

Attachment 2**For Public Notice via Internet****REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*****Title of Proposal:** Alberton Wind Energy Facility**Proponent:** Synergy Wind Pty Ltd**Description of Project:**

Synergy Wind Pty Ltd proposes to develop a new Alberton Wind Energy Facility (AWEF) in South Gippsland, Victoria, west of Alberton and 6 km south of Yarram townships. The project will provide 460 GWh of renewable energy per year and is proposed to comprise 34 turbines, with an overall height of up to 200 m to the blade tip, located on a total footprint area of approx. 59.4 ha. The AWEF infrastructure will occupy an area of 3,200 ha, generally bound by Alberton township to the east, South Gippsland Highway in the south, cleared farmed ranges to the west and Nocols Roads in the north. The project infrastructure includes:

- 23 km of access tracks (6 m wide during construction to be reduced to 2.5 m post-construction);
- 15 km of 22kV overhead transmission lines connecting the wind farm to the terminal station and 66kV SP AusNet transmission line;
- Underground electrical and telecom cables;
- Two small electrical substations within the project area and one larger electrical substation located near the intersection of Coal Mine Roads and the old South Gippsland rail line; and
- Four works compounds (up to 2.773 ha footprint).

The AWEF would be located on the existing farm land cleared for grazing and cropping. The power line route primarily traverses private agricultural properties and parcels of public land including road reserves.

Decision:

The Minister for Planning has decided that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is not required for the Alberton Wind Energy Facility, as described in the referral accepted on 22 November 2017.

Reasons for Decision:

- The effects on native vegetation and other biodiversity values are unlikely to be significant given their limited extent and the avoidance and mitigation measures incorporated into the proposed design, including the reduction in turbine numbers and relocation of some turbines.
- The project has some potential for significant environmental effects on bird species listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* known to utilise Corner Inlet Ramsar site and Albert River habitats, in particular the Swift Parrot, Orange-bellied Parrot, Fork-tailed Swift and White-throated Needletail. There is some uncertainty related to information on their occupancy, migration routes and/or flight heights, as well as the avoidance and mitigation measures that will need to be adopted for these species.
- The potentially significant effects and residual risks for the above mentioned bird species will need to be further assessed and mitigated, including bird collision rates with turbines, to inform relevant offset requirements and statutory decisions. These matters need to be addressed as part of the planning permit process under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.
- The potential effects on the Corner Inlet Ramsar site during earthworks and construction can be managed by implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, which will be required as a condition of a planning permit.
- Other potential effects on amenity, landscape values and cultural heritage are unlikely to be significant and can also be readily addressed under existing statutory requirement under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Date of Decision:

28/12/17