rokewood would be consistent with the objectives of the GPPS to contain residential development within settlement boundaries in order to protect and maintain agricultural land within the shire. This issue is identified under Clause 21.03-1 Settlement Patterns of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme:

> *The Golden Plains Shire is characterised by a number of small towns located in the midst of productive agricultural areas. The maintenance of a clear distinction between urban and rural areas is essential to continued agriculture and efficient township development and maximise the use of infrastructure.*
>
> *Objective 1 Strategy 1.1 Focus growth into townships as indicated on the Golden Plains Strategic Framework Plans (Figure 21.02-2A) and Township Hierarchy Framework (Table 1).*
>
> *Strategy 1.6 Establish an urban edge to all settlements. Zoning will be used to provide a clear urban growth boundary.*
>
> *Strategy 1.9 Discourage extension of infrastructure services and urban use and development outside identified urban growth boundaries*

Rokewood is identified as a District retail and commercial centre within the settlement hierarchy. The project has been designed and sited to provide an appropriate distance between the wind farm and the urban boundary of Rokewood. The proposed development provides a compatible land use within the farming zone and will provide employment close to an established service centre. The proximity of the wind farm to Rokewood will assist to contain residential development within the urban growth boundary, as encroachment beyond the existing boundary may result in loss of residential amenity. Future urban growth areas are identified to the north of Rokewood at a significant distance from the project site.

5.2.2 Local planning policy

The LPPs are tools used to implement the objectives and strategies of the MSS. A LPP is a policy statement of intent or expectation. It states what the responsible authority will do in specified circumstances or the responsible authority's expectation of what should happen. There are three local planning policies which apply to the site which are outlined within Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 : Local planning policies

Clause	Policy	Objectives	Comment
Clause 22.10 Salinity	This policy applies to land within the salinity management overlay which applies to areas within the subject land as shown in Figure 5.2. It is policy that the responsible authority considers, as appropriate: *Development avoiding, where practical, areas affected by salinity.* *The benefit of protective measures to mitigate the impacts of salinity including:* *The careful siting of development and infrastructure to avoid saline affected soils;* *The selection of appropriate construction materials which are safe or impervious from the corrosive effects of saline soil and water;* *Site landscaping to ensure groundwater levels can be reduced or that includes species capable of surviving saline conditions;* *Appropriate watering and irrigations systems which can minimise excessive water flows and groundwater injection;* *The management of surface water runoff to reduce groundwater infiltration, so as not to aggravate saline conditions.*	Relevant objectives include: *To avoid and minimise the impacts of salinity on development, subdivision and infrastructure assets. To ensure that development and subdivision does not aggravate or result in the expansion of existing areas effected by salinity or the creation of new areas affected by salinity.*	Where practical, areas affected by the salinity management overlay have been avoided. Management of surface water and vegetation removal to avoid aggravating saline conditions will be included within the development of an EMP for the project which will include the following management plans: • Construction and work site management plan; • Sediment, erosion and water quality management plan These issues are currently being discussed with Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.
Clause 22.11 Floodplain Management	This policy applies to all land affected by the Floodway Overlay (FO) or the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). Portion of the site is affected by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay. It is policy to: *Discourage earthworks that obstruct natural flow paths or drainage lines*	The objectives are to: *To minimise flood risk and promote sustainable use and development of the floodplain.* *To ensure land use and development on the floodplain is compatible with flood risk.* *To ensure that where permitted, development in the floodplain:* *Maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters;* *Minimises flood damage;* *Will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity; and* *Will not cause any impact on adjacent property.* *To discourage the intensification of land use and development in the floodplains of watercourses.* *To protect surface and ground water quality, and preserve important wetlands and areas of*	The siting of wind turbines will avoid creek lines and creek beds and there will be no wind turbines constructed within 85 metres of any waterway or wetland. However, the majority of wind turbines (227) are located a minimum of 100 metres from a waterway or wetland. There are four wind turbines sited within the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). In instances where wind turbines are to be located within these areas an assessment will be undertaken to evaluate potential to impact on hydrology and surface water flows. This assessment will accompany a planning permit application. The potential changes to site hydrology and surface water flows; increased sediment generation and transport into waterways, and direct impacts on waterways and vegetation can be adequately managed within the site. Development of the following

Clause	Policy	Objectives	Comment
		environmental significance. *To minimise risk associated with overland flow of storm water.*	management plans in consultation with Corangamite Catchment Management Authority will help control risk associated with impacts to flood flow pathways, surface water and water quality. These management plans will comply with industry standard guidelines. • Construction and site works management plan; • Sediment, erosion and water quality management plan • Hydrocarbon and hazardous substances plan
Clause 22.12 Heritage	This policy applies to all applications under the Heritage Overlay.	To ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the built form and amenity of heritage places. To ensure that contributory elements within heritage precincts are not compromised as a result of future development. Golden Plains Heritage Study Stage 1, Lorraine Huddle for the Golden Plains Shire (2004) Golden Plains Heritage Study Stage 2, Heritage Matters Pty Ltd for Golden Plains Shire (2009) The Australian ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter), Australia ICOMOS (1999)	The Rokewood Stone Arrangement is identified within the schedule to the Heritage Overlay (HO30) under Clause 43.01 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme (GPPS). This site will be avoided by the proposed development. A Cultural Heritage Management Plan is being prepared for the site and will need to be evaluated and approved by Aboriginal Victoria and WWAC.

5.3 Planning permit triggers

Under Clause 52.32-2 a permit is required to use and develop land for a Wind Energy Facility. An assessment of the GPPS has been undertaken to identify additional permit triggers.

5.3.1 Zones and Overlays

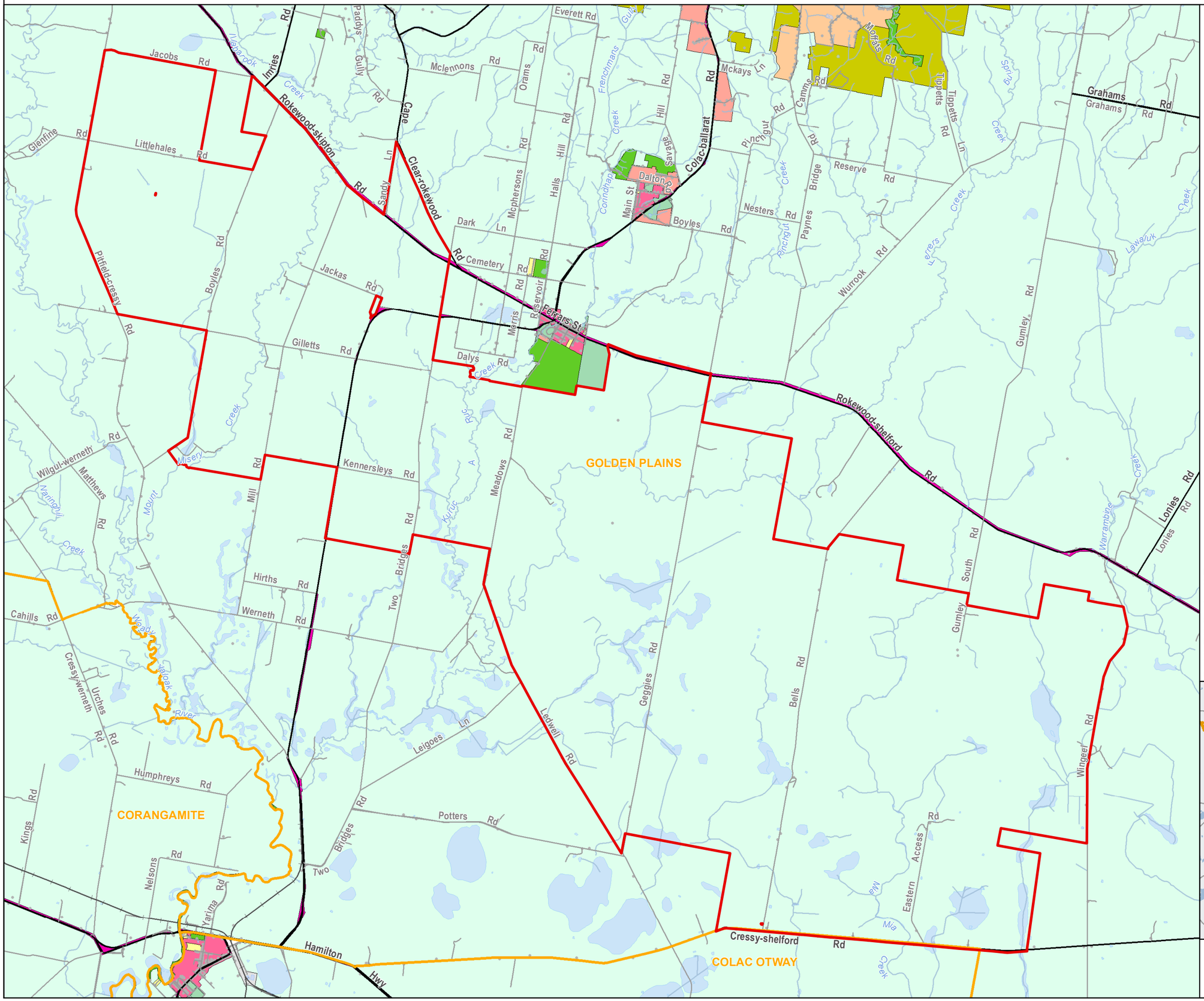
The applicable zones as shown on Figure 5.1 include:

- The whole of the site is within the Farming Zone (Clause 35.07 of the GPPS) and the schedule to the Farming Zone (FZ)
- Cressy-Shelford Road is within the Farming Zone (Clause 35.07 of the GPPS and the COPS) and the schedule to the farming zone
- Rokewood-Shelford Road is within the Road Zone Category 1 Road (RDZ1) (Clause 36.04 of the GPPS)
- Rokewood-Skipton Road is within the Road Zone Category 1 Road (RDZ1) (Clause 36.04 of the GPPS)
- Ballarat-Colac Road is within the Road Zone Category 1 Road (RDZ1) (Clause 36.04 of the GPPS).

The applicable overlays which affect portion of the site as shown on Figure 5.2 include:

Planning Zones

Golden Plains Wind Farm



Legend

Planning Zones

- FZ
- FZ1
- LDRZ
- PCRZ
- PPRZ
- PUZ1
- PUZ2
- PUZ4
- PUZ5
- PUZ6
- RCZ1
- RDZ1
- RLZ
- TZ
- Revised Site Boundary (West Wind Energy, 05/05/2017)
- LGA Boundary

IS164500

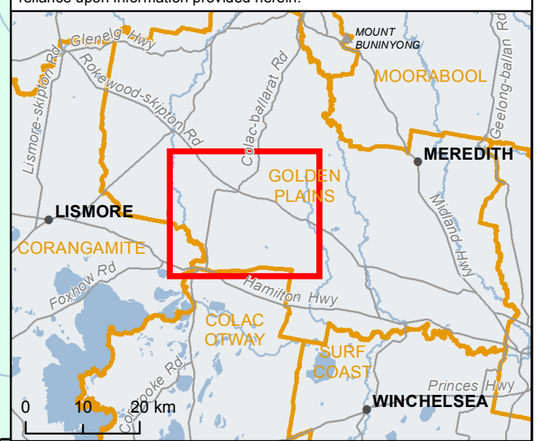
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 54

N 0 3 6

kilometres

DATA SOURCES

© Commonwealth of Australia (Geoscience Australia) 2006 Geodata Topo 250k Series 3; Vicmap Data © State of Victoria 2016, Jacobs 2016, West Wind Energy 2016. Imagery ©ESRI Basemap



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Date Published: 08 Jun 2017

- Clause 42.01 Environmental Significance Overlay and Schedule 2 to the Environmental Significance Overlay – Watercourse Protection (ESO2) of the GPPS
- Clause 42.02 Vegetation Protection Overlay and the Schedule 1 to the Vegetation Protection Overlay – Western Plains Grassland (VPO1) and Schedule 2 to the Vegetation Protection Overlay – Bushland Reserves and Roadside Vegetation Areas (VPO2) of the GPPS
- Clause 42.02 Vegetation Protection Overlay and the Schedule 2 to the Vegetation Protection Overlay – Roadside Vegetation of the COPS
- Clause 43.01 Heritage Overlay and the schedule to the Heritage Overlay (HO30) of the GPPS
- Clause 44.02 Salinity Management Overlay (SMO) and the Schedule to the Salinity Management Overlay of the GPPS,
- Clause 44.04 Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) and the schedule to the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay of the GPPS.

5.3.2 Planning Assessment

Table B.1 within Appendix B describes the zones and overlays within the GPPS and the COPS which apply to the proposal and identifies where planning approval is required. This assessment concludes that as a minimum, planning approval is required for:

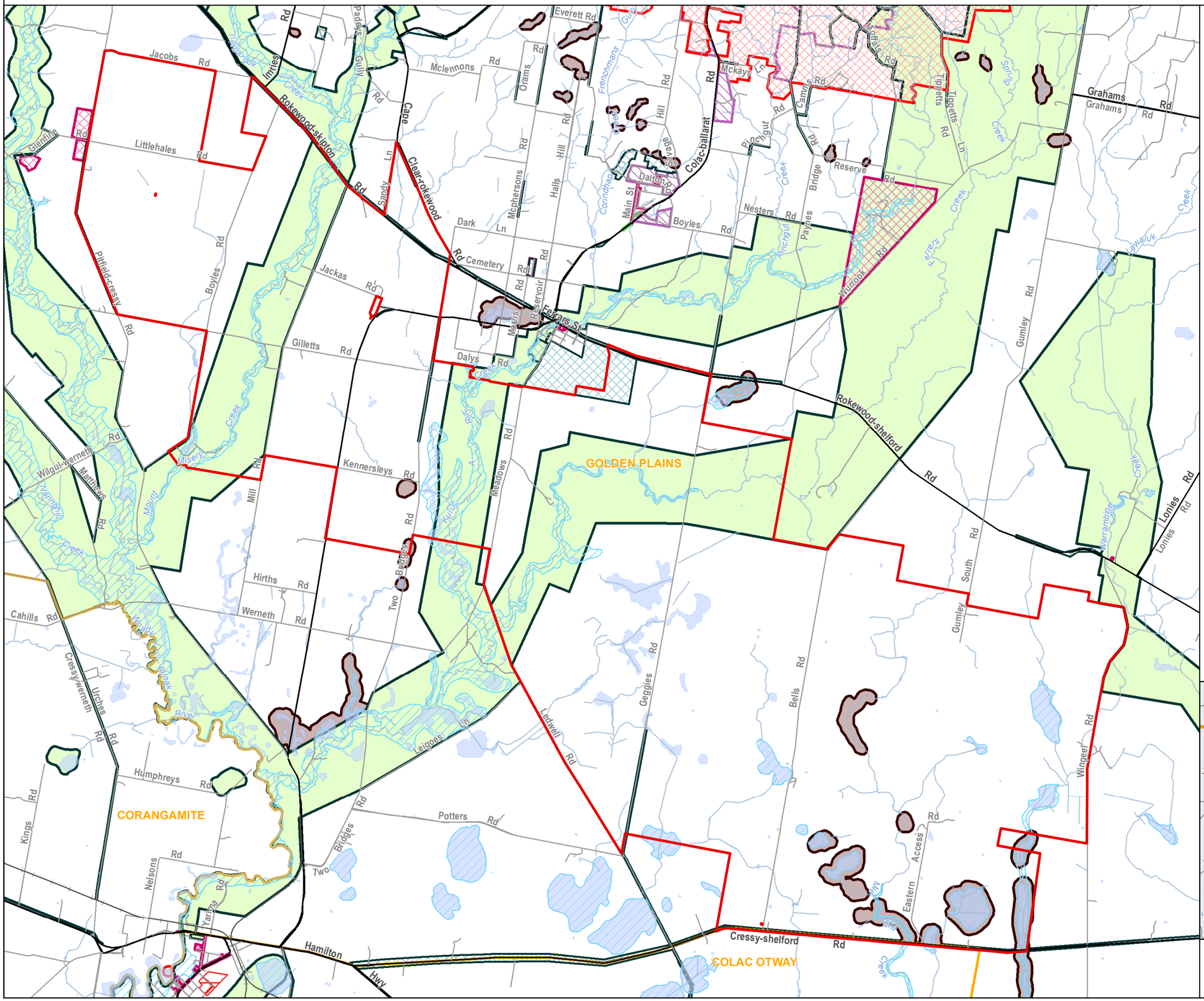
- Use and development of the land for the purpose of a wind energy facility including associated ancillary temporary and permanent infrastructure
- Use and development of the land for the purpose of a utility installation
- Removal of vegetation pursuant to Clauses 42.01, 42.02, 44.02 and 52.17 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme
- To create or alter access to a road in a Road Zone under Clause 52.29 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme

A planning permit will also be required under Clauses 42.02 (Vegetation Protection Overlay) and 52.17 (Native Vegetation) of the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.

The Minister for Planning is the responsible authority and will assess the future planning applications under the Golden Plains Planning Scheme and Clauses 42.02 and 52.17 of the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.

Planning Overlays

Golden Plains Wind Farm



Legend

Planning Overlays

- DDO - Design and Development
- LSIO - Land Subject to Inundation
- ESO - Environmental Significance
- HO - Heritage
- RO - Restructure
- SLO - Significant Landscape
- SMO - Salinity Management
- VPO - Vegetation Protection
- WMO - Wildfire Management
- Revised Site Boundary (West Wind Energy, 05/05/2017)
- LGA Boundary
- Waterbody
- Watercourse
- Rail

IS164500

GDA 1994 MGA Zone 54

N

0 3 6

kilometres

DATA SOURCES

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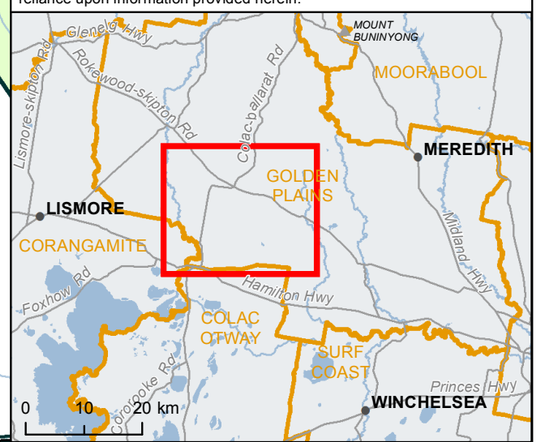

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Date Published: 08 Jun 2017

5.4 Compliance with Objectives

5.4.1 Zone Purpose

The purpose of each of the zones applicable to the land and the implications for future development are discussed in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 : Objectives of the zone

Zone	Purpose	Discussion
Farming Zone	*To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.* *To ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.*	Once constructed agricultural activities will be able to continue under and around the wind turbines. The proposed use will not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture and once decommissioned and infrastructure removed the use can continue for agricultural purposes. The wind farm will result in direct lease payments to landholders which will significantly assist farm businesses by providing a non-rainfall dependent income.
Road Zone	*To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.* *To identify significant existing roads.* *To identify land which has been acquired for a significant proposed road.*	The project will involve upgrades or construction of site access from the existing road network. Written consent will be required from the road manager for the occupation and or construction works within public roads under the *Road Management Act 2004*. Site access will be designed to ensure safe sight distances, turning movements and potential through traffic conflicts. Under Clause 52.29 a permit is required to create or alter access to a road in a Road Zone, Category 1. Even if no physical modifications are required to the access, a permit may be required, as during the construction period there is likely to be changes in the volume, frequency and type of traffic.

Figure 5.1 : Overlay Objectives

The objectives of each of the overlays applicable to the land and the implications for future development are discussed in 5.4.

Table 5.3 : Overlays

Zone	Purpose	Discussion
Golden Plains Planning Scheme		
Environmental Significance Overlay	*To identify areas where the development of land may be affected by environmental constraints.* *To ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.*	Preliminary environmental assessments were undertaken to map constraints to inform the siting and design of the development.
Schedule to the ESO	*To maintain the quality and quantity of water within the watercourse.* *To prevent erosion of banks, streambeds and adjoining land and the siltation of watercourses, drains and other features* *To protect and encourage the long term future of fauna and flora habitats along watercourses.* *To prevent pollution and increased turbidity of water in natural watercourses.* *To prevent increased surface runoff or concentration of surface water runoff leading to erosion or siltation of watercourses.* *To conserve existing wildlife habitats close to natural watercourses and, where appropriate, to allow for generation and regeneration of habitats.* *To restrict the intensity of use and development of land and to activities which are environmentally sensitive and which are compatible with potential drainage or flooding hazards.*	A key principle of the siting and design of the development is to avoid the loss of high quality native vegetation in order to conserve wildlife habitats and maintain fauna movement, where practical. Wind turbines have been sited a minimum of 85 metres and the majority (227) a minimum of 100 metres from the waterway or wetland in order to protect riparian vegetation and habitats, bank stability and hydrology. Surface runoff and water quality can be adequately managed on-site through the development of a Construction and Work Site Management Plan and Sediment, Erosion and Water Quality Management Plan.
Salinity Management Overlay	*To encourage development to be undertaken in a manner which brings about a reduction in salinity recharge.* *To ensure development is compatible with site capability and the retention of vegetation, and complies with the objectives of any salinity management plan for the area.* *To prevent damage to buildings and infrastructure from saline discharge and high watertable.*	Where practical, areas affected by the salinity management overlay have been avoided. There is potential that some wind turbine foundations may interact with the water table. As such, the impact on groundwater quality on concrete or steel structures (depending on construction material choice) will need to be assessed in instances where this occurs. Measures to avoid aggravating saline conditions such as minimising vegetation clearance and controlling surface water flows will be included within relevant environmental management plans. This issue is currently being investigated with Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.
Land Subject to Inundation	*To ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity.* *To protect water quality in accordance with the provisions of relevant State Environment Protection Policies, particularly in accordance with Clauses 33 and 35 of the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria).*	Potential flood impacts can be adequately managed on site, as discussed in section 5.2.2. Standard conditions for wind farm developments, as outlined within the Victorian Guidelines, is the requirement for an Environmental Management Plan, which provides detail on compliance with relevant State Environment Protection Policies. Where required, permits or approvals would need to be obtained from the Corangamite CMA..

Zone	Purpose	Discussion
	To ensure that development maintains or improves river and wetland health, waterway protection and flood plain health.	
Vegetation Protection Overlay	*To protect areas of significant vegetation.* *To ensure that development minimises loss of vegetation. To preserve existing trees and other vegetation.* *To recognise vegetation protection areas as locations of special significance, natural beauty, interest and importance.* *To maintain and enhance habitat and habitat corridors for indigenous fauna. To encourage the regeneration of native vegetation.*	This VPO applies an additional vegetation trigger in addition to Clause 52.17.
Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 1 (Western Plains Grasslands)	*To protect areas of remnant grasslands which are significant for their representative nature of the Western Plains Grasslands* *To protect the conservation values of the above areas. To protect significant remnant grassland species.*	VPO1 affects a small section of the site towards the north west adjacent to the Rokewood-Shelford Road, near Rokewood and aims to protect remnant Western Basalt Plains Grassland. This VPO applies an additional vegetation trigger in addition to Clause 52.17.
Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2 (Bushland Reserves and	These areas contain significant remnant vegetation located within bushland reserves and government road reserves. Such areas include significant species of: • Red Ironbark, Yellow Box and Red Stringy Bark eucalyptus species. • Rare and endangered flora and fauna species of regional significance To protect the conservation values of the above areas. To protect significant remnant vegetation species.	VPO2 affects a small section of Geggies Road, Two Bridges Road and the corner of Jacka's and Colac-Ballarat Roads. It also affectsthe Golden Plains side of Cressy Shelford Road. The VPO 2 aims to protect Red Ironbark, Yellow Box and Red Stringy Bark eucalyptus species and endangered flora and fauna species of regional significance generally. This VPO applies an additional vegetation trigger in addition to Clause 52.17.
Heritage Overlay (HO30)	*To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance. To conserve and enhance those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places. To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.*	The proposed development will avoid the Rokewood Stone Arrangement (HO30). The impact of the proposed development on heritage places will be addressed through the development of a CHMP. The standard assessment and the stage 1 complex assessment on the EMAC/GAC side of the activity area have been completed.
Colac Otway Planning Scheme		
Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2 – Roadside Vegetation	To protect and manage the remnant vegetation along roadsides as viable habitat areas for animals and birds and for its scenic and recreational value. To encourage natural regeneration and replanting with indigenous species and to remove or modify threatening processes and introduced plant species.	VPO2 affects the section of Cressy Shelford Road which abuts the southern boundary of the project site. The VPO aims to protect the remnant vegetation along the roadside. The VPO provides an additional vegetation trigger in addition to Clause 52.17.

5.5 Particular Provisions

A detailed review of the particular provisions is provided within Appendix C. Key matters within the particular provisions are addressed in detail below.

5.5.1 Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation

A planning permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation under Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation) of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme and the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.

The purpose of Clause 52.17 is:

- *To ensure permitted clearing of native vegetation results in no net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity.*

The removal of native vegetation is primarily regulated by Clause 52.17 using a risk based approach. This is achieved through the following:

- *Avoid the removal of native vegetation that makes a significant contribution to Victoria's biodiversity*
- *Minimise impacts on Victoria's biodiversity from the removal of native vegetation, and*
- *Where native vegetation is permitted to be removed, ensure that an offset is provided in a manner that makes a contribution to Victoria's biodiversity that is equivalent to the contribution made by the native vegetation to be removed.*

The *Permitted clearing of native vegetation – Biodiversity assessment Guidelines (Biodiversity Guidelines)* (DEPI, 2013) are designed to manage the risk to biodiversity associated with clearing native vegetation.

A high risk based pathway assessment process will be applied to this project. The flora and fauna assessment provided with the planning permit application will include information required to support a high risk-based pathway application in accordance with Clause 52.17-3 of the GPPS and the Biodiversity Guidelines.

Pursuant to Clause 52.17-6 (Offset Requirement), the biodiversity impacts of the removal of native vegetation are required to be offset, in accordance with Biodiversity Guidelines. Offset requirements must take account of:

- *The location of the native vegetation to be removed*
- *The condition and extent of native vegetation to be removed*
- *The strategic biodiversity score of the native vegetation to be removed, and*
- *Whether the native vegetation to be removed is important habitat for rare or threatened species, and the proportional impact of the removal on those species' habitat.*

5.5.2 Clause 52.32 (Wind Energy Facility)

The purpose of Clause 52.32 (Wind Energy Facility) is:

- *To facilitate the establishment and expansion of wind energy facilities, in appropriate locations, with minimal impact on the amenity of the area.*

Clause 52.32-2 requires a planning permit for a wind energy facility and specifies area where wind energy facilities are prohibited.

Clause 52.32-3 prohibits wind turbines within 1km of dwellings unless the dwelling owner has provided written consent to the particular wind turbine(s).

Clause 52.32-4 outlines the information that must be contained within a planning permit application for a wind energy facility including a site and context analysis and a design response.

Amongst other matters Clause 52.32-4 requires:

- *An assessment of:*
  - *The visual impact of the proposal on the surrounding landscape*
  - *An assessment of the visual impact on abutting land that is described in a schedule to the National Parks Act 1975 and Ramsar wetlands and coastal areas*

- *An assessment of the impact of the proposal on any species (including birds and bats) listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 or the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)*
- *An assessment of the noise impacts of the proposal prepared in accordance with the New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics - Wind Farm Noise, including an assessment of whether a high amenity noise limit is applicable, as assessed under Section 5.3 of the Standard, and*
- *An assessment of the impacts upon Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal cultural heritage.*

- *A statement of why the site is suitable for the wind energy facility, and*
- *An environmental management plan including any rehabilitation and monitoring requirements.*

Clause 52.32-5 sets out the decision guidelines that a responsible authority must consider including:

- *The State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies*
- *The effect of the proposal on the surrounding area in terms of noise, blade glint, shadow flicker and electromagnetic interference*
- *The impact of the development on significant views, including visual corridors and sightlines*
- *The impact of the facility on the natural environment and natural systems*
- *The impact of the facility on cultural heritage*
- *The impact of the facility on aircraft safety*
- *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, January 2016), and*
- *The New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics - Wind Farm Noise.*

These matters will all be assessed in detail and documentation provided with the planning permit application to enable the responsible authority to appropriately consider all potential significant impacts on the environment.

5.5.3 Clause 52.37 Post Boxes and Dry Stone Walls

A number of dry stone walls exist within and near the project site. Clause 52.37 (post boxes and dry stone walls) may be applicable should the construction of the project impact on any dry stone walls constructed prior to 1940. This clause requires a planning permit to demolish, remove or alter a dry stone wall constructed before 1940 unless:

- *The demolition or removal of a section of a dry stone wall to install a gate.*
- *The reconstruction of damaged or collapsing walls which are undertaken to the same specifications and using the same materials as the existing walls.*

5.5.4 Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to a Road Zone (Category 1)

The purpose of Clause 52.29 is to *ensure appropriate access to identified roads.* A permit is required to create or alter access to a road in a Road Zone, Category 1. Even if no physical modifications are required to the access, a permit may be required, as during the construction period there is likely to be changes in the volume, frequency and type of traffic. The Cressy Shelford Road is within the Farming Zone.

5.6 General Provisions

The following particular provisions are relevant to the proposal.

5.6.1 Clause 61.01-1 (Minister is Responsible Authority)

This clause requires planning permit applications for wind energy facilities and associated powerline infrastructure to be assessed by the Minister for Planning.

5.6.2 Clause 65 – Decision guidelines

The responsible authority must decide whether the use and development will produce acceptable outcomes in accordance with the decision guidelines of Clause 65 of the GPPS and any other decision guidelines outline within the relevant provisions of the planning scheme.

5.6.3 Referral and Notice Provisions

A wind energy facility and ancillary buildings and infrastructure will be required to be referred to a number of different referral authorities as outlined within Table 5.3. Consultation has commenced with all relevant referral authorities and details of this consultation are provided within the referral documentation.

Table 5.3: Referrals Requirements

Kind of application	Referral authority	Type of referral authority
Clause 66.02-2 Native Vegetation		
To remove, destroy or lop native vegetation if the area to be cleared is 0.5 hectare or more.	Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.	Recommending referral authority[3]
To remove, destroy or lop native vegetation for the following class of application based on the risk-based pathway as defined in the Permitted clearing of native vegetation – Biodiversity assessment guidelines (Department of Environment and Primary Industries, September 2013): high risk-based pathway. Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (as constituted under Part 2 of the Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987) Recommending referral authority		
To remove, destroy or lop native vegetation on Crown land which is occupied or managed by the responsible authority.		
Clause 66.02-4 Major Electricity Line or Easement To construct a building or construct or carry out works on land within 60 metres of a major electricity transmission line (220 Kilovolts or more) or an electricity transmission easement.	The relevant electricity transmission authority – Ausnet Services	Determining referral authority[4]
Clause 44.02-7 (Salinity Management Overlay) If the proposal involves works within this overlay. An application under the overlay and any site capability report	Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	Determining referral authority
Clause 44.04-5 (Land Subject to Inundation Overlay) If the proposal involves works within this overlay.	Relevant floodplain management authority.	Recommending referral authority
Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to a Road Zone (Category 1) An application to create or alter access to Rokewood-Shelford Road, Rokewood-Skipton Road or Colac-Ballarat Road must be referred to the Roads Corporation under Section 55	Roads Corporation	Determining referral authority

[3] The responsible authority is not bound by the requirements of a Recommending Referral Authority when considering the planning permit application.

[4] The responsible authority is bound by the requirements of a Determining Recommending Authority. If the authority objects to the planning permit application, the responsible authority must refuse the application. If the authority requires planning permit conditions, the responsible authority must include these conditions within the planning permit.

Kind of application	Referral authority	Type of referral authority
of the Act.		

5.7 Reference Documents

5.7.1 Policy and planning guidelines for wind energy facilities in Victoria 2016

The Policy and Planning Guidelines is a reference document listed under Clauses 19.01 (Renewable Energy) and 52.32 (Wind Energy Facility) of the GPPS.

These guidelines recognise Victoria's abundant wind resources that will support a large scale grid of connected wind energy facilities which can contribute to the sustainable delivery of Victoria's future energy needs. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide:

- *A framework for a consistent and balanced approach to the assessment of wind energy projects.*
- *A set of consistent operational performance standards to inform the assessment and operation of a wind energy facility project.*
- *Guidance how planning permit applications might be met.*

Section 2.2 of the guidelines provides matters that need to be taken into consideration when identifying suitable sites for wind energy facilities. Relevant considerations include:

- Siting and design of the facility to examine risk to flora and fauna species and apply design and adopt adaptive management measures where required. This includes Impacts on flora and fauna species and habitat protected at the national and state levels. Consideration must be given to the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*, the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, Clauses 12.01 (Biodiversity) and 52.17 (Native Vegetation) of the Victoria Planning Provisions
- Significant Landscape Values including Clause 12.04 (Significant Environments and Landscapes) of the SPPF, the Environmental Significance Overlay, Vegetation Protection Overlay or the Significant Landscape Overlay
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Values which are protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007, and
- Draft National Wind Farm Development Guidelines (July 2010) and Best Practice Guidelines for Implementation of Wind Energy Projects in Australia (2006).

For this wind farm proposal the Minister for Planning as the responsible authority must assess the impact of a wind energy facility taking into consideration the following:

- Contribution to Government Policy Objectives including the SPPF, LPPF and give consideration to best practice standards including the draft National Wind Farm Development Guidelines (July 2010) and Best Practice Guidelines for Implementation of Wind Energy Projects in Australia (2006)
- Compliance with New Zealand Standard NZS 6808:200 Acoustics – Wind Farm Noise (the Standard)
- Amenity impacts such as noise, blade glint, shadow flicker, overshadowing and electromagnetic interferences. The guidelines encourage impact reduction measures such as surface treatment with low reflectivity; modelling shadow flicker in advance of siting and design; avoiding the siting of wind turbines in the line of sight between transmitters and receivers
- Landscape and visual amenity. The guidelines suggest the following measures for reducing visual impact including minimising views from areas used for recreation and dwellings; spacing turbines to respond to the landscape characteristics; minimising earthworks and protecting drainage lines and waterways; minimising removal of vegetation; consistency in height, appearance and rotation of turbines; colour; limiting night lighting

- Flora and fauna and removal of native vegetation. The responsible authority will consider whether appropriate survey work has been provided within the planning permit application and whether further monitoring or survey work is required
- Aircraft safety. The responsible authority will assess whether appropriate consultation has been undertaken with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and with any other private airstrip operators that may not be identified by CASA. The proponent will need to demonstrate compliance with any of CASA or private operators requirements. This may include reducing the number of turbines, mitigating light glare with the use of baffling; matching light intensity to meteorological visibility or minimising light intensity at ground level, and
- Construction impacts and decommissioning must be addressed in detail within an environmental management plan that is in compliance with the draft National Wind Farm Development Guidelines 2010.

The guidelines highlight the issues associated with impacts relating to wind energy facilities and provide a suggested approach and method for assessing these impacts. The focus is on the proponent to demonstrate that appropriate scientific methods have been used to assess the impacts of the wind energy facility. Where relevant, the guidelines also establish the compliance standards to be achieved. Other decision guidelines under the Golden Plains Planning Scheme are summarised in Appendix D.

In addition, the proponent will be required to develop environmental management, rehabilitation and monitoring plan(s) in liaison with government and referral agencies to provide confidence that appropriate management and mitigation measures are in place during construction and operation to manage potential impacts.

All of the above points will be addressed in the planning permit application.

5.7.2 Interim guidelines for the assessment, avoidance, mitigation and offsetting of potential wind farm impacts on the Victorian Brolga population 2011 DSE (2012)

This policy document provides a framework and approach for addressing the impacts of wind energy facilities on the state-threatened Brolga. It sets an over-arching policy of 'zero net impact' for the Victorian Brolga population that avoids cumulative impacts of wind energy development on the species. This objective is achieved through a combination of mitigating and offsetting impacts. This is informed by three levels of investigation of increasing detail depending on the findings of the previous level. For the Golden Plains Wind Farm, all three levels have been triggered. The investigations and findings to date and the steps taken to avoid and minimise impacts on the Brolga are described in detail in BL&A (2017b).

5.8 Other Environmental Approvals

Other Commonwealth and State legislation applicable to the project site is reviewed in Appendix E. In addition to the relevant planning provisions discussed above, the proponent will also need to ensure that consents/ approvals under the legislation are obtained in addition to the planning permit. Other primary approvals include:

- A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) which will need to be prepared in conjunction with and assessed by the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation and Aboriginal Victoria. Under Section 52 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* a planning permit cannot be granted prior to the approval of the CHMP.
- Approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* will be required. Commonwealth assessment could be undertaken in accordance with a relevant bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Victoria. The bilateral agreement is discussed in more detail in Appendix F.

Other consents and approvals are likely to be required including:

- A Permit to Take listed flora under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- A Works on Waterway Permit under the *Water Act 1989, and*
- Consents under the *Road Management Act 2004*.

6. Conclusion

This assessment found that Commonwealth, State and local policy clearly support the uptake of renewable energy and recognises the suitability of this area for a wind energy facility. The project will give effect to and is entirely consistent with Clause 19.01 Renewable Energy of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme. The assessment demonstrates that the project will give effect to the State and Local Planning Policy Framework, the objectives and decision guidelines of the zones and overlays applying to the site.

The design and siting of the proposed development has been informed by desk top and site investigations undertaken during the period July 2016 and May 2017 (and continuing) and represents a significant proportion of the investigations necessary to support a planning application. These assessments have identified the key environmental values and constraints within the site. Consultation has commenced with DELWP, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, VicRoads, Golden Plains Shire Council, Aboriginal Victoria and Civil Aviation Safety Authority. A meeting has been organised with Colac Otway Shire Council for mid-June 2017.

During consultation with referral authorities a number of management measures have been identified to avoid and minimise impacts on the environment including:

- Removal of 17 proposed wind turbines to provide for a turbine exclusion buffer to reduce risks on the Victorian Brolga to a 'zero net impact' level; avoid native vegetation and cultural heritage places
- Avoiding areas of high quality native vegetation and habitat identified during the habitat hectare assessment of the project site
- Relocation of an access track to avoid an extensive section of roadside vegetation which contains Spiny rice flower; recently identified during targeted surveys
- Siting wind turbines a minimum of 85 metres and the majority of wind turbines (227 wind turbines) over 100 metres from a waterway or wetland
- Offset sites have been identified within the project site and in the area surrounding the project, and
- Identification of draft mitigation measures to be included within future environmental plans for the site including salvage and translocation protocols to be approved by DELWP.

The development has been designed to minimise the impact footprint. The overall site coverage is low at 1% of the total site. The design has been substantially modified to comply with state and local planning policy and to reduce the impact footprint including (but not limited to):

- Where possible existing habitat corridors of a minimum of 30 metres width will be maintained
- The project has been designed with rotor swept area which is a minimum of 40 metres from the ground to avoid the majority of bird flight paths. This has been confirmed by bird utilisations surveys have observed that all birds counted fly below this height
- To minimise the temporary impacts of construction infrastructure the project will be designed to co-locate construction infrastructure, such as concrete batching plants and construction compounds, with permanent infrastructure such as collector stations to reduce the disturbed area within the site
- Within the 100-metre radius area surveyed for each turbine site, the foundation and hardstand areas have been located to avoid and minimise the removal of native vegetation as much as possible
- Where possible internal access tracks will utilise existing tracks within the project site. Where new tracks will result in removal of native vegetation widths have been reduced to 5 metres (up to 7 metres on corners) to minimise the impact footprint, while still maintaining functionality and safety, and
- The underground cable layout has been designed to avoid native vegetation removal, where possible.

The assessment has concluded that a number of planning and environmental approvals will be required for the proposed use and development. Key primary approvals will include:

- A planning permit for a wind energy facility, utility installation, native vegetation removal and associated buildings and works, which will be assessed by the Minister for Planning against the provisions of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme
- A planning permit in accordance with clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation) (and the Vegetation Protection Overlay) and of the Colac Otway Planning Scheme, should the removal of native vegetation be required within Colac Otway Shire
- A Cultural Heritage Management Plan which will need to be prepared in conjunction with and evaluated by the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation and Aboriginal Victoria.
- Approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). A referral under the EPBC Act will be lodged concurrently with the referral to the Minister for Planning under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*. The project will be referred as a 'controlled action'. Therefore, approval under the EPBC Act will be required. Commonwealth assessment could be undertaken in accordance with a relevant bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Victoria. The planning permit process under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 is one of the three accredited Victorian processes for this purpose.

Other consents and approvals are likely to be required including:

- A Permit to Take listed flora under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- A Works on Waterway Permit under the *Water Act 1989*
- Consents under the *Road Management Act 2004*.

Appendix A. Review of the SPPF

Clause 11.06 of the SPPF

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
Clause 11.06-2 A diversified economy	Clause 11.06-2 establishes the objectives and strategies for the provision of a more diversified economy in the Central Highlands. The objective is to *To strengthen the region's economy so that it is more diversified and resilient.*	Relevant strategies include: *Support greater economic self-sufficiency for the region.* *Facilitate economic development opportunities based on the emerging and existing strengths of the region.*	The Plan recognises that the Central Highlands has *some of the best wind resources in Vic*toria and this policy supports facilitation of wind energy projects within this area in order to facilitate jobs growth and investment for the region and to diversify the economy. The development of the Golden Plains Wind Farm will create new direct and indirect employment opportunities within the area, including permanent operations and maintenance jobs, and supporting jobs during the construction and installation phases. The project will also provide a significant annual rates base to Golden Plains Shire Council and host farmers will receive an annual non-drought dependent income for the lease of the land over the life of the wind farm. The proponent proposes to establish a number of community benefit programs for the existing and wider community.
Clause 11.06-5 A Sustainable Region	Clause 11.06-5 establishes the objectives and strategies to support a low carbon economy and increased energy security. The objective is: *To make the region more self-reliant and sustainable.*	Relevant strategies include: *Support the productive use of energy, water, waste materials, agricultural and natural resource assets.* *Facilitate opportunities to enhance water supply and increase energy security.* *Create communities that offer local jobs and services.*	Development of new wind farms within this region that can link into an established grid network will assist to achieve a more sustainable and secure energy supply for the region while supporting residential and industrial growth through the continual supply of energy. The wind farm will have a total capacity of approximately 800 MWs and produce approximately 2500 GWH of electricity each year while saving 2.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.
11.06-6 Integrated planning	The objective of this clause is *to integrate planning for growth with the provision of infrastructure*.	Relevant strategies include: *Support the provision of infrastructure with planned growth.* *Support infrastructure investment where it will support business investment, including Stage 1 of the Ballarat Western Link Road which will improve access to the Ballarat West Employment Zone.* *Support expansion of energy supply infrastructure to facilitate the establishment of new industry or the expansion of existing industry*.	The project represents expansion of energy supply infrastructure in this region.

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
Clause 11.06-7 Environmental assets	The objective of this clause is: *To manage, protect and enhance the region's land, soil, water and biodiversity*.	Relevant Strategies include: *Improve environmental outcomes and support economic development by capitalising on the region's environmental assets.* *Minimise impacts from development on water catchments.*	The design and siting of the proposed wind farm has taken into consideration the environmental assets within the site and the surrounding context. Discussions have also been held with DELWP, Golden Plains Shire Council and Corangamite Catchment Management Authority to inform the siting and design and to discuss appropriate management measures within the site. A number of mitigation measures are proposed to manage impacts on environmental assets including: • Turbines will be re-located outside, or removed from large areas of quality vegetation • Existing habitat corridors of a minimum of 30 metres width will be maintained • Minimise native vegetation impact by upgrading existing farm access tracks and access ways • Co-location of underground cables and access tracks to minimise native vegetation impact and removal, and • Designing cable routes to avoid impacting native vegetation along waterways by utilising singular points of crossing and overhead transmission lines where required.
Clause 11.06-8 Agricultural productivity	The objectives of this clause is: *To support long-term agricultural productivity.*	The various strategies relevant to the project include: *Support change and transition to maintain the viability and productivity of agricultural land.* *Support rural economies to grow and diversify and protect key agricultural assets from incompatible uses.* *Support the ongoing viability of agriculture by identifying land for primary production and agriculture, including intensive agriculture.*	There is a general acceptance of wind farms being located on land within the Farming Zone. The proposed wind farm will not impact on the viability or productivity of the existing agricultural land. Agricultural land uses will be retained under and around the wind turbines. Host farmers will receive an annual non-drought dependent income for the lease of the land over the life of the wind farm.
Clause 11.06-9 Cultural heritage and landscapes	The objectives of this clause is: *To recognise the importance of cultural heritage and landscapes as economic and community assets*.	The various strategies relevant to the project include: *Protect cultural heritage assets that are important for attracting tourists to the region.* *Provide clear urban boundaries and maintain distinctive breaks and open rural landscapes between settlements.* *Maintain a clear settlement break between metropolitan Melbourne and the Central Highlands.*	Officers from Golden Plains Shire Council have indicated that the use of the land for a wind farm to the south of Rokewood would be consistent with the objectives of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme to contain residential development within settlement boundaries in order to protect and maintain agricultural land within the shire. Rokewood is identified as a District retail and commercial centre within the settlement hierarchy. The project has been designed and sited to provide appropriate distance between the wind farm and the urban boundary of

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
			Rokewood to protect residential amenity. The proposed development provides a compatible land use within the farming zone and will provide employment close to an established service centre. Its proximity to the town protects the viability of the agricultural land surrounding the town and will assist to contain residential development within the urban growth boundary.

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
Clause 12.01 Biodiversity	Clause 12.01 establishes the objectives and strategies for the protection of biodiversity in Victoria. The objective of Clause 12.01-1 Protection of Biodiversity states *To assist the protection and conservation of Victoria's biodiversity, including important habitat for Victoria's flora and fauna and other strategically valuable biodiversity sites.*	Relevant strategies include: *Use statewide biodiversity information to identify high value biodiversity and consider the impact of land use and development on these values.* *Ensure that decision making takes into account the impacts of land use and development on Victoria's high value biodiversity* Planning must consider as relevant the *Permitted Clearing of Native Vegetation – Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines (Department of Environment and Primary Industries, September 2013)* and the Native Vegetation Information Management System maintained by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	The maximum area of native vegetation which may be impacted on to facilitate the wind farm is 81.290 hectares. Of this, 81.009 hectares of native vegetation represents remnant patches and 0.281 represents four scattered trees (converted to extent in the BIOR report). This removal represents less than two percent of the native vegetation on the site (of which there are several thousand hectares. The native vegetation assessment was used to inform the wind farm layout. The avoidance and minimisation of impacts on high quality vegetation has been prioritised throughout the development of the wind farm layout (see Appendix 2 of BL&A 2017). This has been achieved by: • Re-location of access tracks to avoid and minimise areas where high quality native vegetation is located. • Strategically positioning collector stations, batching plants and temporary construction compounds to avoid impacting native vegetation. • Removal of WTGs from all areas of high quality native vegetation located on private property. • Implemented buffers around wetlands to avoid impacting high quality native vegetation. • Setback WTGs a minimum of 85 metres and the majority (227 wind turbines) at least 100m from all waterways to avoid impact to high quality native vegetation. • Minimise native vegetation impact by upgrading existing farm access tracks and access ways. • Co-location of underground cables and access tracks to minimise native vegetation impact and removal. • Designing cable routes to avoid impacting native vegetation along waterways by utilising singular points of crossing and overhead transmission lines where required. • Minimising the need for new access points off the public road network by using existing farm access points. • Transportation turning radii factored into track design to accurately understand and minimise native vegetation impacts, where practical. • Refining the position of turbine hardstands to avoid or reduce the area of native

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
			vegetation affected. Additional detail on how native vegetation has been avoided and minimised is located in Appendix 2 of (BLA 2017) *Golden Plains Wind Farm – EES Referral Flora and Fauna Assessment Report No. 16064 (1.3).* Brett Lane and Associates has undertaken an assessment of the impacts on the State threatened Brolga (*Grus rubicunda*) within the attached BL&A (2017b) Brolga Impact Assessment Report. Collision risk modelling of the impacts of the project on the Brolga (taking into consideration the application of turbine-free buffers to the nine of 21 known breeding sites less than 3.2 kilometres from the wind farm) indicates that less than one bird per year will be affected by the turbines and powerlines associated with the project. This equates to between 3 and 22 birds over the life of the project. This level of impact is slightly less than that of the recently approved Dundonnell Wind Farm, which is half the size of the proposed wind farm. A Brolga compensation plan, to be developed for the planning application will ensure that the government policy objective for wind farms and Brolgas in Victoria of 'zero net impact'.
Clause 12.01-2 Native Vegetation Management	To ensure that permitted clearing of native vegetation results in no net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity.	Apply the risk-based approach to managing native vegetation as set out in *Permitted clearing of native vegetation – Biodiversity assessment guidelines* (Department of Environment and Primary Industries, September 2013). These are: *Avoid the removal of native vegetation that makes a significant contribution to Victoria's biodiversity.* *Minimise impacts on Victoria's biodiversity. Where native vegetation is permitted to be removed, ensure that an offset is provided in a manner that makes a contribution to Victoria's biodiversity that is equivalent to the contribution made by the native vegetation to be removed.* Planning must consider as relevant: *Permitted clearing of native vegetation – Biodiversity assessment guidelines*, (Department of Environment and Primary Industries, 2013). The Native Vegetation Information Management System maintained by the Department of Environment,	The project will be assessed using the high risk based assessment pathway under the Permitted Clearing of Native Vegetation – Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines (Department of Environment and Primary Industries, September 2013). The proponent has engaged Biodiversity Offsets Victoria to undertake desktop studies and preliminary site based investigation to determine areas suitable for both general and species specific state and federal native vegetation offsets. A preliminary offset strategy has been developed and is submitted with the referral. Potential offset sites have been identified in wind farm host and neighbouring properties and are likely to meet all offset requirements. Further desktop and field assessments will be undertaken to confirm offset availability. If these sites do not meet all requirements there are offset available at Warrambeen and the GEWVVP site in Bannockburn.

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
		Land, Water and Planning.	
Clause 12.04-2 Landscapes	The objective is: *To protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments.*		The land is within the South West Victoria Landscape Assessment Study (SWVLAS) Area, however this document has not been included as a reference or incorporated document within the Golden Plains Planning Scheme. The project site is not subject to a Significant Landscape Overlay and is not recognised within the Golden Plains Planning Scheme as having landscape significance. The SWVLAS acknowledges that significant changes have occurred within the landscape as a result of human settlement and agricultural practices; suggesting lower landscapes sensitivity. The findings of the preliminary assessment of the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed wind farm are discussed within XURBAN 2017.
Clause 13 Environmental Risks	The objectives of this clause are that: *Planning should adopt a best practice environmental management and risk management approach which aims to avoid or minimise environmental degradation and hazards. Planning should identify and manage the potential for the environment, and environmental changes, to impact upon the economic, environmental or social well-being of society.*		Each of the individual risks are discussed in more detail below.
Clause 13.02 Floodplains	The objective of clause 13.02-1 Floodplain management is to assist the protection of: *Life, property and community infrastructure from flood hazard.* *The natural flood carrying capacity of rivers, streams and floodways.* *The flood storage function of floodplains and waterways.* *Floodplain areas of environmental significance or of importance to river health.*	Relevant strategies include; *avoid intensifying the impacts of flooding through inappropriately located uses and developments.* Planning must consider as relevant: State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria). Any floodplain management manual of policy and practice, or catchment management, river health, wetland or floodplain management strategy adopted by the relevant responsible floodplain management authority	The siting of wind turbines will avoid creek lines and creek beds. Four wind turbines are sited within the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). In instances where wind turbines are to be located within the areas affected by the LSIO these areas will be evaluated for potential to impact on surface water flows. The potential changes to site hydrology and surface water flows; increased sediment generation and transport into waterways, and direct impacts on waterways and vegetation can be adequately managed within the site. Development of the following management plans in consultation with Corangamite Catchment Management Authority will help control risk associated with impacts to flood flow pathways, surface water and water quality. These management plans will comply with industry standard guidelines. • Construction and site works management

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
			plan • Sediment, erosion and water quality management plan, and • Hydrocarbon and hazardous substances plan. Where required, permits such as 'works on waterways' permits will be obtained and the project will be designed to comply with conditions and guidelines to avoid damage and ensure permit compliance.
Clause 13.03-3 Salinity	The objective is: *To minimise the impact of salinity and rising watertables on land uses, buildings and infrastructure in rural and urban areas and areas of environmental significance and reduce salt loads in rivers.*	Relevant strategies include *prevent inappropriate development in areas affected by groundwater salinity*. Planning must consider as relevant: A Local Government Planning Guide for Dryland Salinity (Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 1995). Any relevant regional catchment strategy and any associated implementation plan or strategy (particularly salinity management plans and regional vegetation plans). Any special area plans approved under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*	The salinity management overlay applies to small portion of the site and statewide mapping (FUA, 2016) indicates that watertable salinity of the site ranges between 3,500-13,000 mg/L TDS. Saline groundwater can have corrosive or aggressive properties that could affect concrete and steel structures. The impact of groundwater quality on concrete and steel structures will be addressed through the development of the sediment, erosion and water quality management plan. Potential impacts to groundwater during construction of wind turbine foundations (if groundwater is intercepted) will be localised and short term and unlikely to impact on environmental assets. Where possible, the development has been sited >100 metres from GDEs and local bores.
Clause 13.04-1 Noise Abatement	The objective of this clause is: *To assist the control of noise effects on sensitive land uses.*	Strategies include: *Ensure that development is not prejudiced and community amenity is not reduced by noise emissions, using a range of building design, urban design and land use separation techniques as appropriate to the land use functions and character of the area.* Planning must consider as relevant: *Interim Guidelines for Control of Noise from Industry in Country Victoria* (Environment Protection Authority, 1989).	Noise from the proposed turbines will be subject to a full impact assessment which demonstrates compliance with the New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics Wind Farm Noise. A preliminary noise assessment has been undertaken which includes the noise predication contour for the highest predicted noise level in relation to participant and non-participant dwellings. It has concluded that compliance with the NZS 6808:2010 base noise limit of 40 dB L_{A90} is achieved at all wind speeds at all identified neighbour properties (including the school and child care) identified in the vicinity of the proposed Golden Plains wind Farm for both candidate wind turbine models (Senvion 3.6M140 and Vestas V136-3.6). Predicted noise levels at host properties comply with the recommended base noise limit of 45 dB L_{A90} at all wind speeds for both candidate wind turbine models.
Clause 14 Natural Resource Management	The relevant objectives of this clause are that: *Planning is to assist in the conservation and wise use of natural resources including energy, water, land, stone*		Each of the respective natural resource issues are discussed in detail below.

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
	and minerals to support both environmental quality and sustainable development.		
Clause 14.01 Agriculture	The objective of this clause is: *To protect productive farmland which is of strategic significance in the local or regional context.*	*In considering a proposal to subdivide or develop agricultural land, the following factors must be considered:* *The desirability and impacts of removing the land from primary production, given its agricultural productivity.* *The impacts of the proposed subdivision or development on the continuation of primary production on adjacent land, with particular regard to land values and to the viability of infrastructure for such production.* *The compatibility between the proposed or likely development and the existing uses of the surrounding land.* *Assessment of the land capability.*	The project area has not been identified as high quality productive agricultural land. Agricultural activities can continue underneath and around the wind turbines once constructed. The wind energy facility provides a value add to the agricultural land by providing a non-drought dependent income to local landowners without compromising the primary land use within this area.
Clause 14.02-1 Catchment Planning and Management	The relevant objective of this clause is: *To assist the protection and, where possible, restoration of catchments, waterways, water bodies, groundwater, and the marine environment.*	The relevant strategies are: *Protect water catchments and water supply facilities to ensure the continued availability of clean, high-quality drinking water.* *Retain natural drainage corridors with vegetated buffer zones at least 30m wide along each side of a waterway to maintain the natural drainage function, stream habitat and wildlife corridors and landscape values, to minimise erosion of stream banks and verges and to reduce polluted surface runoff from adjacent land uses.* *Ensure that works at or near waterways provide for the protection and enhancement of the environmental qualities of waterways and their instream uses.* *Require the use of appropriate measures to restrict sediment discharges from construction sites.* Planning must consider as relevant: State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria). Any relevant regional river health program, river and wetland restoration plans or waterway and wetland management works programs approved by a catchment	The project site is not within a water supply catchment or groundwater management area. The siting of wind turbines will avoid creek lines and creek beds. Wind turbines have been sited a minimum of 85 metres and the majority (227 wind turbines) at least 100 metres from each waterway and wetland and to largely avoid areas affected by the LSIO. In instances where wind turbines are to be located within the areas affected by the LSIO, these areas will be evaluated for potential to impact on surface water flows and native vegetation. The proposed wind turbines have been sited, where possible to avoid wildlife movement corridors, stream habitat and all areas of high quality native vegetation. Development of the following management plans in consultation with Corangamite Catchment Management Authority will help control risk associated with impacts to the catchment. These management plans will comply with industry standard guidelines. • Construction and site works management plan • Sediment, erosion and water quality management plan, • Hydrocarbon and hazardous substances plan. Should any works on waterways be proposed a permit under the *Water Act 1989* will be

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
		management authority. Any regional catchment strategies approved under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and any associated implementation plan or strategy including any regional river health and wetland strategies.	obtained and the project will be designed to comply with conditions and guidelines to avoid damage and ensure permit compliance.
Clause 14.02-2 Water Quality	The objective is *to protect water quality*.	Relevant strategies include: *Discourage incompatible land use activities in areas subject to flooding, severe soil degradation, groundwater salinity or geotechnical hazards where the land cannot be sustainably managed to ensure minimum impact on downstream water quality or flow volumes.* Planning must consider as relevant: Construction Techniques for Sediment Pollution Control (Environmental Protection Authority, 1991). Environmental Guidelines for Major Construction Sites (Environmental Protection Authority, 1996 - Publication 480).	Potential impacts to water quality can be appropriately managed through the development of an EMP. The EMP will be required to address sediment control, the potential for erosion and the protection of water quality. The EMP will need to be prepared in consultation with the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority and other agencies and address the requirements of the SEPPs.
Clause 15 Built Environment and Heritage	The relevant objective is that: *Planning should ensure all new land use and development appropriately responds to its landscape, valued built form and cultural context, and protects places and sites with significant heritage, architectural, aesthetic, scientific and cultural value*.		Each of the respective environment and built heritage issues are discussed in detail below.
Clause 15.02 Sustainable Development	This clause seeks to guide more efficient use of resources. More specifically clause 15.02-1 Energy and Resource Efficiency aims to minimise greenhouse gas emissions from industry and other users of electricity through the greater use of renewable energy. The objective of this clause is: *To encourage land use and development that is consistent with the efficient use of energy and the minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions.*	A relevant strategy to give effect to this objective is to: *Improve efficiency in energy use through greater use of renewable energy.*	This project will result in emission savings of >2.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
Clause 15.03-2 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	The objective of the clause is: *To ensure the protection and conservation of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.*	Relevant Strategies include: *Provide for the protection and conservation of pre- and post-contact Aboriginal cultural heritage places.* *Ensure that permit approvals align with recommendations of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan approved under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.* Planning must consider as relevant: The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* for all Aboriginal cultural heritage. The findings and recommendations of the Aboriginal Heritage Council. The findings and recommendations of the Victorian Heritage Council for post-contact Aboriginal heritage places where relevant.	The project area is currently located within the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP boundary of the Wadawurrung, Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (WWAC) and partly in the area not administered by a RAP. The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) and the Guligad Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) both have an interest in the area. GAC currently have a RAP application under review by the Aboriginal Heritage Council that encompasses the entire area. Consultation has commenced with all relevant parties and it has been agreed that the Cultural Heritage Management Plan will be prepared, which will be evaluated by both Aboriginal Victoria (Ballarat Regional Office in consultation with EMAC and GAC. The standard assessment and the stage 1 complex assessment on the EMAC/GAC side of the activity area have been completed. At this stage of the assessment process there have been no issues identified that cannot be resolved through the CHMP process.
Clause 17 Economic Development	The relevant objective is that: *Planning is to contribute to the economic well-being of communities and the State as a whole by supporting and fostering economic growth and development by providing land, facilitating decisions, and resolving land use conflicts, so that each district may build on its strengths and achieve its economic potential.*		There are significant economic and community benefits associated with the proposed wind energy facility. These include: • new direct and indirect employment opportunities within the area, including permanent operations and maintenance jobs, and supporting jobs during the construction and installation phases. • significant annual rates base to Golden Plains Shire Council. • host farmers will receive an annual non-drought dependent income for the lease of the land over the life of the wind farm. • The proponent proposes to establish a number of community benefit programs once the wind farm is operational.
Clause 19.01 Renewable Energy	The objective is: *To promote the provision of renewable energy in a manner that ensures appropriate siting and design considerations are met*	• *Facilitate renewable energy development in appropriate locations.* • *Protect energy infrastructure against competing and incompatible uses.* • *Develop appropriate infrastructure to meet community demand for energy services and setting aside suitable land for future energy infrastructure.* • *In considering proposals for renewable energy, consideration should be given to the economic and environmental benefits to the*	The project gives effect to this clause as the project: • Is located within an excellent wind resource area • Provides a wind energy facility within a suitable location close to the existing electricity grid. • Provides economic benefit to the local community in terms of income, employment, community investment and reduced energy costs; and • Environmental constraints can be managed within the site.

Clause	Objective	Relevant Strategies	Comment
		broader community of renewable energy generation while also considering the need to minimise the effects of a proposal on the local community and environment. • *In planning for wind energy facilities, recognise that economically viable wind energy facilities are dependent on locations with consistently strong winds over the year.* Policy guidelines provided within Clause 19.01-1 include: • *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, January 2016).*	

Appendix B. Review of the LPPF

Clause	Objective	Strategies	Comments
Clause 21.04-1 Catchment Management	*To protect water catchments*	*Adopt an integrated catchment management approach to ensure use and development assessment comprehensively considers the effects on land and water resources*. Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy – Corangamite Catchment Management Authority	Discussions are currently being undertaken with the Corangamite CMA. Potential impacts to water quality can be appropriately managed through the development of an EMP. The EMP will be required to address sediment control, the potential for erosion and the protection of water quality. The EMP will need to be prepared in consultation with the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority and other agencies and address the requirements of the SEPPs.
Clause 21.04-2 Flooding	*To ensure the protection of floodplains through minimising the impact of development and subdivision*	Corangamite Catchment Management Authority Floodplain Management Strategy, April 2002	Discussions are currently being undertaken with the Corangamite CMA. The siting of wind turbines will avoid creek lines and creek beds. Four wind turbines have been sited within the LSIO. In instances where wind turbines are to be located within the areas affected by the LSIO, these areas will be evaluated for potential to impact on surface water flows. The potential changes to site hydrology and surface water flows; increased sediment generation and transport into waterways, and direct impacts on waterways and vegetation can be adequately managed within the site. Development of the following management plans in consultation with Corangamite Catchment Management Authority will help control risk associated with impacts to flood flow pathways, surface water and water quality. These management plans will comply with industry standard guidelines. • Construction and site works management plan • Sediment, erosion and water quality management plan, • Hydrocarbon and hazardous substances plan. Where required, permits such as 'works on waterways' permits will be obtained and the project will be designed to comply with conditions and guidelines to avoid damage and ensure permit compliance.
Clause 21.04-3 Salinity	*To protect soil resources from erosion, contamination, compaction, salinity and other forms of degradation*.	*Protect soil and water resources from the risk of increased salinity.* Golden Plains Shire – Salinity Management Overlay Salinity Occurrences and Mapping Background Report No 1, Dahlhaus	The Dahlhaus 2006 report delineates areas in the Golden Plains Shire where salinity may potentially threaten assets and included them within the SMO. Areas with the potential to be affected by salinity are shown on Figure 21.04-3A under Clause 21.04-3. It would appear that

Clause	Objective	Strategies	Comments
		Environmental Geology Pty Ltd, 2006 Permit Application Requirements for Development Proposals where a Salinity Management Overlay Applies. EnPlan, 2006. This document provides guidance on the Council's information requirements for development under the Salinity Management Overlay. These are outlined in Appendix D.	the subject site is outside these areas. However, portion of the site is subject to Clause 44.02 Salinity Management Overlay. The implications of this are discussed under section 5.4 of this report.
Clause 21.04-5 Protection of stone resources	The objectives of Clause 21.04-5 are *to provide for the long term protection and* utilisation of stone resources.	The strategies within the MSS relate directly to the Ballarat Supply Area.	The subject site is located outside of the Ballarat Supply Area.
Clause 21.05-2 Agriculture	The objectives of this clause are: *To ensure agricultural land is protected and used as an economically valuable resource.* *To facilitate more intensive use and diversified use of rural land for higher value products, including timber plantations and agroforestry*.	The strategies relevant to the project include: *Encourage agricultural diversity and promote opportunities for new farming enterprises.* *Ensure that the use and development of rural land is both compatible and complementary to agricultural activities.* *Facilitate more intensive use and diversified use of rural land for higher value products, including agroforestry, which are compatible with surrounding farming practice.*	With a total footprint of approximately 1%, the project will allow for retention of the primary land use as agriculture. Individual farm businesses will directly benefit form additional income, which could be further invested into farms. Once decommissioned the use will be reinstated to agricultural use.
Clause 21.06-3 Transport	The objective is *to ensure the transport network supports economic opportunities*.	The relevant strategy is to: *Protect the efficiency and safety of the shire's transport infrastructure to support economic activities.*	All construction impacts will be appropriately managed through the development of a traffic management plan which will be prepared in consultation with VicRoads, Colac Otway and Golden Plains Shire Councils. This plan will be endorsed and will form part of the wind farm permit. Site access and intersection improvements undertaken during the construction phase will improve the operating efficiency of the existing road network.

Appendix C. Planning Assessment

Planning Control	Planning Approval (Y/N)			Comments
	Use	Building & Works	Vegetation Removal	
Zones				
Farming Zone	Y	Y	N	Must meet the requirements of Clause 52.32. Minor Utility Installation is a Section 1 Use Road use and development is exempt under clause 62
Road Zone Category 1 Road (RDZ1)	Y	Y	N	Minor Utility Installation is a Section 1 Use
Overlays				
Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2 – Watercourse Protection)	N/A	Y	Y	A permit is required to construct a building or carry out works A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation including dead vegetation.
Salinity Management Overlay	N/A	Y	Y	A permit is required to construct a building or carry out works. A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation
Land Subject to Inundation Overlay	N/A	Y	N/A	A permit is required to construct a building or carry out works except: Earthworks that do not raise ground level topography by more than 200 millimetres and does not include the removal, destruction or lopping of trees and the removal of vegetation or topsoil. Road works or works to any other access way (public or private) that: • Do not change the finished level of the road surface; or • Are limited to resurfacing of an existing road.
Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO1)	N/A	N	Y	A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation specified in a schedule to this overlay (Westerns Plains Grassland) under the Golden Plains Planning Scheme.
Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO2)	N/A	N	Y	A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation specified in a schedule to this overlay (Bushland Reserves and Roadside Vegetation Areas under the Golden Plains Planning Scheme. A permit is required to remove destroy or lop any native vegetation under the Colac Otway Planning Scheme
Particular Provisions				
Clause 52.05 Advertising Signs		Y		A planning permit will be required in accordance with Clause 52.05-10. The development standards for the signage are that the total advertisement area must not exceed 3 sq m. The objective of Clause 52.05-10 Category 4 – Sensitive Areas is *to provide for unobtrusive signs in areas requiring strong amenity control.*
Native Vegetation – Clause 52.17			Y	A planning permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation under Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation) of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme and the Colac Otway Planning Scheme. The purpose of Clause 52.17 is: • *To ensure permitted clearing of native vegetation results in no net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity.* This is achieved through the following approach: • *Avoid the removal of native vegetation that makes a significant contribution to Victoria's biodiversity.*

Planning Control	Planning Approval (Y/N)			Comments
	Use	Building & Works	Vegetation Removal	
				• *Minimise impacts on Victoria's biodiversity from the removal of native vegetation.* • *Where native vegetation is permitted to be removed, ensure that an offset is provided in a manner that makes a contribution to Victoria's biodiversity that is equivalent to the contribution made by the native vegetation to be removed.* • *To manage native vegetation to minimise land and water degradation* • *To manage native vegetation near buildings to reduce the threat to life and property from bushfire.* Pursuant to Clause 52.17-6 (Offset Requirement), the biodiversity impacts of the removal of native vegetation are required to be offset, in accordance with the Permitted clearing of native vegetation – Biodiversity assessment Guidelines (Biodiversity Guidelines) (DEPI, 2013).
Clause 52.32 (Wind Energy Facility)	Y	Y	Y	A permit is required to use and develop land for a Wind energy facility. This clause provides guidance for the responsible authority in considering applications. It also outlines information required to accompany planning permit applications and referred to other relevant standards. The purpose of Clause 52.32 Wind Energy Facility is: *To facilitate the establishment and expansion of wind energy facilities, in appropriate locations, with minimal impact on the amenity of the area.* The application requirements include the preparation of a site and context analysis and a design response. Full details of what should be included within these documents are provided in Appendix D The Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for a new application for a permit for a wind energy facility and this clause provides guidance on what should be considered in assessing any application for a wind farm. These include matters such as noise, blade glint, shadow flicker and electromagnetic interference and the impact of the facility on: • Views • Natural environment and natural systems • Cultural heritage • Aircraft safety. The Minister for Planning is also required to consider the *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria (DELWP January 2016*) (The Planning and Policy Guidelines) and the *New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics - Wind Farm Noise (Acoustic Standard).*
Clause 52.37 Post Boxes and Dry Stone Walls	N/A	Y	N	A number of dry stone walls exist within and near the project site. Clause 52.37 (post boxes and dry stone walls) may be applicable should the construction of the project impact on any dry stone walls constructed prior to 1940. The objective of Clause 52.37 of the GPPS is to *conserve historic post boxes and dry stone walls* and the following requirements include: A permit is required to demolish, remove or alter a dry stone wall constructed before 1940 on land specified in the schedule to this provision. This does not apply to: • *Dry stone structures other than walls and fences.* • *The demolition or removal of a section of a dry stone wall to install a gate.* • *The reconstruction of damaged or collapsing walls which are*

Planning Control	Planning Approval (Y/N)			Comments
	Use	Building & Works	Vegetation Removal	
				undertaken to the same specifications and using the same materials as the existing walls.
Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to a Road Zone (Category 1)		Y		The purpose of Clause 52.29 is to: • *ensure appropriate access to identified roads.* A permit is required to create or alter access to a road in a Road Zone, Category 1. Even if no physical modifications are required to the access, a permit may be required, as during the construction period there is likely to be changes in the volume, frequency and type of traffic.
General Provisions				
Clause 61.01 Administration and Enforcement of the Scheme.				Planning permit applications for a wind energy facilities and associated powerline infrastructure are required to be assessed by the Minister for Planning. *Clause 61.01-1 (Minister is Responsible Authority) states:* *The Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for matters under Divisions 1, 1A, 2 and 3 of Part 4 of the Act, and matters required by a permit or the scheme to be endorsed, approved or done to the satisfaction of the responsible authority, in relation to:* • *the use and development of land for a Wind energy facility.* • *the use or development for a Minor utility installation used to transmit or distribute electricity generated by a Wind energy facility.* • *the use or development for a Utility installation used to transmit or distribute electricity generated by a Wind energy facility.* The Minister for Planning is the Responsible Authority and any matters required by a permit or the scheme to be endorsed, approved or done to the satisfaction of the responsible authority will be the responsibility of the Minister. However, the shire will be the responsible authority for the enforcement of the planning permit and permit conditions.
Clause 65 Decision Guidelines				The responsible authority must decide whether the use and development will produce acceptable outcomes in accordance with the decision guidelines of Clause 65 of the GPPS and any other decision guidelines outline within the relevant provisions of the planning scheme. These are included in Appendix D.

Appendix D. Decision Guidelines

Proposals for wind energy facilities must be assessed against state planning policy, local planning policy and other matters specified in section 60 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Section 5 of the *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria 2016* (Victorian Guidelines) outlines the matters for consideration in assessing wind energy facilities and include:

- Contribution to Government Policy Objectives including the SPPF, LPPF and give consideration to best practice standards including the draft *National Wind Farm Development Guidelines* (July 2010) and *Best Practice Guidelines for Implementation of Wind Energy Projects in Australia* (2006).
- Compliance with New Zealand Standard NZS 6808:200 Acoustics – Wind Farm Noise (the Standard). In seeking to achieve compliance the model conditions within the Victorian Guidelines require proponents to seek to engage an environmental auditor, appointed under the *Environment Protection Act 1970* to conduct an assessment and verification of wind farm noise compliance. This assessment would verify noise compliance, with regard to relevant standards and planning permit conditions and the Victorian Guideline.
- Amenity impacts such as noise, blade glint, shadow flicker, overshadowing and electromagnetic interferences. The guidelines encourage impact reduction measures such as surface treatment with low reflectivity; modelling shadow flicker in advance of siting and design; avoiding the siting of wind turbines in the line of sight between transmitters and receivers.
- Landscape and visual amenity. The guidelines suggest the following measures for reducing visual impact including minimising views from areas used for recreation and dwellings; spacing turbines to respond to the landscape characteristics; minimising earthworks and protecting drainage lines and waterways; minimising removal of vegetation; consistency in height, appearance and rotation of turbines; colour; limiting night lighting.
- Flora and fauna and removal of native vegetation. The responsible authority will consider whether appropriate survey work has been provided within the planning permit application and whether further monitoring or survey work is required. Compliance with the *Permitted clearing of native vegetation – biodiversity assessment guidelines 2013* must be demonstrated. There are three steps that land managers and owners must address when considering the removal of vegetation which include avoidance as a priority; minimising loss; and identification of appropriate offsets.
- Aircraft safety. The responsible authority will assess whether appropriate consultation has been undertaken with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and with any other private airstrip operators that may not be identified by CASA. The proponent will need to demonstrate compliance with any of CASA or private operators requirements. This may include reducing the number of turbines, mitigating light glare with the use of baffling; matching light intensity to meteorological visibility or minimising light intensity at ground level.
- Construction impacts and decommissioning must be addressed in detail within an environmental management plan that is in compliance with the draft *National Wind Farm Development Guidelines 2010*.

Clause 52.32-5 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme requires the responsible authority to consider the following in assessing the application for a wind energy facility:

- The State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- The effect of the proposal on the surrounding area in terms of noise, blade glint, shadow flicker and electromagnetic interference.
- The impact of the development on significant views, including visual corridors and sightlines.
- The impact of the facility on the natural environment and natural systems.
- The impact of the facility on cultural heritage.
- The impact of the facility on aircraft safety.

- Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, January 2016).
- The New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics - Wind Farm Noise

In addition Clause 65.01 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme requires the responsible authority to consider as appropriate:

- The purpose of the zone, overlay or other provision.
- Any matter required to be considered in the zone, overlay or other provision.
- The orderly planning of the area.
- The effect on the amenity of the area.
- The proximity of the land to any public land.
- Factors likely to cause or contribute to land degradation, salinity or reduce water quality.
- Whether the proposed development is designed to maintain or improve the quality of stormwater within and exiting the site.
- The extent and character of native vegetation and the likelihood of its destruction.
- Whether native vegetation is to be or can be protected, planted or allowed to regenerate.
- The degree of flood, erosion or fire hazard associated with the location of the land and the use, development or management of the land so as to minimise any such hazard.

Due consideration has been given to all these matters and are addressed within the specialist reports provided to support the referral under the EE Act.

Appendix E. Environmental Approvals

Legislation	Relevance to the Site	Next Steps
Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999		
The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) protects matters of national environmental significance (MNES) including species and ecological communities, and internationally recognised wetlands. The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy is responsible for administering the EPBC Act. The EPBC Act requires that an environmental approval be obtained from the Minister before taking any action that will have, or is likely to have, a significant negative impact on nine identified matters of national environmental significance which include: Nationally threatened species and ecological communities.	The ecological assessment concludes that the project area has potential to significantly impact on identified matters of national environmental significance.	The project will be referred under the EPBC Act as a controlled action.
Environment Effects Act 1978		
The Ministerial Guidelines for assessment of Environmental Effects are made under Section 10 of the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act). These guidelines provide for assessment of proposed projects (works) that are capable of having a significant effect on the environment. The EE Act does this by enabling the Minister administering the EE Act to decide whether Environment Effects Statement (EES) should be prepared. The guidelines outline the relevant referral criteria which individually or in combination could trigger the need for an EES to be prepared.		It is recommended that a referral be made to the Minister for Planning to determine if an EES will be required for the proposed development[5]. For wind energy facilities, this referral is required to be accompanied by a preliminary landscape assessment.
Aboriginal Heritage Act, 2006 and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations, 2007		
Regulation 6 of the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007* (Regulations) requires a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) to be prepared for an activity if all or part of the activity area is within an area of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity and if all or part of the activity is a high impact activity.	The project area is currently located within the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) boundary of the Wadawurrung, Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (WWAC) and partly in an area not currently administered by a RAP. The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) and the Guligad Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) both have an interest in the area. GAC currently have a RAP application under review by the Aboriginal Heritage Council that encompasses the entire project area.	A mandatory cultural heritage management plan is required under sections 43 (1) (a) and (b)(xxvi) of the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007*. A cultural heritage management plan will be prepared. The WWAC and AV will evaluate the CHMP in consultation with EMAC and GAC. A planning permit cannot be issued before a cultural heritage management plan is approved by the Responsible Aboriginal Party or Aboriginal Victoria (where relevant).

[5] It is noted from the workshop (13/09/16) that the timing of this referral should be carefully considered depending on the result of additional ecological assessment.

Legislation	Relevance to the Site	Next Steps
Heritage Act 1995		
The Heritage Act 1995 (the Heritage Act) is administered by Heritage Victoria. The main purpose of the Heritage Act is to 'provide for the protection and conservation of places and objects of cultural heritage significance and the registration of such objects'.	A search of the Victorian Heritage Database was undertaken and one registered historical site was identified within the project area. The registered site is the historic mining site, Queen of Plains Co. (H7622-0172) located at 429 Pitfield-Cressy Road, Golden Plains. It is listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory but the heritage overlay under the Golden Plains Planning Scheme does not apply to the site.	The design of the proposed development will be sited to ensure that the project will not impact on this site.
Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988		
The *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* is the primary legislation dealing with biodiversity, conservation and sustainable use of native flora and fauna in Victoria and applies to public land. Threatened species of flora and fauna and floristic communities, as well as threatening processes, are listed under this Act.	There is a potential for threatened species and threatened ecological communities to be present along the road reserves and within the area of Crown land included within the site.	Where the project is required to remove threatened and/or protected flora species from Public land a 'Permit to Take' will need to be obtained from DELWP. This permit is not dependent on the planning permit process. However, the timing of an application for these permits is dependent on finalisation and approval of the detailed design of the project and the timing of any targeted surveys that may be required.
Road Management Act 2004		
Rokewood-Shelford Road, Rokewood-Skipton Road and Colac-Ballarat Road are categorised as a declared road under the *Road Management Act 2004.* VicRoads is the consenting authority for the occupation and / or construction works within these roads. Therefore, if any changes to the road are required to access the site, a permit will be required in accordance with this Act. The shire is the road manager for other roads within and adjoining the site.	Therefore, if any works within the road reserve or changes to the road to access the site, consent will be required in accordance with this Act.	Under section 63 of this Act, written consent is required from the road manager (VicRoads in the case of Rokewood-Shelford Road, Rokewood-Skipton Road and Colac-Ballarat Road and Council for the remainder) for the occupation and/or construction works within public roads.
Water Act 1989		
The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is responsible for the control, management and authorisation of works and activities in or over designated waterways in the CMA's waterway management district. The CMA authorises works on designated waterways via an authority permit in accordance with the CMA's by-law number four, Waterways Protection 2014. Part 2 Section 7 of this Bylaw states that a permit is required for any of the following: • construct , alter, remove, obstruct or interfere with any structures or works	Some works including construction of public utilities such as sewers/ water mains, gas pipelines, electricity cables and public access structures do not require a works on waterways permit but authorisation for these works is still required. The CMA must be notified and works undertaken in accordance with the Corangamite CMA guidelines. Work must not commence until the CMA has provided written approval.	Work must not commence until the CMA has provided written approval. The works on waterways permit is not dependent on the planning permit process. However, the timing of an application for these permits is dependent on finalisation and approval of the detailed design of the project. As such these applications would be timed after the planning permit is issued or once the detailed design is finalised. A licence would be required from Southern Rural Water to take or use groundwater. Southern Rural Water can impose conditions on the licence under Section 71 of the *Water*

Legislation	Relevance to the Site	Next Steps
in, under, on or over a designated waterway or any designated land or works; or • construct or carry out any works that deviate or are likely to deviate a designated waterway; or • obstruct or interfere with a designated waterway or any designated land or works; or • cut down, interfere with or take any tree or other vegetation within or from a designated waterway or any designated land or works; or • interfere with or take any soil, earth, sand, gravel or other material within or from a designated waterway or designated land or works. A licence is required under Section 51 of the *Water Act 1989* to take and use groundwater and under Section 67 of the *Water Act 1989* a licence is required to construct and operate a bore or to undertake works on waterways.		*Act 1989* including the maximum amount of water that may be taken in particular periods and circumstances. Therefore these issues will be considered during the licensing and approvals process under the *Water Act 1989.*
Environment Protection Act 1970		
The *Environment Protection Act 1970* (EP Act) establishes the Environment Protection Authority and creates the legislative framework for the protection of the environment in Victoria. State Environment Protection Policies (SEPP) are subordinate legislation made under the provisions of the EP Act to provide more detailed requirements and guidance for the application of the EP Act in Victoria. SEPPs aim to safeguard the environmental values and human activities (beneficial uses) that need protection in the State of Victoria from the effect of pollution and waste.	Detailed management plans associated with the future planning permit will need to consider and comply with relevant SEPPs and guidelines including: • State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria) • State Environment Protection Policy (Groundwaters of Victoria) • Noise from industry in regional Victoria: Recommended maximum noise levels from commerce, industry and trade premises in regional Victoria (NIRV; EPA publication 1411). • The design and operation of the temporary concrete batching plant will be in accordance with EPA Publication 628 Environmental Guidelines for the Concrete Batching Industry. • EPA Publication 480 Environmental Guidelines for Major Construction Sites. • EPA Publication 891.2 Code of Practice – Onsite wastewater management (December 2008). • EPA Publication 275 Construction Techniques for Sediment Pollution Control	The application of and compliance with the SEPPs will be implemented through Environmental Management Plan which will be endorsed and which will form part of the planning permit for the wind farm.

Legislation	Relevance to the Site	Next Steps
Other Acts		
Other permits and provisions may be required by the following acts: • *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* • *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* • *Wildlife Act 1975*		Further detail on the nature of the proposed engineering works and the extent of impacts are required to determine whether these Acts will apply to the project.

Appendix F. Accredited Processes

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) protects Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), including species and ecological communities, and internationally recognised wetlands. The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy is responsible for administering the EPBC Act.

The EPBC Act requires that an environmental approval be obtained from the Minister before taking any action that will have, or is likely to have, a significant negative impact on MNES. This project will be referred as a 'controlled action' and will therefore require approval under the EPBC Act.

The assessment may also be undertaken in accordance with a relevant bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and a state or territory. The following Victorian processes can be accredited:

- Assessment under the *Environmental Effects Act 1978* - the bilateral agreement allows the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy to make a decision whether to approve the Project based on an assessment under the EEA. The approvals process for the Project would require the preparation of an Environmental Effects Statement (EES)
- Advisory Committee Process under Section 151 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (P&E Act), or
- Planning permit process under the P&E Act.

The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy will make the final decision under the EPBC Act even if the project is assessed using an accredited state impact assessment process.

The Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for matters under Division 1, 1A, 2 and 3 of Part 4 of the Act and under these Divisions, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal is responsible for considering a review of the planning permit under section 77 or 82 of the Act.

However, the Minister for Planning can decide at any stage during the planning permit process to 'call in' a planning permit under Section 97B of the P&E Act if the Minister decides that the:

- *Application raises a major issue of policy and that the determination of the application may have a substantial effect on the achievement or development of planning objectives; or*
- *Decision on the application has been unreasonably delayed to the disadvantage of the applicant; or*
- *Use or development to which the application relates is also required to be considered by the Minister under another Act or regulation and that consideration would be facilitated by the referral of the application to the Minister.*

If the Minister was to call in the planning permit application[6], then a Planning Panel would be appointed instead of the Tribunal to review objections and submissions to the planning permit.

[6] The Minister would effectively call the application from him/her self.

Appendix G. Relevant land use definitions

Term	Definition	Proposed Land Use
Clause 72 General Terms of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme and the Colac Otway Planning Scheme		
Anemometer	*A wind measuring device*	Permanent meteorological masts
Earthworks	*Land forming, laser grading, levee banks, raised access roads and tracks, building pads, storage embankments, channel banks and drain banks and associated structures.*	Applicable to some hardstands and road construction.
Native Vegetation	*Plants that are indigenous to Victoria, including trees, shrubs, herbs, and grasses.*	Removal of Native Vegetation within the project site.
Clause 74 Land Use Terms of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme and the Colac Otway Planning Scheme		
Wind Energy Facility	Land used to generate electricity by wind force. It includes land used for: *a) any turbine, building or other structure or thing used in or in connection with the generation of electricity by wind force* *b) an anemometer.* *It does not include turbines principally used to supply electricity for domestic or rural use of the land.*	Wind Turbines Operation & Maintenance Buildings/Ablutions Anemometers Signage Fencing
Industry	*Land used for any of the following operations: a) any process of manufacture; b) dismantling or breaking up of any article; c) treating waste materials; d) winning clay, gravel, rock, sand, soil, stone, or other materials (other than Mineral, stone, or soil extraction); e) laundering, repairing, servicing or washing any article, machinery, or vehicle, other than on-site work on a building, works, or land; or f) any process of testing or analysis.* *If on the same land as any of these operations, it also includes: a) storing goods used in the operation or resulting from it; b) providing amenities for people engaged in the operation; c) selling by wholesale, goods resulting from the operation; and d) accounting or administration in connection with the operation. If Materials recycling, goods resulting from the operation may be sold by retail.*	Concrete Batching Plants
Minor Utility Installation	*Land used for a utility installation comprising any of the following: a) sewerage or water mains; b) storm or flood water drains or retarding basins; d) gas mains providing gas directly to consumers; e) power lines designed to operate at less than 220,000 volts; f) a sewage treatment plant, and any associated disposal works, required to serve a neighbourhood; g) a pumping station required to serve a neighbourhood; or h) an electrical sub-station designed to operate at no more than 66,000 volts. It includes any associated flow measurement device or a structure to gauge waterway flow.*	Transmission lines less than 220,000 volts
Utility Installation	*Land used: a) for telecommunications; b) to transmit or distribute gas, oil, or power; c) to collect, treat, transmit, store, or distribute water; or d) to collect, treat, or dispose of storm or flood water, sewage, or sullage. It includes any associated flow measurement device or a structure to gauge waterway flow.*	Collector Stations Terminal Sub-Station Transmission lines over 220,000 volts
Section 3 Definitions of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*		
Road	*Includes highway, street, lane, footway, square, court, alley or right of way, whether a thoroughfare or not and whether accessible to the public generally or not.*	Access tracks, site access and upgrade to any existing roads.
Works	*includes any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land including the removal, destruction or lopping of trees and the removal of vegetation or topsoil.*	

Appendix H. Golden Plains Planning Scheme

H.1 Zones

Farming Zone

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/vpps/35_07.pdf

Road Zone

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/vpps/36_04.pdf

H.2 Overlays

Environmental Significance Overlay

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/goldenplains/ordinance/42_01s02_gpla.pdf

Salinity management overlay

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/vpps/44_02.pdf

Land subject to inundation overlay

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/vpps/44_04.pdf

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/goldenplains/ordinance/44_04s_gpla.pdf

Vegetation Protection Overlay (1 and 2)

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/goldenplains/ordinance/42_02s01_gpla.pdf

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/goldenplains/ordinance/42_02s02_gpla.pdf

http://planning-schemes.delwp.vic.gov.au/schemes/colacotway/ordinance/42_02s02_cola.pdf

Heritage Overlay

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/vpps/43_01.pdf

http://planning-schemes.delwp.vic.gov.au/schemes/goldenplains/ordinance/43_01s_gpla.pdf

H.3 Particular Provisions

Wind Energy Facility

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/vpps/52_32.pdf

Renewable Energy Facility

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/vpps/52_42.pdf

Land Adjacent to a Road Zone

http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/vpps/52_29.pdf