

Tall Tree Wind Farm EES

Final EES Scoping Requirements FAQs July 2026

1. What is the Tall Tree Wind Farm Project?

The Tall Tree Wind Farm Project (the project) is a proposed renewable energy development ('wind farm') located within the Golden Plains Shire. Accionia Energia is the proponent for the project.

The aim of the project is to enhance Victorian and national energy supply through the Australian National Energy Market by generating up to 360MW of renewable energy and providing up to 800 MWh of dispatchable energy storage. This objective is in accordance with national and state emissions reductions targets.

Key components of the project include:

- Up to 53 wind turbine generators, with a hub height up to 169 m above ground level, providing up to 360 megawatts generation capacity.
- An electrical substation, a battery energy storage system and an overhead transmission line to connect the wind farm to a new electrical switchyard, and a connection to the existing Moorabool to Elaine 220 kV transmission line.
- site access points, internal access tracks and road upgrades.
- underground cabling.
- meteorological monitoring masts.
- one or more temporary small on-site stone quarries (borrow pits).

2. What is the purpose of the EES scoping requirements?

Scoping is an important stage that occurs prior to preparing an EES.

The scoping requirements set out the matters to be investigated and documented within the EES. The EES will include a description of the proposed project, assessment of its potential effects on the environment proportionate to the level of risk and potential significance of effects and approaches to management.

The EES scoping requirements have been issued by the Minister for Planning and are available on the Planning website:

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environmental-assessments/browse-projects/referrals/tall-tree-wind-farm>

3. Has the approach to EES scoping requirements changed?

During 2025, the Department reformed the approach to EES scoping as part of Victoria's Economic Growth Statement (EGS) EES reforms, which aim to make assessment processes under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*, faster, more efficient and focused.

Under the new approach, scoping requirements are structured to support a targeted, risk-based and proportionate environment assessment, enabling proponents to focus more on potentially significant environmental effects.

The scoping requirements now identify potential significant effects and categorise them. This tiered approach is further described in new advisory notes recently released to support industry, proponents and stakeholders available on the Planning website:

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environmental-assessments/environmental-assessment-guides/improving-ees-and-environment-report-assessments>



4. What do the scoping requirement identify as the priority matters for assessment for the Tall Tree Wind farm EES?

For the Tall Tree Wind Farm EES, biodiversity is identified as a 'high priority' matter for assessment.

Aboriginal cultural heritage, surface water and groundwater environments and landscape and visual amenity are identified as 'priority' matters for the EES, reflecting their potential for state or regionally significant effects.

The scoping requirements also identify 'other matters' that are not priorities for detailed assessment but may be important for an integrated assessment and should be considered through a risk-based examination in the EES. These include historic heritage, social and amenity effects, including traffic and transport.

5. Did the public have an opportunity to comment on the scoping requirements?

Yes. Draft scoping requirements for the EES were exhibited on the Engage Victoria website from 24 April 2026 to 15 May 2026. Notice of the draft scoping requirements' exhibition was advertised in metropolitan and local newspapers.

One hundred and thirty-three submissions were received during the public exhibition period, including from individuals, community groups and local businesses.

Redacted versions of the submissions received have been provided to Acciona Energia to inform the ongoing development of the EES.

6. What issues were raised in public submissions on the draft scoping requirements?

Key concerns raised by submitters related to:

- Biodiversity values, including impacts to threatened flora and fauna, including to the Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon, Golden Sun Moth, Striped Legless Lizard and Spiny Rice Flower, and to birds such as the Wedge-tailed Eagle. Several submissions noted the importance of protecting the local ecological character.
- Potential impacts to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, particularly along water courses.
- Bushfire risk, including the impact of the wind farm on the use of Lethbridge Airport for firefighting operations and safety for nearby residents.
- Social impacts including the combined impacts of noise, vibration, shadow flicker visual amenity reduction and possible changes to the agricultural/rural character of the area.
- Operation of the Lethbridge airport, including the economic impact on current airport users.
- Various traffic impacts, including potential for increased traffic volumes and impacts on the structure and safety of local roads.
- Public safety risks and hazards, including potential pollution risks from the wind farm, construction impacts and possible effects from the proposed small quarry.
- Turbine locations, including their impact on threatened species, their placement in relation to residences, including the buffer distance to houses and visual amenity impacts.



7. What revisions have been made to the final scoping requirements?

Most issues raised by submitters were considered already adequately covered by existing requirements.

Minor adjustments have been made to the final scoping requirements to improve clarity and readability.

No changes have been made to the matters considered to be priority matters for assessment. To maintain focus on priority matters, items previously listed individually as 'other matters' in the draft scoping requirements are now grouped under the broader theme of historic heritage, amenity and social impacts. The change is intended to enable flexibility and support the streamlining of EES documents.

Public safety risks, including bushfire and aviation, have moved from the 'other matters' category and are now addressed within the project description section of the scoping requirements. This clarifies that the EES is to canvass the relevant standards, design requirements and management for bushfire and aviation that inform the proponent's approach to the project and its design and operation.

Acciona Energia is intending to seek planning approval for the project following the completion of the EES process. The planning application process will consider impacts of the proposal on aviation safety and bushfire risk.

8. What happens now the Minister has issued the final scoping requirements?

The proponent will proceed with the necessary information-gathering and investigations to inform the EES. This is expected to take a number of months and conclude in early 2027. The proponent will conduct its studies and prepare the EES in close consultation with DTP and the agencies on the Technical Reference Group (TRG), which DTP has put in place for this EES.

The proponent's EES will include a detailed description of the proposed project and an assessment of its potential effects on the environment and approaches to mitigation.

When completed, the EES will be placed on public exhibition, and the Minister for Planning will invite public comments. At the end of the process, the Minister will issue an assessment of the environmental effects of the project. The Minister's assessment will inform statutory/approval decisions needed for the project to proceed.

The proponent has finalised and begun to implement its EES consultation plan to engage with the public and stakeholders about the EES process and its associated investigations, ensuring it provides opportunities for input and feedback on its investigations.

9. When does Acciona expect to publicly exhibit its EES?

When the proponent believes the EES is ready, it will be reviewed by DTP, and the Minister for Planning will decide whether to authorise the EES to be exhibited. If authorised, the EES will be advertised for public comment for no less than 30 business days.

Acciona is planning public exhibition of the EES in early 2027.

The EES and the submissions received will be referred to an inquiry to be appointed under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act). The inquiry will consider all the information before it and will report to the Minister, who will then make an assessment and provide it to decision-makers.

10. Why is an EES required for the project?

An EES is the state's most rigorous and transparent environmental assessment and is typically reserved for those projects that require integrated assessment across a range of potential adverse effects when there is potential for significant impacts. The EES will provide an integrated and transparent examination of the



proposed project and its environmental effects to inform both the proponent's refinement of the proposal and the statutory decisions/ approvals needed for the project to proceed.

In September 2025 the Minister for Planning determined under the EE Act that Acciona should prepare an EES for the Tall Tree Wind Farm project. The project as proposed could have a range of significant impacts, including on the:

- threatened species and ecological communities listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*;
- native vegetation and ecology of the area's terrestrial environments, including conservation reserves;
- values of freshwater environments, including wetlands and creeks and groundwater dependent systems; and
- cultural and landscape values.

11. What about the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act?

The proponent referred the project (EPBC 2025/10238) for a decision from the Commonwealth on whether the proposal is a 'controlled action' requiring assessment and approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

On 29 September 2025, a delegate for the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water determined that the project was a controlled action, as it is likely to have a significant impact on the following matters of national environmental significance (MNES), which are protected under Part 3 of the EPBC Act:

- listed threatened species and communities (section 18 and 18A).

This EES is being undertaken as an accredited process set out in the bilateral agreement under the EPBC Act. It will have to assess the relevant matters of national environmental significance identified in the Commonwealth decision.

In Victoria an EES assessment does not confer approval of a project, rather it informs decision makers when considering project approvals. The EES preparation is a rigorous process, that ends with the Minister for Planning issuing an assessment of the project's effects.

12. What about planning approval under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*?

The Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for planning permit applications of all energy generation facilities that are 1 megawatt or greater.

The proponent has indicated that planning approval will be sought following the EES process.

Proposals for wind energy facilities must be assessed against the requirements of the planning scheme in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Some of the matters for assessment in the EES will inform relevant matters that will be examined through the assessment of the planning permit application.