REFERRAL OF A PROJECT FOR A DECISION ON THE NEED FOR ASSESSMENT UNDER THE ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978

REFERRAL FORM

The *Environment Effects Act 1978* provides that where proposed works may have a significant effect on the environment, either a proponent or a decision-maker may refer these works (or project) to the Minister for Planning for advice as to whether an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required.

This Referral Form is designed to assist in the provision of relevant information in accordance with the *Ministerial Guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978* (Eighth Edition, 2023). Where a decision-maker is referring a project, they should complete a Referral Form to the best of their ability, recognising that further information may need to be obtained from the proponent.

It will generally be useful for a proponent to discuss the preparation of a Referral with the Impact Assessment Unit (IAU) at the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) before submitting the Referral.

If a proponent believes that effective measures to address environmental risks are available, sufficient information could be provided in the Referral to substantiate this view. In contrast, if a proponent considers that further detailed environmental studies will be needed as part of project investigations, a more general description of potential effects and possible mitigation measures in the Referral may suffice.

In completing a Referral Form, the following should occur:

- Mark relevant boxes by changing the font colour of the 'cross' to black and provide additional information and explanation where requested.
- As a minimum, a brief response should be provided for each item in the Referral Form, with a more detailed response provided where the item is of particular relevance. Cross-references to sections or pages in supporting documents should also be provided. Information need only be provided once in the Referral Form, although relevant cross-referencing should be included.
- Responses should honestly reflect the potential for adverse environmental effects. A Referral will only be accepted for processing once IAU is satisfied that it has been completed appropriately.
- Potentially significant effects should be described in sufficient detail for a reasonable conclusion to be drawn on whether the project could pose a significant risk to environmental assets. Responses should include:
 - a brief description of potential changes or risks to environmental assets resulting from the project;
 - available information on the likelihood and significance of such changes;
 - the sources and accuracy of this information, and associated uncertainties.
- Any attachments, maps and supporting reports should be provided in a secure folder with the Referral Form.
- A USB copy of all documents will be needed, especially if the size of electronic documents may cause email difficulties. Individual documents should not exceed 10MB as they will be published on the Department's website.

- A completed form would normally be between 15 and 30 pages in length. Responses should not be constrained by the size of the text boxes provided. Text boxes should be extended to allow for an appropriate level of detail.
- The form should be completed in MS Word and not handwritten.

The party referring a project should submit a covering letter to the Minister for Planning together with a completed Referral Form, attaching supporting reports and other information that may be relevant. This should be sent to:

Postal address

Couriers

Minister for Planning PO Box 500 EAST MELBOURNE VIC 8002 Minister for Planning Level 16, 8 Nicholson Street EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

In addition to the submission of the hardcopy to the Minister, separate submission of an electronic copy of the Referral via email to <u>ees.referrals@delwp.vic.gov.au</u> is required. This will assist the timely processing of a referral.

PART 1 PROPONENT DETAILS, PROJECT DESCRIPTION & LOCATION

1. Information on proponent and person making Referral

Name of Proponent:	Acciona Energy Australia Global Pty Ltd (ACCIONA Energía)
Authorised person for proponent	Jacqueline Pertz
Position:	Project Coordinator
Postal address:	Level 8, 11 Eastern Road, South Melbourne Vic, 3205
Email address:	jacqueline.pertz@acciona.com
Phone number:	(03) 9027 1000
Facsimile number:	N/A
Person who prepared Referral:	Jenny Luk
Position:	Partner
Organisation:	Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd
Postal address:	Level 8, 501 Swanston Street, Victoria, 3000
Email address:	Jenny.luk@erm.com
Dhana mumham	(02) 0000 0011
Facsimile number:	(03) 9696 8022 Acciona Energy Australia Global Pty Ltd (ACCIONA
environmental expertise: (areas of 'in-house' expertise & consultancy firms engaged for project)	Energía) ACCIONA Energía, the world's largest 100% renewable energy company without a fossil fuel legacy, has been operating in Australia for over two decades, and over 30 years worldwide. In Australia, ACCIONA Energía not only develop, but also build, own and operate renewable energy assets. This unique approach demonstrates our long-term commitment to the regions where we work. We collaborate with
	renewable energy, create jobs, and deliver a positive social impact Currently, we have over 1,800MW of renewable energy installed or under construction across Queensland,
	Victoria, NSW and South Australia
	Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd (ERM)
	ERM is a leading provider of environmental, health and safety, risk, and social consulting services. ERM delivers innovative solutions for their clients, helping them manage their challenges and better understand their impacts on the world around them and how to best avoid, minimise and mitigate impacts so projects are developed in an environmental and socially responsible manner. ERM has over 8000 employees working across 40 offices globally, including over 600 in Australia.

	ERM has a long standing and proven history of successful delivery in Australia and globally of major infrastructure projects, including across the renewable energy and offshore oil and gas sectors. ERM has delivered over 1500 renewable energy projects across 100 countries since 2010, including offshore wind in Europe and the Asia Pacific regions.
E e s a F t	ERM's experience relevant to onshore wind includes environmental due diligence and feasibility studies, site selection, environmental and social impact assessments, and environmental scoping, environmental approvals and permitting, environmental compliance and auditing, and terrestrial studies.
	 The following attachments are provided to assist with assessment of the Project: Attachment 1 – Project Figures (ERM, 2025) Attachment 2 – GDA94 Project Coordinates Attachment 3a, 3b and 3c – Ecological Assessment (Ecology & Heritage Partners, 2025). Attachment 4 – Shadow Flicker Assessment (Moir, 2025) Attachment 5 – Noise Assessment (ERM, 2025a). Attachment 6 – Aviation Impact Assessment (Aviation Projects, 2025). Attachment 7 – Heritage Assessment (ERM, 2025b) Attachment 8 – Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (Hansen Partnership, 2025). Attachment 9 – Consultation Report for Referral (Acciona, 2025)

2. Project – brief outline

Project title: Tall Tree Wind Farm

Project location: (describe location with AMG coordinates and attach A4/A3 map(s) showing project site or investigation area, as well as its regional and local context)

The Tall Tree Wind Farm ("the **Project**") is a proposed renewable energy development located within the Golden Plains Shire, south of Meredith, west of Lethbridge, North of Teesdale in Central West Victoria. The Project is within the proposed Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). Refer to **Figure 1** of **Attachment 1** for the Project locality.

The referral area is 5,119.44 hectares (ha) in size, comprising:

- Wind Farm Area of 5,011.48 ha, which includes up to 53 wind turbine generators (**WTGs**).
- Transmission Corridor of 114 ha, to accommodate a 220 kilovolts (kV) overhead transmission line, which follows a corridor of approximately 100 m in width and approximately 11.3 km in length from Lower Plains Road, and a new electrical switchyard to the east of Taylor Road to provide connection to the existing Moorabool to Elaine 220 kV transmission line. The final transmission line easement will be up 60 m within the 100 m corridor.

There are no state government declared roads within the Wind Farm Area; however, the Transmission Corridor intersects the Midland Highway (a declared road) as well as the Geelong – Ballarat Railway Line (freight). Lethbridge Airport is located approximately 5 km east of the Wind

Farm Area. The Bamganie State Forest is directly adjacent to the northern boundary of the Wind Farm Area. In addition, the Boonderoo Nature Conservation Reserve is surrounded by (but not to be included within) the south-eastern section of the Wind Farm Area.

Refer to **Figure 2** of **Attachment 1** for the referral area. The Project coordinates are provided in **Attachment 2** in GDA94.

Short project description (few sentences):

The Project involves the construction of up to 53 WTGs, providing approximately 330 megawatt (**MW**) generation capacity. The WTGs are proposed to have a hub height of up to 169 m and a maximum blade tip height of 250.5 m.

Additional ancillary infrastructure and developments will include access tracks, road upgrades, meteorological monitoring masts, one or more borrow pits, one switchyard, one substation, one battery energy storage system (**BESS**) and operation and maintenance buildings, including a carpark and office facilities.

The final design and location of the components of the Project, including infrastructure and final technology selection, will be subject to further detailed design and assessment.

The Project is targeting construction commencement in 2027 and operations in 2029.

3. Project description

Aim/objectives of the project (what is its purpose / intended to achieve?):

The Project objective is to enhance Victorian and National energy supply through the Australian National Electricity Market (**NEM**) by generating up to 330 MW of renewable energy, and powering approximately 200,000 Victorian homes a year. The Project will contribute to the Victorian Renewable Energy Target of 95% renewable electricity by 2035 and the long-term target of net zero emissions by 2045. It will also support Victoria's 2035 Emissions Reduction Target to reduce Victoria's emissions by 75 – 80% below 2005 levels by 2035.

In addition to strengthening the state's electricity supply and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the Project will provide:

- A diversified income for Project host landowners as well as a neighbour benefits program for residents within 2.5 km of a proposed wind turbine;
- Employment and procurement opportunities for local residents and businesses; and
- A community benefits program, which may include small grants, scholarships for local students and legacy investment programs to support community organisations, groups, events, projects and activities. The wider community benefit program will be designed in consultation with local stakeholders.

Background/rationale of project (describe the context / basis for the proposal, eg. for siting):

The following locational factors were considered when determining the suitability of the Project site:

- Strong & consistent wind source the prevailing wind direction is from the north-west and has an estimated speed of up to 8.5 m/s at a height of 140 m.
- Site suitability the referral area is characterised by a modified landscape with reduced ecological values due to historical land use, including for agriculture, where the land has primarily been utilised for cropping and grazing. The land within the Wind Farm Area is generally flat which supports the suitability of the site to accommodate wind turbines.
- Access to the transport network from surrounding major roads to facilitate construction activities, minimising the use of local roads.
- Ability to implement minimum 1 km buffer between wind turbine locations and all dwellings (unless written consent from landowner is obtained for a reduction in this buffer).

 Proximity to significant grid infrastructure, which will allow for a grid connection to be established. Three 220 kV transmission circuits run south-east to north-west approximately 4 km east, and a 500 kV transmission line runs east to west approximately 7 km south, of the referral area. There are also two existing substations within 20 km of the referral area (Elaine – 220 kV and Moorabool – 500 kV).

Suitability for the area to support a wind energy facility is further reinforced by the Project site being situated within the proposed Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone (**REZ**) with high opportunities and low constraints for renewable energy facilities including wind and solar. Additionally, the Golden Plains Shire Council is currently preparing a plan to set the overall direction and objectives of the Shire to 2050 and beyond, called the Growing Places Strategy (**GPS**). The draft GPS has been released for further community consultation and has identified key potential growth locations focusing on investment in services and infrastructure to support residential and commercial development, which includes the referral area. The draft GPS includes objectives to support renewable energy and climate responsive development.

Main components of the project (nature, siting & approx. dimensions; attach A4/A3 plan(s) of site layout if available):

Permanent infrastructure

The main permanent components of the Project are described below.

Wind turbine generators

The wind farm component of the Project will have a maximum generation capacity of 330 MW and comprise up to 53 WTGs. An indicative turbine layout plan is provided in **Figure 3** of **Attachment 1**. The final number and location of WTGs is subject to further investigation and will consider existing environmental values and sensitivities.

Each WTG will comprise a tower, nacelle, hub and blades, as specified in Table 1 below. The final turbine model and specification will be confirmed during detailed design and procurement.

Item	Maximum specification
Number of turbines	Up to 53
Rotor diameter	Up to 183 m
Blade length	Up to 91.5 m
Uppermost blade tip	Up to 250.5 m
Hub height	Up to 169 m
WTG hardstand	Approximately 3 ha per WTG required for construction

Table 1 WTG specifications

Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Area

The O&M area will be approximately 100 m x 100 m plus a 50 m buffer on each side to allow for batters and asset protection, subject to detailed design, with associated fencing, landscaping and car parking.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

The BESS facility will have a capacity of approximately 800 MWh and will be approximately 200 m x 400 m plus a 35 m buffer on each side to allow for batters and asset protection. The final location and connection configuration for the BESS will be determined with consideration of Medium Voltage (**MV**) & High Voltage (**HV**) electrical configuration and potential areas of inundation following a hydrology and flood assessment.

<u>Substation</u>

The Project may require one on-site substation, anticipated to be 250 m x 250 m plus a 50 m buffer on each side to allow for batters and asset protection, with associated fencing and landscaping.

Switchyard

The Project will include a new electrical switchyard as part of the Transmission Corridor, connecting to the Wind Farm through the 220 kV overhead transmission line. The switchyard is anticipated to be 100 m x 150 m plus a 60 m buffer on each side to allow for batters and asset protection.

Internal access tracks

Access tracks will be required to support construction and ongoing maintenance activities. The access tracks will be approximately 6.5 m in trafficable width plus shoulders, batters and drainage as required. Access tracks will be constructed along existing farm tracks where possible. The location of and requirement for any new access tracks would be determined in consultation with host landowners and the Country Fire Authority (**CFA**).

Site entrance(s)

The main site entrance is currently proposed to be located on Meredith-Shelford Road. The entrance location and the additional site access points will be determined with consideration of a transport route assessment and environmental constraints. Secondary site entrances will also be required and will be confirmed as part of the detailed design development phase.

Underground cabling

Reticulated underground medium voltage electrical cabling will be required between the WTGs and on-site substation. Cables will generally be direct-buried, with individual single-circuit trenches, 0.65 m wide per circuit and 1 m to 1.6 m deep.

Overhead transmission lines

An overhead high voltage electrical transmission line with a length of 11.3 km will be required to connect the wind farm to a new electrical switchyard to the east of Taylor Road to provide connection to the existing Moorabool to Elaine 220 kV transmission line. The final transmission line easement will be up 60 m in width.

Overhead transmission towers

Transmission towers will be required to allow for connection between the new electrical switchyard and wind farm. The transmission towers will be single-circuit steel lattice or steel monopole towers, up to 70 m in height. From the centre of the towers, tower spacing will be approximately 500 m. Final tower type, height and span length is yet to be determined and will be subject to minimising impacts to existing farming operations, vegetation, dwellings, property boundaries and fencing and will comply with the requirements of the *Electricity Safety (General) Regulations 2019*.

Semi-permanent meteorological masts

Up to four meteorological masts, at locations near key WTGs, will be required for a period of up to 5 years from commencement of operations to confirm performance of WTGs. These will be guyed lattice towers each up to 170 m in height, with a small foundation, guy-wire anchor points, and underground communications connections to nearby WTGs.

Temporary infrastructure

The main temporary components of the Project include:

- Construction compound, including site offices, storage and car parking.
- Construction laydown areas.
- Turbine component laydown areas.
- Washdown areas.
- Fencing and hoardings.
- Earthworks and bunding.
- One on-site borrow pit for concrete aggregates, earthworks and pavement materials.

- Potentially one off-site borrow pit.
- Up to four guyed lattice meteorological mast structures (each up to 170 m in height).
- One or more on-site concrete batching plants may be constructed. The need for a concrete batching plant will be determined in the design development phase and will consider the outcomes of the traffic impact assessment and construction methodology.

Ancillary components of the project (e.g. upgraded access roads, new high-pressure gas pipeline; off-site resource processing):

A traffic impact assessment has not yet been undertaken. However, the Project will require the upgrade of some local public roads to support the construction phase. The identification of roads requiring upgrades will be determined as part of a traffic impact assessment in the planning phase, with consultation with the relevant landowners and road management authorities to follow.

The Project may require an off-site borrow pit in addition to an on-site borrow pit. Impact assessments associated with the potential effects on local amenity (noise, dust, traffic), groundwater, cultural heritage and ecology will be determined in the planning phase.

Key construction activities:

Construction of the Project is anticipated to commence in 2027 and is expected to last for 24-36 months, with a targeted operational date of 2029.

Construction activities expected to support the delivery of the Project include:

- Public road upgrades and establishment of the site entrances to accommodate Oversize Overmass (**OSOM**) vehicles.
- Site establishment works including temporary site fencing and hoarding, site offices, storage and construction compound.
- Displaying construction, directional and business identification signs.
- Preparatory work including establishment of environment and traffic controls, designated 'no-go' zones and installation of permanent fencing and signage.
- Establishment of erosion and sediment control measures across the site.
- Construction, protection, modification, removal or relocation of utility services.
- Clearing and grubbing of vegetation where permanent and temporary works are proposed.
- Establishment of site borrow pit.
- Earthworks including for construction of internal roads, drainage, laydown areas, wind turbine foundations and assembly areas.
- Pavement construction including for internal roads, laydown areas, and wind turbine assembly areas.
- Drainage construction including for roads, waterways and site flood mitigation.
- Structures construction including wind turbine generator foundations and any major culverts.
- Delivery of wind turbine generator components.
- Assembly and erection of wind turbine generators.
- Construction of electrical reticulation from wind turbines to the Project substation, including trenching and directional drilling for underground cabling, and erecting transmission towers for overhead cabling.
- Construction of permanent O&M facilities and site office.
- Construction of the BESS facility, substation and switching station, including earthworks bench, pavement, drainage, concrete foundations, steel structures and all electrical equipment installation.
- Construction of overhead transmission infrastructure including concrete foundations, steel towers and overhead lines.
- Removal of development stage meteorological mast
- Installation of semi-permanent meteorological mast(s)
- Quality assurance inspections and testing activities including geotechnical testing, permanent works materials sampling and testing.
- Commissioning and energisation activities.
- Removal of temporary works and construction facilities.
- Reinstatement of temporarily disturbed land.

It is expected that construction activities will be undertaken within 36 months with a workforce of approximately 270 full-time equivalent employees directly engaged on the Project.

Key operational activities:

Operation, maintenance and monitoring of the Project includes the following activities:

- Maintenance and remote monitoring of the Project's permanent infrastructure.
- Ongoing maintenance of relevant facilities on-site, predominantly associated with scheduled maintenance events or the ad hoc repair and replacement of equipment, structural components, access tracks, buildings and plant, control systems, connections, and cabling.
- Undertaking relevant administrative tasks.
- Ongoing environmental monitoring and reporting for the Project in accordance with the relevant approval conditions.

The Project is anticipated to have an operational life of 30 years based on current design life. It is expected that operational activities will be undertaken by 10 to 12 full-time equivalent employees.

Key decommissioning activities (if applicable):

At the end of its operational life, the Project will either extend its operational life or be decommissioned. Where the operational life is extended, the process of re-powering the Project will be subject to any relevant planning approval processes and the upgrading of project infrastructure, facilities, and equipment requirements.

Decommissioning activities will adopt a similar method to those utilised in the construction phase of the Project. When decommissioning occurs:

- Key stakeholders and landholders will be consulted.
- All above ground structures not required for the ongoing agricultural use of the land will be removed and the land rehabilitated to ensure it can be returned to agricultural use.
- Access tracks and hardstands which are not requested by the landowner to be retained will be removed and land rehabilitated and returned to agricultural use.
- Associated below ground infrastructure, including cabling and the WTG foundations, would be left *in situ* below a certain depth and appropriately managed to avoid further disturbance and minimise clearing of revegetated areas.
- Rehabilitated areas will be adequately graded to reflect the slope of the surrounding area and to mitigate risks of soil erosion.
- All materials removed will be sorted for reuse and/or recycling where possible or adequately disposed in accordance with local waste policies and regulations in place.

The Project will comply with any relevant requirements for decommissioning as stipulated under any planning approval or subsequent permit or licence that may be required. The decommissioning process will be undertaken in accordance with best practice methods available at the time of decommissioning. The decommissioning process will focus on the principles of repurpose, reuse, and recycling.

Is the project an element or stage in a larger project?

X No **X** Yes If yes, please describe: the overall project strategy for delivery of all stages and components; the concept design for the overall project; and the intended scheduling of the design and development of project stages).

The Project is not part of an element or stage in a larger project.

Is the project related to any other past, current or mooted proposals in the region? No Yes If yes, please identify related proposals.

What is the estimated capital expenditure for development of the project? Preliminary figures are estimated in the range of \$990 million for total capital expenditure. 7

4. Project alternatives

Brief description of key alternatives considered to date (eg. locational, scale or design alternatives. If relevant, attach A4/A3 plans):

ACCIONA Energía is committed to avoiding and/or minimising impact to areas of environmental and cultural heritage value, to maximise ongoing agricultural use of the land and avoid potential impacts to the surrounding area and local community (as far as practicable).

Wind Farm Area

The Wind Farm Area has been through iterative layouts including a reduction in the number of turbines from the original scope of 60 turbines. The Project land has been reduced by more than 2,400 hectares, including removal of turbines and supporting infrastructure from identified high value vegetation and habitat areas and in efforts to reduce amenity impacts to the surrounding townships.

Transmission Corridor

With regards to the proposed Transmission Corridor, the proponent explored numerous transmission route options. The selection of the preferred Transmission Corridor in this referral was informed through consultation with proposed landholders and consideration of engineering design and environmental investigations. The alignment of the Transmission Corridor originally avoided the Rural Conservation Zone – Schedule 3 (**RCZ3**), to the east of Taylor Road. However, following consultation with potential landholders and due to presence of an existing dam, the alignment was relocated to intersect RCZ3 (refer to **Figure 4** in **Attachment 1**). The route within the RCZ3 follows lower topography, reducing visual impact compared to the original route.

Brief description of key alternatives to be further investigated (if known):

No further alternatives are being investigated.

5. Proposed exclusions

Statement of reasons for the proposed exclusion of any ancillary activities or further project stages from the scope of the project for assessment:

A temporary meteorological mast (met mast) has been installed on the Project site for the purposes of collecting wind and weather data. This testing is common for most wind farm projects and is for assessing the wind resource and optimising turbine placement. The met mast has been installed on-site since 2023; a planning permit pursuant to Clause 52.32-6 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme will be sought if the mast remains in place beyond three years.

Early works geotechnical surveys are excluded from this referral as these activities are minor, temporary and unlikely to result in significant environmental effects. The geotechnical investigations will have limited ground disturbance, localised borehole drilling and test pits to assess subsurface conditions. The works do not involve significant earthworks, vegetational removal or long-term land disturbance. Prior to commencing, the proponent will consider the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 Technical Advisory Note: Geotechnical Investigations* and/or seek relevant approvals as necessary.

6. Project implementation

Implementing organisation (ultimately responsible for project, ie. not contractor):

Acciona Energy Australia Global Pty Ltd

Implementation timeframe:

The current proposed timeline for the construction, commissioning and operation of the Project is provided below. This timeline is subject to change and dependant on the timing and outcomes of the approvals processes (including referral outcomes).

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Q3 2027 Constructi duration	on commences, with construction period of 24-36 months
2029 Commenc deploymen	e operation (30 year operational life, with potential for re- nt)

Proposed staging (if applicable):

Not applicable.

7. Description of proposed site or area of investigation

Has a preferred site for the project been selected?

No Yes If no, please describe area for investigation. If yes, please describe the preferred site in the next items (if practicable).

General description of preferred site, (including aspects such as topography/landform, soil types/degradation, drainage/ waterways, native/exotic vegetation cover, physical features, built structures, road frontages; attach ground-level photographs of site, as well as A4/A3 aerial/satellite image(s) and/or map(s) of site & surrounds, showing project footprint):

The referral area is situated within the proposed Central Highlands REZ, between the township of Meredith to the north, Teesdale to the south, and Lethbridge to the east. The Wind Farm Area is bounded by the Midland Highway to the east and by Bannockburn-Shelford Road to the south. The Geelong – Ballarat Railway Line (freight) is located to the east and is intersected by the Transmission Corridor. The Lethbridge Airport is located approximately 5 km east of the referral area.

The Project is situated in a rural and lifestyle farming area, characterised by mid-sized pastoral holdings and some more intensive agricultural operations. The majority of the referral area is cleared and predominantly flat with some undulation, with a topography ranging between 120 m to 320 m AHD. The referral area has been used extensively for sheep grazing and other agricultural practices, however, patches of high-quality native grassland are present. Built structures are scarcely distributed through the Project site and its surrounds. These consist primarily of agricultural infrastructure such as silos, sheds and rural dwellings.

The referral area spans across two bioregions, the Victorian Volcanic Plain and the Central Victorian Uplands. Native vegetation is largely confined to the riparian corridors of Wilson Creek and Woodbourne Creek, as well as some areas of native grassland. Paddock trees and pockets of vegetation are also scattered across the landscape, particularly in the north and north-east of both the Wind Farm Area and Transmission Corridor.

The Bamganie State Forest is directly adjacent to the northern boundary of the Wind Farm area. In addition, the Boonderoo Nature Conservation Reserve, a grassland reserve, is surrounded by (but not to be included within) the south-eastern section of the Wind Farm Area. The Brisbane Ranges National Park is located approximately 10 km and 4.1 km to the east of the Wind Farm Area and Transmission Corridor respectively.

Various parts of the referral area intersect with areas of cultural heritage sensitivity associated with waterways, including the Native Hut Creek and Leigh River, which meander through the centre of the referral area and along the western boundary, respectively.

The Wind Farm Area and the majority of the Transmission Corridor contain regions of low probability for acid sulphate soils (**ASS**), and some parts of the Transmission Corridor from the Midland Highway to the proposed switchyard have extremely low probability of ASS occurrence. Further assessment will be undertaken to confirm the potential for any highly erodible soils that could be affected by the Project.

Site area (if known):

Total referral area is: 5,119.44 ha, comprising:

- Wind Farm Area: 5,011.48 ha
- Transmission Corridor: 107.96 ha

Route length (for linear infrastructure) approximately 11.3 km long within the Transmission Corridor.

Current land use and development:

The predominant land use is cleared agricultural land utilised for cropping and grazing. Other uses include rural-residential land and publicly-owned land including road corridors. The predominant zoning within the referral area is the Farming Zone (**FZ**). The referral area also includes:

- Special Use Zone Schedule 1 (SUZ1) to provide for the use of land for refuse disposal.
- Transport Zone 1 State Transport Infrastructure (TRZ1) and Transport Zone 2 Principal Road Network (TRZ2) to provide for an integrated and sustainable transport system.
- Rural Conservation Zone Schedule 3 (RCZ3) to preserve the natural heritage and biodiversity values of the Sheoaks-Steiglitz area including remnant native vegetation on private land.

There are multiple land parcels in separate ownerships within the referral area. The proposed overhead transmission lines are located along roadsides and across paddocks, Geelong – Ballarat Railway Line (**TRZ1**) and Midland Highway (**TRZ2**).

Description of local setting (eg. adjoining land uses, road access, infrastructure, proximity to residences & urban centres):

At its closest point, the Project is located approximately 70 km west of Melbourne and 35 km south of Ballarat. The area within and immediately surrounding the referral area is moderately populated with townships located approximately 2-7 km of the site, including Lethbridge (population 1,181), Teesdale (population 2,308) and Meredith (population 821). These local townships include residential areas, educational facilities and recreational facilities. The largest town within proximity of the site is Bannockburn, which is located 12 km south-east of the referral area and has a population of approximately 6,470 people.

The Project is situated in a rural and lifestyle farming area, characterised by mid-sized pastoral holdings and some more intensive agricultural operations. There are no state government declared roads within the Wind Farm Area, but the Transmission Corridor intersects the Midland Highway (a declared road) and the Geelong – Ballarat Railway Line (freight) to the east. The Lethbridge Airport is located approximately 5 km east of the referral area.

Planning context (eg. strategic planning, zoning & overlays, management plans):

The Victoria Planning Provisions (Clause 73.03) define a Wind Energy Facility as:

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.

Under Clause 72.01-1, 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 an:

- Energy generation facility with an installed capacity of 1 megawatt or greater.
- Utility installation used to:
 - Transmit or distribute electricity.

Proposals for wind energy facilities must be assessed against the planning policy framework and other matters specified in Section 60 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The use and development of a Wind Energy Facility is subject to the provisions of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme.

State Planning Policy Framework

Key clauses relevant to the referral area include, but are not limited to:

- Clause 12 Environmental and Landscape values, including considerations for the protection of biodiversity and significant environments and landscapes, and native vegetation management.
- Clause 13 Environmental Risks and Amenity, which seeks to ensure best practice environmental management and risk management are adopted to avoid or minimise environmental degradation and hazards. The clause also includes considerations for the management of natural hazards and climate change, erosion and landslip, noise abatement, and bushfire risk.
- Clause 14 Natural Resource Management, which seeks to assist in the conservation and appropriate use of natural resources to support sustainable development and environmental quality. Considerations include the protection of agricultural land, catchment planning and management, and water quality.
- Clause 15 Built Environment and Heritage, including the relevant considerations for heritage conservation and Aboriginal cultural heritage and post-contact heritage.
- Clause 17 Economic Development, including the relevant considerations for a diversified economy in the Barwon region.
- Clause 18 Transport, including the considerations for integrating land uses with transport and car parking.
- Clause 19 Infrastructure, including Clause 19.01 Energy, establishes an objective to promote the provision of renewable energy whilst ensuring that appropriate siting and design considerations are met.

Zones and Overlays

Refer to Figure 4 (Planning Zones) and Figure 5 (Planning Overlays) of Attachment 1.

The referral area is affected by the following planning controls under the Golden Plains Planning Scheme:

- Zones
 - Farming Zone (**FZ**)
 - Special Use Zone 1 (SUZ1)
 - Transport 1 Zone State Transport Infrastructure (TRZ1)
 - Transport 2 Zone Principal Transport Network (TRZ2)
 - Rural Conservation Zone Schedule 2 (RCZ2)
 - Rural Conservation Zone Schedule 3 (RCZ3)
- Overlays
 - Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 (ESO1)
 - Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 2 (ESO2)
 - Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 3 (ESO3)
 - Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2 (VPO2)
 - Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 16 (SLO16)
 - Floodway Overlay (FO)
 - Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO)
 - Salinity Management Overlay (SMO)
 - Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO).

Particular Provisions

Pending the final design for the Project, permits maybe required to facilitate the Project under the following particular provisions:

- Clause 52.02 Easements, restrictions, and reserves.
- Clause 52.02 Signs.
- Clause 52.06 Car Parking.
- Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation.
- Clause 52.29 Land adjacent to the Principal Road Network.
- Clause 52.32 Wind Energy Facility.
- Clause 53.22 Significant Economic Development.

Incorporated Documents

The Project Site is not affected by any Incorporated Documents.

Local government area(s):

• Golden Plains Shire.

8. Existing environment

Overview of key environmental assets/sensitivities in project area and vicinity (cf. general description of project site/study area under section 7):

Recent desktop and site assessments undertaken include:

- Ecological Assessment (EHP, 2025) (Attachment 3a, 3b and 3c).
- Shadow Flicker Assessment (Moir, 2025) (Attachment 4).
- Preliminary Noise Impact Assessment (ERM, 2025a) (Attachment 5).
- Preliminary Aviation Impact Assessment (Aviation Projects, 2025) (Attachment 6).
- Preliminary Heritage Assessment (ERM, 2025b) (Attachment 7).
- Preliminary Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (Hansen Partnership, 2025) (Attachment 8).

The ecological field assessment program detailed in the Ecological Assessment (EHP, 2025) commenced in August 2023 and is continuing as part of the broader ecological assessment program. The field assessments undertaken include:

- Bird Utilisation Surveys.
- Brolga Level 1 and Level 2 assessments.
- Habitat Hectare Assessment.
- Migratory Birds, Owls and Swift Parrot surveys.
- Microbat surveys using Songmeter units.
- Targeted fauna surveys for Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impact*), Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis major*), Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*), and Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*).
- Targeted flora surveys for Matted Flax-lily (*Dianella amoena*) and Spiny Rice-flower (*Pimelea spinescens subsp. spinescens*).

The assessment findings are summarised below.

Ecological values

Key ecological findings within the referral area include:

- The referral area spans across two bioregions: Victorian Volcanic Plain (**VVP**) and Central Victorian Uplands (**CVU**).
- Four waterways (Leigh River, Woodbourne Creek, Wilson Creek, and Native Hut Creek) run through or directly adjacent to the referral area and support several riparian and creekline habitat types.

- A mix of cropping and grazing occurs throughout the majority of the referral area, with some properties supporting remnant native grassland and woodland, planted vegetation and shelterbelts.
- The Ecological Assessment including site survey (EHP, 2025) identified eleven (11) bioregionally endangered Ecological Vegetation Communities (**EVCs**) within the referral area including:
 - Lowland Forest (EVC 16)
 - Grassy Dry Forest (EVC 22)
 - Valley Grassy Forest (EVC 47)
 - Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55)
 - Creekline Grassy Woodland (EVC 68)
 - Plains Grassy Wetlands (EVC 125)
 - Creekline Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 164)
 - Plains Grassland (EVC 132)
 - o Grassy Woodland (EVC 175)
 - Stream Bank Shrubland (EVC 851)
 - Escarpment Shrubland (EVC 895).
- Eight-two (82) threatened flora species of conservation significance either recorded or with the potential to occur within 10 km of the referral area. This includes:
 - 4 species with only an EPBC listing.
 - o 22 species with both FFG and EPBC listing.
 - 56 species with only an FFG listing.
- Fifty-six (56) threatened fauna species of conservation significance either recorded or with the potential to occur within 10 km of the referral area. This includes:
 - 5 species with only an EPBC listing.
 - 26 species with both FFG and EPBC listing.
 - 25 species with only an FFG listing.
- Four (4) migratory species of conservation significance have been recorded within 10 km of the referral area. This includes:
 - Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) Vulnerable
 - o Curlew Sandpiper (Calidris ferruginea) Critically Endangered
 - o Swift Parrot (Lathamus discolor) Critically Endangered
 - White-throated Needle-tail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) Vulnerable.
- Five (5) Threatened Ecological Communities (**TECs**) were modelled to occur within 10 km of the referral area, of these TECs, one TEC was recorded to occur within the referral area:
 - Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain (NTGVVP).
- One (1) significant ecological community listed as threatened under the FFG Act was recorded to occur within the referral area including:
 - o Western (Basalt) Plains Grasslands Community.

Heritage

Cultural Heritage (First Nations)

The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (**WTOAC**) is the Registered Aboriginal Party (**RAP**) of the entirety of the referral area. The site is traversed by various areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity, particularly along existing waterways including the Native Hut Creek and Leigh River, which meander through the centre of the Wind Farm Area and along the western boundary respectively. Additionally, the Transmission Corridor intersects areas of cultural heritage sensitivity at two locations, to the east of Lower Plains Road and west of Vicary Road (refer to **Figure 6** in **Attachment 1**).

There are 54 registered Aboriginal places on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (**VAHR**) within 5 km of the referral area. Of these, five (5) are located within the referral area. The registered places within the referral area consist of artefact scatters made predominantly of silcrete and quartzite.

Historic Heritage

Version 7: March 2020

There is one registered historic heritage place on the Victorian Heritage Inventory (**VHI**) located within the Transmission Corridor, VHI *Taylors Road, Meredith – Section of Cobble Road* (H7722-0038). The VHI registration relates to remnants of a cobbled road along the current Taylor Road south of Meredith.

No Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) listings or Local Planning Scheme Heritage Overlays (HO) are located within the referral area. The Wind Farm Area abuts a locally listed heritage place "HO55 - Native Creek No. 1 Run (former) and Moranghurk Woolshed (former), "Morbrook" 1820 Meredith-Shelford Road" to the north-east and "HO31 Golf Hill Homestead and Outbuildings, 1718 Bannockburn-Shelford Road, Bannockburn" to the south-west.

Overall, the remainder of the referral area is considered to have low potential for historic heritage places.

Refer to Figure 7 in Attachment 1.

Visual and Amenity

Landscape and visual

The referral area is situated in a rural and lifestyle farming area, characterised by mid-sized pastoral holdings and some more-intensive agricultural operations. The majority of the referral area is cleared and is predominantly flat with some undulation through the site, and basalt deposits on the surface.

Sensitive landscapes in proximity to the referral area include natural reserves (Bamganie State Forest and Boonderoo Nature Conservation Reserve), Bunjil's lookout (tourist attraction in Maude, approximately 9.8 km from the Wind Farm Area) and residential townships including Meredith to the north, Lethbridge to the east, and Teesdale to the south.

The referral area is affected by, or is in proximity to, multiple schedules of the Significant Landscape Overlay (**SLO**), which identify and protect landscapes of environmental, cultural, and visual significance (refer to **Figure 5** of **Attachment 1**) including:

- Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 16, located in the south-eastern portion of the Wind Farm Area, associated with the Leigh River as it forms part of the connected system of rivers within the Barwon catchment.
- Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 18, located 860 m north of the Transmission Corridor and is associated with the Moorabool River as it forms part of the connected system of rivers within the Barwon catchment.
- Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 16, located 5.5 km west of the Wind Farm Area, associated with the Yarrowee River.

Noise

The area surrounding the Project is of rural character with a number of townships in proximity including Lethbridge, Teesdale, Shelford and Meredith, located approximately 2-7 km from the referral area.

A number of operating wind farms are located in proximity to the referral area including the Mt Mercer Wind Farm, 8.6 km north-west and the Lal Lal Wind Farm, 10 km north from the closest point of the referral area. The Golden Plains Wind Farm, which is under construction, is located 10 km west of the Wind Farm Area. Any cumulative noise impacts during construction and operation will be confirmed as part of the pre-construction noise assessment as required under the *Environment Protection Regulations 2021*.

Aviation

Lethbridge Airport is the nearest aerodrome to the Project. It is not certified, therefore it is not subject to regulatory oversight by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (**CASA**). The closest certified

airports are the Avalon Airport (**YMAV**) and Ballarat Airport (**YBLT**) which are located 56 km from the referral area.

Potential aviation impacts include the introduction of physical structures (i.e., WTGs, transmission towers, met masts) and increased low-intensity turbulence down-wind (from WTGs) which may affect low-flying aircraft.

The Project will comply with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (**CASA**) regulations including the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (Cth) relating to obstacle height limits and electromagnetic interference guidelines.

9. Land availability and control

Is the proposal on, or partly on, Crown land?

 \times No \times Yes If yes, please provide details.

The majority of the referral area is located on freehold land, with approximately 6 ha (or 1.36 %) of the referral area located on Crown land (see **Figure 8** in **Attachment 1**).

Current land tenure (provide plan, if practicable):

The majority of the referral area is located on freehold land, with some small areas of Crown land, road and rail corridors, and other publicly owned land for utilities, reserves and recreation areas (refer to **Figure 8** of **Attachment 1**).

Intended land tenure (tenure over or access to project land):

There are 19 residential dwellings within the referral area. Project land requirements will be secured via commercial land lease/licence agreements applied to private freehold land. The agreements will provide for long-term lease and easement arrangements that will extend for the operational life of the wind farm.

Approvals to construct cabling and access tracks over/across existing road reserves will be obtained from the relevant authority as required when the Project layout is finalised.

Other interests in affected land (eg. easements, native title claims):

Native title rights and interests, as recognised in determination VCD2022/002, are held by the Wadawurrung People and administered by the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. ACCIONA Energía will comply with applicable obligations under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) and the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* (Vic). The structure, nature, and requirement for these obligations remains subject to additional legal assessment and ongoing engagement with First Peoples State Relations (**FPSR**) and Traditional Owners being the Wadawurrung People.

Various utility easements may be located within the referral area. Opportunities for co-locating Project infrastructure will be explored during future stages of design development.

10. Required approvals

State and Commonwealth approvals required for project components (if known):

In addition to this referral, the Project will seek the following approvals to facilitate the development and delivery of the Project:

Commonwealth

• Referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* for a decision as to whether the Project is a 'controlled action' requiring environmental assessment and approval.

State

- Planning approval pursuant to the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (P&E Act).
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan (**CHMP**) pursuant to the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* 2006.

Additional works permits and approvals for the development may also be required under the following legislation:

• Licence pursuant to the *Crown (Land Reserves) Act 1978* where works are required on Crown land.

- Compliance with *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* and Future Act Assessment procedure in addition to the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010.*
- Permit or consent under the *Heritage Act 2017* for management of impacts to historic heritage.
- Development licence pursuant to the *Environment Protection Act 2017* for disturbance / removal of contaminated material and soil.
- Permit pursuant to the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* for taking of wildlife and removal of flora species.
- Authorisation pursuant to the Wildlife Act 1988 for taking of wildlife.
- Permit or consent pursuant to the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* for weed and pest animal management.
- Permit pursuant to the *Water Act 1989* for any works within 20 metres of a designated waterway.
- Consent pursuant to the Road Management Act 2004 for works within a road reserve.
- Consent pursuant to the Electricity Safety Act 1998.
- Electricity Industry Act 2000 for license to generate, distribute and sell electricity.
- *Land Act 1958* for any works on unreserved Crown land and freehold land.
- Consent pursuant to the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (Cth) for wind turbines located near airports, flight paths, or radar installations.
- Work authority pursuant to the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* for extractive activities.

Have any applications for approval been lodged?

 \mathbf{X} No \mathbf{X} Yes If yes, please provide details.

Approval agency consultation (agencies with whom the proposal has been discussed):

- State and Federal Members of Parliament
- Golden Plains Shire Council
- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- Department of Transport and Planning Planning and Impact Assessment teams
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
- Parks Victoria Grampians Region
- Country Fire Authority (**CFA**)
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)

Other agencies consulted: Nil

PART 2 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

11. Potentially significant environmental effects

Overview of potentially significant environmental effects (identify key potential effects and comment on their significance and likelihood, as well as key uncertainties):

Early Project design has sought to avoid and mitigate impacts to known environmental values and sensitivities. It is anticipated that potential significant adverse environmental effects can be further avoided, minimised, or mitigated through detailed technical assessments that will inform the refinement of the Project's final design and siting. Where residual impacts remain, appropriate mitigation and offset measures will be identified in accordance with relevant environmental policies and framework

The key anticipated and potential effects from the Project are described below.

Native vegetation and threatened flora and fauna

Native vegetation is largely confined to riparian corridors, though paddock trees, patches of native grassland, and pockets of vegetation are scattered across the referral area, particularly in the north and north-east of the Wind Farm Area and Transmission Corridor.

A total of 489.59 hectares of native vegetation was recorded within the referral area, with up to 74.263 ha of this total estimated to be removed for the Project, representative of:

- 67.79 ha of native vegetation patches comprising of eight (8) Ecological Vegetation Communities (EVCs), grouped by conservation status as follows:
 - o Endangered -
 - Creekline Grassy Woodland (EVC 68).
 - Plains Grassland (EVC 132).
 - Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55).
 - Grassy Woodland (EVC 175).
 - Plains Grassy Wetlands (EVC 125).
 - o Vulnerable -
 - Valley Grassy Forest (EVC 47).
 - Creekline Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 164).
 - o Depleted
 - Grassy Dry Forest (EVC 22).
- 225 Large Trees in patches.
- 128 scattered trees (96 Large and 32 Small).

Many of these EVCs have a Bioregional Conservation Status of Endangered. Such vegetation may be impacted by the creation of access roads to fields and paddocks, and by widening of roads to accommodate large vehicles during construction and for delivery of turbines. Small patches requiring clearing have potential to add up to a significant amount of native vegetation loss (i.e. > 10 ha). While the proposed transmission corridor has substantial scope for avoidance of impacts, indirect losses may be required for reduction of bushfire hazards beneath the proposed transmission lines.

A total of 171.75 ha of the NTGVVP ecological community was recorded within the referral area. The ecological assessment estimates that the Project would result in direct impact of up to 16.31 ha of the NTGVVP community, with 155.44 ha being retained.

In relation to flora, efforts have been undertaken to avoid impacts to 35 FFG Act listed Tough Scurf-pea specimens, over 100 Small Scurf-pea specimens, 25 Austral Tobacco specimens, Fragrant Saltbush as well as several State-protected Jersey Cudweed and orchids. However, two (2) FFG Act listed flora species are proposed to be impacted by the Project including:

- Small Scurf-pea (Cullen parvum)
- Jersey Cudweed (Laphanigium luteoalbum).

In relation to fauna, habitat of two (2) FFG-Act and EPBC-Act listed species are expected to be significantly impacted directly by the Project based on the current design, including:

- Up to 3.76 ha of Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*) habitat.
- Up to 84.31 ha of Golden Sun Moth (Synemon plana) habitat.

There is not considered to be any additional indirect loss or impact to the habitat of these species. Impact will be mitigated through the protection and enhancement of retained areas of confirmed habitat.

Where effects on threatened flora and/or fauna cannot be avoided, best-practice environmental management measures would be detailed in the Project's Construction Environmental Management Plan (**CEMP**) to further avoid and mitigate impacts by ensuring protection of retained vegetation prior to and during construction. Examples of potential mitigation measures are discussed further in Section 12 of this referral form.

While various threatened species and communities are recorded within the referral area, micrositing of infrastructure may avoid significant loss of habitat. It is considered unlikely that a significant proportion of a remaining habitat or population of species listed under the FFG Act would experience long-term impacts due to the Project. Bat and bird FFG Act listed species recorded within, or considered likely to use the Project site, were found to have a low-moderate risk of impact due to turbine strike. However, the construction of the wind farm is not anticipated to result in the loss of a genetically important population of these species. Upon confirmation of the development footprint at the detailed design phase development, further site utilisation assessment and targeted surveys will be conducted to inform the final design and siting of the Project to allow for the avoidance and mitigation of any significant environmental matters.

Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)

There are two (2) flora species listed under both the FFG Act and EPBC Act that are considered to have the highest likelihood of occurrence within the referral area and therefore may be subject to impacts by the Project:

- Matted Flax-lily (Dianella amoena).
- Spiny Rice-flower (Pimelea spinescens subsp. spinescnes).

Targeted surveys were undertaken for the Matted Flax-Lily and Spiny Rice-flower, however, neither species were found to be present. Thus, based on the results of the targeted surveys and the condition of potential habitats present, both species are considered unlikely to be present within the referral area. However, further assessments for the Spiny Rice-flower are planned for Winter 2025.

Assessments undertaken so far have found suitable foraging habitat within the referral area for the following nine (9) fauna species listed under the FFG Act and/or EPBC Act:

- Brown Treecreeper (Climacteris picumnus) EPBC listed.
- Blue-winged Parrot (*Neophema chrysostoma*) EPBC listed.
- Latham's Snipe (Gallinago hardwickii) EPBC listed.
- Striped Legless Lizard (Delma impar) FFG and EPBC listed.
- Growling Grass Frog (Litoria raniformis major) FFG and EPBC listed.
- Golden Sun Moth (Synemon plana) FFG and EPBC listed.
- Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*) FFG and EPBC listed.
- Gang-gang Cockatoo (Callocephalon fimbriatum) FFG and EPBC listed.
- Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata*) EPBC listed.

There are four (4) migratory species listed under the EPBC Act that are either recorded or have the potential to occur within 10 km of the referral area including:

- Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) Vulnerable
- Curlew Sandpiper (Calidris ferruginea) Critically Endangered
- Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) Critically Endangered
- White-throated Needle-tail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) Vulnerable.

The risk to migratory species is considered to be low due to the lack of habitat within and around the referral area. Habitat assessments and targeted surveys found that the proposed Wind Farm

Area is not located between, or in proximity, to either migratory bird feeding areas, or important, regularly used, feeding and roosting sites. While it is possible that small numbers of migratory birds could fly over the Wind Farm Area during migration, these shorebirds typically fly between 0.5 to 6 km in elevation, well above the tip of the proposed turbines. Owing to these factors, it is considered that the Project is unlikely to have a significant impact on any migratory species.

Five (5) Threatened Ecological Communities (**TECs**) were modelled to occur within 10 km of the referral area, of these TECs one TEC was recorded to occur within the referral area:

• Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain (NTGVVP).

For threatened fauna, the primary potential impact pathways are considered to be:

- Collision risk with and/or barrier effects of WTGs.
- Reduction of habitat through removal of native vegetation for access roads and along the transmission corridor, clearing and levelling of sites, excavations and general construction activities.

For threatened flora and TECs, the key potential impact pathways are:

- Removal for creation of or widening of access roads (direct).
- Reduction in habitat from creation of or widening of access roads (indirect).

While isolated impacts on native vegetation are likely to be small, cumulative impacts have the potential to be considered significant and to trigger the need for further assessment, especially if such vegetation is found to represent a TEC.

Where effects on threatened species and communities cannot be avoided, best-practice environmental management measures would be detailed in the Project's Construction Environmental Management Plan (**CEMP**) and Operational Environmental Management Plan (**OEMP**). Specific mitigation measures may be developed to address any residual effects.

Bird utilisation surveys (BUS)

Ninety-eight (98) bird species were recorded, consisting of 7,621 individuals. This included:

- two EPBC Act listed species: Blue-winged Parrot (Vulnerable; recorded within the referral area) and Brown Treecreeper (Vulnerable; recorded adjacent to the referral area), and
- one FFG Act listed species recorded within the referral area (Eastern Great Egret; Vulnerable).

The majority of birds recorded (78.4%) were either observed on the ground or flying below the Rotor Swept Area (**RSA**) of 54.5 to 250.5 m. A further 19.2% did not have their height recorded as they were obscured from vision, with no birds recorded flying above the RSA. 2.4% of birds recorded were within the RSA and consisted of:

- Little Raven (Corvus mellori).
- Brown Falcon (Falco berigora).
- Nakeen Kestrel (Falco cenchroides).
- Australia Pelican (Pelecanus conspicillatus).
- Peregrine Falcon (Falc preregrinus).
- Brown Goshawk (Accipiter fasciatus).
- Blue-winged Parrot (Neophema chrysostoma).
- Straw-necked Ibis (Threskiornis spinicollis).
- Wedge-tailed Eagle (Aquila audax).
- Galah (Eolophus roseicapilla).
- Long-billed Corella (*Cacatua tenuirostris*).

Wedge-tailed Eagle and other raptors are likely to fly at and above RSA when foraging, while other birds, such as Blue-winged Parrot, Galah and Little Raven, tend to fly in the RSA as they move daily between roosts and feeding areas.

Further to this, EPBC-Act listed Blue-winged Parrot, Gang-gang Cockatoo and Latham's Snipe are known to fly within the RSA, and while turbines have been configured to reduce the risk of collision to these species, overall, there is a low to moderate risk of turbine collision. The

configuration of the WTGs has been refined through iterative design to avoid and minimise impacts to avifauna where practicable. This has included the relocation or removal of turbines and associated infrastructure from areas of higher ecological sensitivity, such as forested habitat and proximity to known raptor nests, and the implementation of buffers (generally 200 m) around high-risk features. The layout also sought to reduce turbine density in the north-western portion of the referral area, where bird foraging and flight activity is greatest. These measures collectively reduce the likelihood of significant avifauna disturbance or collision.

Refer to the Ecological Assessment Report (EHP, 2025) (Attachment 3a, Section 3.7, pg. 89 to 97) for further details on the results of the bird utilisation surveys.

Bat utilisation surveys

Nocturnal and bat detector surveys were undertaken across the referral area, with eight Songmeters deployed over 59 nights (totalling 472 night-surveys) across October to November 2023, and January to February 2025. No calls attributable to EPBC Act listed bat species were recorded within the referral area. However, the following FFG Act listed microbat species were recorded:

- Eastern Bent-wing Bat (Miniopterus schreibersii).
- Yellow-bellied Sheath-tailed Bat (Saccolaimus faviventris).

Refer to the Ecological Assessment Report (EHP, 2025) (Attachment 3a, Section 3.8 pg. 98-99) for further details on the results of the bat utilisation surveys.

Wetlands and watercourses

There are mapped seasonal and permanent waterways, waterbodies, and wetlands within the referral area (refer **Figure 9** of **Attachment 1**) including:

- Six unnamed DEECA current wetlands.
- Native Hut Creek.
- Leigh River.
- Woodbourne Creek.
- Wilson Creek.

The Project design will seek to avoid, where possible, mapped seasonal and permanent waterways, waterbodies, and wetlands within the referral area. Access track and cable crossings may be required across waterways however, the Project is not anticipated to have a significant impact on these as a result. Any waterway crossings will be designed in accordance with industry standards and a Works on Waterways permit will be required for these works prior to construction.

Stormwater runoff from disturbed areas during Project construction will be managed using standard practices for erosion and sediment control on construction sites. Environmental management plans prepared for the Project and implemented during construction and operations will include specific measures to minimise erosion and sedimentation.

Hydrology

Based on Visualising Victoria's Groundwater portal, groundwater depths across the Wind Farm Area range between approximately 5 m to 30 m and 10 to 35 m at the Transmission Corridor across Midland Highway.

All potential aquatic and terrestrial groundwater dependent ecosystems (**GDEs**) are mapped by the Bureau of Meteorology (**BoM**). The BoM Groundwater Dependent Atlas identifies that the majority of the referral area has Moderate potential GDE. Though there are small sections identified to have Low, High and Unclassified GDE. The potential impact to groundwater and occurrence of GDEs within the referral area will be investigated further as the Project design, location and nature of construction activities (including borrow pit activity) are determined.

Landscape and visual

The referral area is situated in a rural and lifestyle farming area, characterised by mid-sized pastoral holdings and some more-intensive agricultural operations. The majority of the referral area is cleared and is predominantly flat with some undulation through the site, and granite deposits on the surface.

Sensitive landscapes in proximity to the referral area include natural reserves (Bamganie State Forest and Boonderoo Nature Conservation Reserve), Bunjil's lookout (tourist attraction in Maude, approximately 9.8 km from the Wind Farm Area) and residential townships including Meredith to the north, Lethbridge to the east, and Teesdale to the south.

The referral area is affected by, or is in proximity to, multiple schedules of the Significant Landscape Overlay (**SLO**), which identify and protect landscapes of environmental, cultural, and visual significance (refer to **Figure 5** of **Attachment 1**) including:

- Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 16, located in the south-eastern portion of the Wind Farm Area, associated with the Leigh River as it forms part of the connected system of rivers within the Barwon catchment.
- Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 18, located 860 m north of the Transmission Corridor and is associated with the Moorabool River as it forms part of the connected system of rivers within the Barwon catchment.
- Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 16, located 5.5 km west of the Wind Farm Area, associated with the Yarrowee River.

A Preliminary Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal has been undertaken for the Project based on five representative view locations, and the findings include:

- The outcome of the preliminary landscape and visual impact appraisal is high at the Bunjil's Lookout, as all the turbines will be visible.
- The outcome of the preliminary landscape and visual impact appraisal is moderate at the Meredith Recreation Reserve and Shelford Recreation Reserve where some turbines will be visible.
- The outcome of the preliminary landscape and visual impact appraisal is low at the Lethbridge town centre and Teesdale town centre.

The Project is likely to result in some impacts to visual amenity, which will be further assessed through a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that will be undertaken to determine the potential to affect landscape values.

<u>Heritage</u>

Aboriginal cultural heritage

Preliminary assessment (**Attachment 7**) has identified five (5) VAHR sites as being present within the referral area. Avoidance of all registered VAHR sites is intended by siting the proposed wind turbines and transmission corridor in locations that will not interfere with the VAHR sites. The identified VAHR sites predominantly comprise of artefact scatters made predominantly of silcrete and quartzite.

Preparation and approval of a CHMP in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (VIC) will assist in mitigating the risk of damage and provide for the appropriate management of artefacts as required.

Historic heritage

There is one registered historic heritage place on the Victorian Heritage Inventory (**VHI**) located within the referral area, *VHI Taylors (sic) Road, Meredith – Section of Cobble Road (H7722-0038)*. The VHI relates to remnants of a cobbled road along the current Taylor Road south of Meredith. Should works be proposed within this VHI, then a heritage impact assessment will be carried out to ascertain the potential impact and provide mitigation measures to minimise or avoid harm to the place.

The Wind Farm Area abuts a locally listed heritage place "HO55 - Native Creek No. 1 Run (former) and Moranghurk Woolshed (former), "Morbrook" 1820 Meredith-Shelford Road" to the north-east and "HO31 Golf Hill Homestead and Outbuildings, 1718 Bannockburn-Shelford Road, Bannockburn" to the south-west. These HO sites will be avoided entirely from construction activities and siting of infrastructure.

<u>Soils</u>

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (**CSIRO**) databases indicate that the Wind Farm Area contains regions where acid sulphate soils (**ASS**) have a low probability of occurrence. Majority of the Transmission Corridor contains regions where ASS have a low probability of occurrence, with extremely low probability of ASS occurrence as it passes Midland Highway to the proposed switchyard. Detailed assessment of ASS as part of a soil and contamination assessment would be undertaken to inform project design and development. The micro-siting of turbines and associated infrastructure will avoid these areas identified as having higher potential for acid sulphate soils.

No Erosion Management Overlays (**EMO**) exist within the referral area. Further assessment will be undertaken to confirm potential effects the Project may have on highly erodible soils.

Social

The Project is not anticipated to result in any short or long term displacement of residences or severance of residential access to community resources (including accommodation availability). Any effects on the transport network from potential road upgrades and temporary diversions would be short term during construction and will be mitigated and managed through implementation of a Traffic Management Plan.

Early consultation and engagement with the community and stakeholders has been undertaken and will be ongoing throughout the development of the Project to ensure community representatives will have the opportunity to provide input into the Project.

12. Native vegetation, flora and fauna

Native vegetation

Is any native vegetation likely to be cleared or otherwise affected by the project?

 \times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, answer the following questions and attach details.

What investigation of native vegetation in the project area has been done? (briefly describe)

A preliminary ecological site assessment of the referral area was undertaken between 2023 to 2025 by EHP Consulting (**Attachment 3a, 3b and 3c**). The assessment mapped native vegetation presence in the form of patches and scattered trees.

Native vegetation was found to be largely confined to riparian corridors, through paddock trees and pockets of vegetation scattered across the referral area, particularly in the north and northeast of the Wind Farm Area and Transmission Corridor.

What is the maximum area of native vegetation that may need to be cleared?

× NYD Estimated area(hectares)

A total of 489.59 hectares of native vegetation was recorded within the referral area, with up to 74.263 ha of this total estimated to be removed for the Project, representative of:

- 67.79 ha of native vegetation patches comprising of eight (8) Ecological Vegetation Communities (**EVCs**), grouped by conservation status as follows:
 - o Endangered -
 - Creekline Grassy Woodland (EVC 68).
 - Plains Grassland (EVC 132).
 - Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55).
 - Grassy Woodland (EVC 175).
 - Plains Grassy Wetlands (EVC 125).
 - o Vulnerable -
 - Valley Grassy Forest (EVC 47).
 - Creekline Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 164).
 - o Depleted -
 - Grassy Dry Forest (EVC 22).

225 Large Trees in patches.
 128 scattered trees (96 Large and 32 Small).

How much of this clearing would be authorised under a Forest Management Plan or Fire Protection Plan?

× N/A approx. percent (if applicable)

Which Ecological Vegetation Classes may be affected? (if not authorised as above)

Up to 67.79 ha of native vegetation patches are estimated to be impacted comprising eight (8) EVCs including:

- Creekline Grassy Woodland (EVC 68).
- Creekline Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 164).
- Plains Grassland (EVC 132).
- Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55).
- Plains Grassy Wetlands (EVC 125).
- Grassy Dry Forest (EVC 22).
- Grassy Woodland (EVC 175).
- Valley Grassy Forest (EVC 47).

Have potential vegetation offsets been identified as yet?

× NYD × Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

The proponent is committed to avoid and/or mitigate potential significant adverse effects on the environment. The final design and siting of the Project will seek to avoid removal of native vegetation. Unavoidable impacts to native vegetation would be offset in accordance with the Victorian Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017). According to DEECA's Native Vegetation Offset Register, there are four offset sites within the Corangamite Catchment Management Area or Golden Plains Shire region that can be used to the satisfy the General Habitat Unit and Large tree offset requirements. However, there are currently no sites available to satisfy the Species Habitat Unit requirements. Species Habitat Unit requirements may be met via the establishment of an onsite offset site. Consultation and engagement with landowners regarding potential arrangements to secure the required offsets are ongoing.

An offset register search statement identifying the relevant offsite sites is provided in Appendix 4 of the **Ecological Assessment (EHP, 2025) (Attachment 3b, pg. 227).**

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

Refer to the Ecological Assessment (**Attachment 3a, 3b and 3c**) for further details on methodology and results which the above information has been extracted from.

NYD = not yet determined

Flora and fauna

What investigations of flora and fauna in the project area have been done? (provide overview here and attach details of method and results of any surveys for the project & describe their accuracy)

A preliminary ecological site assessment of the referral area was undertaken between 2023 and 2025 by EHP (**Attachment 3a, 3b and 3c**). The assessment mapped native vegetation presence in the form of patches and scattered trees.

Once the development footprint is progressed, further biodiversity assessments including targeted surveys will be undertaken to inform the final design and siting of the Project.

Have any threatened or migratory species or listed communities been recorded from the local area?

- \times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, please:
- List species/communities recorded in recent surveys and/or past observations.
- Indicate which of these have been recorded from the project site or nearby.

The following threatened species, ecological communities and migratory species have been recorded within the referral area or within a 10 km buffer.

Flora species

The preliminary ecological assessment includes a likelihood of occurrence assessment for significant flora species that have been previously recorded within 10 km of the referral area, or that may potentially occur within based on habitat characteristics. The following table lists 57 flora species listed under the EPBC Act and/or FFG Act assessed as having Known, High, Moderate or Low likelihood of occurrence within 10 km of the referral area.

Scientific name	Common Name	Listing status		Likelihood of	
		EPBC	FFG	occurrence	
Amphibromus	River Swamp	VU	-	Low likelihood to	
fluitans	Wallaby-grass,			occur.	
	Floating Swamp				
	Wallaby-grass				

Acacia aspera	Rough Wattle	-	EN Low likelihood to		
Acacia boormanii	Showy River Wattle	River Wattle -	EN	Low likelihood to	
				occur.	
Calotis lappulacea	Yellow Burr-daisy	-	VU	Low likelihood to	
				occur.	
Caladenia oenochila	Wine-lipped Spider	-	CR	Low likelihood to	
	Orchid			occur.	
Caladenia numila	Dwarf Spider-orchid	CR	CR	Moderate likelihood	
Caldacina parina	Bwall oplace of office	ÖN		to occur	
Caladania an Aff	Inverteigh Chider			Madarata likalihaad	
	inveneign Spider-	-	CR		
Fragrantissima	orchid			to occur.	
(Inverleigh)					
Cullen parvum	Small Scurf-pea	-	EN	Known to occur.	
Cullen tenax	Tough Scurf-pea	-	EN	Known to occur.	
Comesperma	Small Milkwort	-	CR	Moderate likelihood	
polygaloides			_	to occur	
Coronidium	Pale Swamp	_	CR	Low likelihood to	
gunnianum	Evorlacting	_			
gunnanum			0.0		
Dianella amoena	Matted Flax-Illy	EN	CR	Low likelihood to	
				occur.	
Diuris gregaria	Clumping Golden	-	CR	Low likelihood to	
	Moths			occur.	
Diuris punctata var.	Purple Diuris	-	EN	Low likelihood to	
punctata				occur.	
Dodonaea	Trailing Hop-bush	VU	-	Moderate likelihood	
procumbens				to occur	
Fucalvotus	Black Gum	VII	VII	Low likelihood to	
	DIACK OUT	vo	vo		
	Courthorm Division			Mederate likelihee	
Eucalyptus globulus	Southern Blue-gum	-	EN	Moderate likelihood	
subsp. Globulus				to occur.	
Eucalyptus	Gum-barked Bundy	-	EN	Low likelihood to	
goniocalyx subsp.				occur.	
Laxa					
Eucalyptus	Bog Gum	-	CR	Moderate likelihood	
kitsoniana	_			to occur.	
Eucalvptus	Melbourne Yellow-	-	EN	Known to high	
leucoxylon subsp	aum			likelihood to occur	
Connata	94				
Eucolyptuc	Varra Cum		CP	Modorato likolihood	
Eucarypius	Talla Gulli	-	UN		
yarraensis				to occur.	
Geranium sp. 3	Pale-flower	-	EN	Moderate likelihood	
	Crane's-bill			to occur.	
Glycine latrobeana	Clover Glycine	VU	VU	High likelihood to	
				occur.	
Grevillea	Golden Grevillea	-	VU	Low likelihood to	
chrvsophaea				occur.	
Grevillea	Brisbane Range	-	FN	Low likelihood to	
steialitziana	Grevilles				
	Beeelt Denner			Levy likelihood to	
	Basall Pepper-			Low likelihood to	
nyssopitolium	cress, Peppercress,			occur.	
	Rubble Pepper-				
	cress, Pepperweed				
Leucochrysum	White Sunray,	EN	EN	High to moderate	
albicans subsp.	Hoary Sunray,			likelihood to occur.	
Tricolor	Grassland Paper-				
	daisy				
Nicotiana	Austral Tobacco	-	FN	Known to occur	
suaveolens					
Olearia minor	Satin Daisv-bush	-	FN	Moderate likelihood	
	Saur Baidy Buor			to occur	
			1	to 00001.	

Olearia pannosa	Velvet Daisy-bush	-	EN	Moderate likelihood	
Olearia tubuliflora	Rayless Daisy-bush	-	EN	Low likelihood to	
Pimelea spinescens	Spiny Rice-flower	CR	CR	Low likelihood to	
subsp. spinescens	Maraan Laak			OCCUI.	
frenchii	orchid	EIN	EIN		
Prasonhvllum fosteri	Shelford Leek-		CR	Moderate likelihood	
	orchid			to occur.	
Prasophyllum maccannii	Inland Leek-orchid	-	EN	Moderate likelihood to occur.	
Prasophyllum sp.	Woodland Leek-	-	EN	Moderate likelihood	
Prasonhvllum	Fragrant Leek-	FN	CR	Low likelihood to	
suaveolens	orchid		ÖN	occur	
Prasophyllum	Sturdy Leek-orchid.	VU	-	Low likelihood to	
validum	Mount Remarkable Leek-orchid			occur.	
Prostanthera	Dense Mint-bush	-	EN	Moderate likelihood	
decussata				to occur.	
Prosthanthera nivea	Snowy Mint-bush	-	VU	Low likelihood to	
var. nivea				occur.	
Pterostylis	Green-striped	VU	EN	Moderate likelihood	
chlorogramma	Greenhood			to occur.	
Pterostylis cucullate	Leafy Greenhood	VU	EN	Low likelihood to occur.	
Pterostylis	Inland Red-tip	-	EN	Moderate likelihood	
rubescens	Greenhood			to occur.	
Pterostylis smaragdyna	Emerald-lip Greenhood	-	EN	Low likelihood to	
Pterostlis X ingens	Sharp Greenhood	-	VU	Low likelihood to	
				occur.	
Pultenaea daltonii	Hoary Bush-pea	-	VU	Low likelihood to	
Pultenaea	Scented Bush-nea		FN	Low likelihood to	
araveolens	Coomed Bush ped			occur.	
Pultenaea gunnii	Golden Bush-pea	-	VU	Moderate likelihood	
subsp. tuberculata	••••••			to occur.	
Rhagodia	Fragrant Saltbush	-	VU	Known to occur.	
parabolica					
Roepera billardierei	Coast Twin-leaf	-	EN	Low likelihood to	
Rutidosis	Button Wrinklewort	EN	EN	Low likelihood to	
leptorhynchoides				occur.	
Senecio	Large-headed	VU	CR	High to moderate	
macrocarpus	Fireweed			likelihood to occur.	
Thelymitra	Naked Sun-orchid	-	EN	Moderate likelihood	
circumsepta				to occur.	
Thelymitra gregaria	Basalt Sun-orchid	-	CR	Moderate likelihood to occur.	
Thelymitra X macmillanii	Crimson Sun-orchid	-	VU	Moderate likelihood	
Tripogonella	Rve Beetle-grass	-	FN	Low likelihood to	
Ioliiformis				occur.	
Xerochrysum palustre	Swamp Everlasting, Swamp Paper Daisv	VU	CR	Low likelihood to occur.	
			<u> </u>	1	

*Note: VU = Vulnerable, EN = Endangered, CR = Critically Endangered

Ecological communities

One (1) FFG-Act listed ecological community, Western (Basalt) Plains Grasslands Community is considered to be present within the referral area, corresponding with all patches of Plains Grassland EVC.

Five (5) TECs were modelled to occur within 10 km of the referral area, of these TECs, one TEC recorded within the referral area:

• Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain (NTGVVP).

Fauna species

Consistent with the approach for flora, the preliminary ecological assessment also includes a likelihood of occurrence assessment for significant fauna species previously recorded within 10 km of the referral area, or that may potentially occur within, based on species records, habitat characteristics and expert advice. The following table lists 43 fauna species listed under the EPBC Act and/or FFG Act assessed as having Known, High, Moderate or Low likelihood of occurrence within 10 km of the referral area.

Scientific name	Common Name	Listing status Likelihoo		
		EPBC	FFG	occurrence
Accipiter	Grey Goshawk	-	EN	Moderate likelihood
novaehollandiae	-			to occur.
Antigone	Brolga	-	EN	Low likelihood to
rubicunda	-			occur.
Ardea intermedia	Plumed Egret	-	CR	Moderate likelihood
plumifera	-			to occur.
Biziura lobata	Musk Duck	-	VU	Low likelihood to
				occur.
Calamanthus	Chestnut-rumped	-	VU	Moderate likelihood
pyrrhopygius	Heathwren			to occur.
Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper	CR	CR	Low likelihood to
				occur.
Callocephalon	Gang-gang	EN	EN	Moderate likelihood
fimbriatum	Cockatoo			to occur.
Climateris	Brown Treecreeper	VU	-	High likelihood to
picumnus				occur.
Delma impar	Striped Legless	VU	EN	Known to occur.
	Lizard			
Egretta garzetta	Little Egret	-	EN	Moderate likelihood
	Ū			to occur.
Engaeus sericatus	Hairy Burrowing	-	VU	High likelihood to
	Crayfish			occur.
Falco hypoleucos	Grey Falcon	VU VU		Low likelihood to
		000		occur.
Falco subniger	Black Falcon	- CR Moderate likelihoo		Moderate likelihood
				to occur.
Gallinago	Latham's Snipe,	VU	-	Low likelihood to
hardwickii	Japanese Snipe			occur.
Geopelia cuneata	Diamond Dove	-	VU	Low likelihood to
				occur.
Grantiella picta	Painted Honeyeater	VU	VU	Moderate likelihood
				to occur.
Haliaeetus	White-bellied Sea-	-	EN	Low likelihood to
leucogaster	Eagle	occur.		occur.
Hieraaetus	Little Eagle	-	VU	Moderate likelihood
morphnoides				to occur.
Hirundapus	White-throated	VU	VU	Moderate likelihood
caudacutus	Needletail			to occur.
Lathamus discolor	Swift Parrot	CR	CR	Low likelihood to
				occur.
Litoria raniformis	Growling Grass	VU	VU	Known to occur
major	Frog			

Melanodrvas	Hooded Robin	FN	VU	Moderate likelihood	
cucullata			to occu		
Miniopterus	Eastern Bent-	-	CR	Known to occur	
orianae	winged Bat		ÖN		
oceanensis	Wingou Dut				
Nannoperca	Yarra Pygmy Perch	FN	VU	Moderate likelihood	
obscura	rana ryginy roion		•••	to occur	
Neonhema	Blue-winged Parrot	VU	-	Known to occur	
chrysostoma	Blue Wingeur arrot	10			
Ninox connivens	Barking Owl		CR	Moderate likelihood	
	Burking OW		ÖN	to occur	
Ninov strenua	Powerful Owl			Moderate likelihood	
TWITTON SLICITUR		-	vo	to occur	
Ornithorhynchus	Platypus		VII	Known to occur	
anatinus	i latypus	-	vo	Rhown to occur.	
	Blue-billed Duck			Low likelihood to	
Oxyula australis		-	vo		
Phascogale	Bruch tailod		\/[]	Mederate likelihood	
tanoatafa	Diusii-talleu	-	VU	to occur	
Regudemoia	Tuccock Skink		EN		
rseuuemola	TUSSOCK SKITK	-	EIN	Known to occur.	
Dtoronuo	Crowboodod	1/11		Madarata likalihaad	
Pleropus	Grey-neaded	VU	VU		
Durrhaloareus	Flying-iox Speekled Werkler			Madarata likalihaad	
Pyrrnolaemus	Speckled warbler	-	EN		
Sagillalus	Mallaw hallad		141		
Saccolaimus	Yellow-belled	-	VU	Known to occur.	
	Sneathtall Bat		N // 1		
Smitnopsis	Fat-tailed Dunnart	-	VU	Moderate likelinood	
crassicaudata				to occur.	
Smithopsis murina	Common Dunnart	-	VU	Low likelihood to	
murina				occur.	
Spatula ryhnchotis	Australasian	-	VU	Low likelihood to	
	Shoveler			occur.	
Stagonopleaura	Diamond Firetail	VU	VU	Moderate likelihood	
guttata				to occur.	
Stictionetta	Freckled Duck	-	EN	Low likelihood to	
naevosa				occur.	
Synemon plana	Golden Sun Moth	VU	VU	Known to occur.	
Tringa nebularia	Common	EN	EN	Low likelihood to	
	Greenshank			occur.	
Tympanocryptis	Victorian Grassland	CR	CR	Moderate likelihood	
pinguicolla	Earless Dragon			to occur,	
Tyto	Masked Owl	-	CR	Moderate likelihood	
novaehollandiae				to occur.	

*Note: VU = Vulnerable, EN = Endangered, CR = Critically Endangered

If known, what threatening processes affecting these species or communities may be exacerbated by the project? (eg. loss or fragmentation of habitats) Please describe briefly.

Potential threatening processes affecting these species or communities that may be exacerbated by the Project include:

- Clearing and levelling of sites, excavations and general construction activities may result in direct loss of habitat and/species, fragmentation of habitats and communities. The Project will, however, seek to avoid and minimise such impacts through further design refinements. Much of the Project site is currently used for broadacre cropping and grazing and the Proponent is working to avoid impact on areas of native vegetation as much as feasibly possible.
- Night lighting, noise and vibration associated with construction and operational activities may result in disturbance to fauna habitat and/or direct loss of fauna species. The Project will seek to avoid and minimise such impacts through further design refinements.

Additionally, nighttime construction works are a rare occurrence on a wind farm project, with working hours typically being between 7.00am and 7.00pm.

- Accidental spills, erosion and sedimentation, and dust pollution due to construction activities, affecting both water and/or soil environments, may cause a decline in water quality and quality of soils, resulting in the long-term decline or loss over time of species numbers and native vegetation area. However, these will be avoided or mitigated through a number of measures including implementation of speed limits, dust suppression, appropriate bunding and re-fuelling protocols, construction of culverts and other drainage features to manage stormwater flows and prevent erosion damage. These will be detailed in the environmental management plans for the construction and operation of the Project.
- Vehicular movements during construction and operations which introduce and/or spread weeds, pest species or pathogens, may result in long-term decline or loss over time of species numbers and native vegetation area. During construction, site vehicles will not be permitted access to land other than the Project footprint thus reducing the possibility of weed and pathogen incursions. Measures for control with be detailed in a CEMP.
- Potential disturbance or collision risk from WTGS. Whilst some impact is unavoidable, the Proponent is working on configuring the turbine layout to reduce the risk of disturbance and collision.

Of the key threatening processes identified under the EPBC Act, the Project has the potential to contribute to the following two:

- Novel biota and their impact on biodiversity introduction of weeds to the site, or spread of existing ones within, can be mitigated by the implementation of a Weed Management Plan.
- Land clearance the Project is likely to result in clearance of native vegetation that may
 currently support listed species or ecological communities. Targeted surveys will be
 conducted to determine the presence and extent of any listed matters within the site, and
 such will be used to inform the Project design and development footprint, avoiding or
 reducing the impact to listed matters through land clearing. Any unavoidable impacts will be
 appropriately offset.

Are any threatened or migratory species, other species of conservation significance or listed communities potentially affected by the project?

- \times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, please:
- List these species/communities:
- Indicate which species or communities could be subject to a major or extensive impact (including the loss of a genetically important population of a species listed or nominated for listing) Comment on likelihood of effects and associated uncertainties, if practicable.

As discussed above, the Project has the potential to affect listed threatened communities and threatened species. Details are summarised below.

- Up to 16.31 ha of the NTGVVP community from the total of 171.75 ha is estimated to be impacted by the Project.
- A total of 84.31 ha of confirmed habitat for the Golden Sun Moth and 3.46 ha of confirmed habitat for Striped Legless Lizard is proposed to be impacted.
- Eastern Bent-wing Bat, Yellow-bellied Sheathtail Bat, Platypus, Brown Treecreeper, Eastern Great Egret, Growling Grass Frog as well as avifauna including Blue-winged Parrot, Ganggang Cockatoo and Powerful Owl are likely to utilise the Project site. However, the Project is not anticipated to result in the loss of a significant proportion of habitat for these species.
- The Blue-winged Parrot, Gang-gang Cockatoo and Latham's Snipe are known to fly at the RSA and while WTGs have been configured to reduce the risk of collision to these species, overall, there remains to be a low to moderate risk to the species from turbine collision.
- The Project will potentially impact threatened flora, including Small Scurf-pea and Jersey Cudweed (*Laphanigium luteoalbum*).

The final design and siting of the Project will avoid effects to ecological values as much as feasibly possible through further micro siting of impacting infrastructure and activities, and the

development of suitable mitigation measures to be implemented through the Project's CEMP and/or OEMP. Such mitigation measures may include:

- Avoidance and minimisation of impacts to native vegetation particularly NTGVVP and habitats through construction and micro-siting techniques, including fencing retained areas of native vegetation. Where possible, trees will be lopped or trimmed rather than removed.
- Native vegetation will be mapped, and Tree Protection Zones (**TPZs**) will be implemented to prevent indirect losses of native vegetation during construction activities.
- If any habitat trees or shrubs are proposed to be removed, this will be undertaken under the supervision of an appropriately qualified ecologist to salvage and relocate any displaced fauna.
- Implementation of buffer zones from Project infrastructure as determined to be required through further ecological assessment, such as least 30 m buffer zone around known Striped Legless Lizard habitat, where possible.
- Fencing and/or bunting around construction activities in proximity to known populations of Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard.
- Implementation of a Bird and Bat Management Plan to inform long-term reduction in turbine collision risk.

Is mitigation of potential effects on indigenous flora and fauna proposed?

The final design and development will be revised to reduce the Project's effects on indigenous flora and fauna. The Project will seek to avoid and reduce the potential for such impacts through further surveys to inform responsive final designs. In addition to this, detailed mitigation measures, such as those outlined below, will be captured in environmental management plans for the construction and operation of the Project.

Where avoidance of an impact is not possible, impacts may be minimised by redesign and/or relocation of infrastructure or low-impact construction methods. Such measures may include:

- Siting of infrastructure in areas that have already been cleared or on the edges of vegetation patches to reduce fragmentation.
- Micro-siting the location of access tracks and other infrastructure or reconfiguring infrastructure to avoid higher value vegetation based on the results of pre-clearance flora and fauna surveys.
- Upgrading existing farm tracks for construction traffic to minimise the amount of vegetation requiring removal and reducing fragmentation (compared with clearing required for new tracks).
- Demarcation of clearing boundaries and designation of areas outside clearing boundaries as "no go" zones to avoid accidental damage to adjacent vegetation.
- Pre-clearance surveys to identify habitat features before clearing commences and to inform development of an appropriate tree removal procedure if required.
- Developing a traffic management plan to minimise damage to ecologically sensitive areas and injury/mortality of fauna.
- Develop a Bird and Bat Management Plan containing adaptive management practices to be applied where they are likely to be helpful or necessary.
- Micro-siting WTGs and associated infrastructure to maximise separation from the edges of remnant vegetation.

After impacts have been avoided and minimised as far as practicable, remaining impacts will be mitigated. Mitigative measures may include:

- Rehabilitating disturbed areas following completion of construction activities such as temporary WTG construction pads, laydown areas and other infrastructure (site office, substations) or removal of temporary infrastructure.
- Protection and potential restoration of any vegetation corridors that may facilitate the longterm survival and dispersal of the threatened flora and fauna species identified in assessments.

- Development of appropriate environmental management procedures in a construction environmental management plan (e.g. erosion and sediment control, dust suppression, weed and pest animal management, offsite rubbish disposal).
- Develop a Vegetation, Fauna, and Bird and Bat Management Plan to obtain any additional fauna utilisation information to allow for adaptive management practices to be applied.
- An adaptive management and monitoring program to assess the effectiveness and implementation of controls as required.
- Development of Offset Management Strategy as required for unavoidable and residual impacts to significant species and/or communities.

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

The field and desktop assessments provide an overview of the biodiversity values that exist, or have the potential to exist, within the referral area. The absence of a species from a database list or observational studies does not confirm its absence within the Project site or the broader referral area and may instead indicate a low historic sampling effort in the region. Additional surveys as part of the ongoing broader ecological assessment program, performed by experienced ecologists and in accordance with relevant survey guidelines, will be undertaken to confirm the presence or likely presence of threatened flora and fauna species or ecological communities.

13. Water environments

Will the project require significant volumes of fresh water (eg. > 1 Gl/vr)?
\times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, indicate approximate volume and likely source.
A water supply is required for the 24 – 36 months of construction period, primarily for dust suppression and concrete production. Water source will be determined during detailed design.
Operational water requirements for the wind farm will be minimal, limited to servicing the operation and maintenance office and ablution facilities on site.
Will the project discharge waste water or runoff to water environments?
\times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, specify types of discharges and which environments.
Construction hardstands have the potential to increase occurrence of runoff. To assist with this, construction areas, including access tracks, will be formed by crushed rock and be permeable to a certain degree. All construction, operational and decommissioning facilities will retain wastewater for appropriate disposal off-site, or reuse where possible, subject to meeting quality standards and relevant approvals.
An overarching CEMP and an OEMP would be prepared to include management procedures for handling wastewater and runoff. Standard sediment control measures will be incorporated into the Project's environmental management plans in accordance with Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria's Civil Construction, building and demolition guide (Publication 1834.1). Typical controls may include: Silt fences and sediment basins. Diversion drains
• Diversion drains.
 Stockpile containment and dust suppression measures.
Regular inspections and maintenance of controls.
Are any waterways, wetlands, estuaries or marine environments likely to be affected? NYD X No Yes If yes, specify which water environments, answer the following questions and attach any relevant details.
 There are mapped seasonal and permanent waterways, waterbodies, and wetlands within the referral area (refer Figure 9 of Attachment 1) including: Six unnamed DEECA current wetlands. Native Hut Creek. Leigh River. Woodbourne Creek. Wilson Creek.
The Project design will seek to avoid mapped seasonal and permanent waterways, waterbodies, and wetlands within the referral area where possible. Access track and cable crossings may be required across waterways. The potential for construction-related impacts on water environments – including native vegetation, aquatic ecosystems, and GDE will be assessed through hydrological and ecological assessments during the detailed design phase. These assessments will inform the design of any required access track and cable crossings to ensure the impacts are avoided or minimised to the extent practicable. Where waterway crossings are unavoidable, they will be designed in accordance with industry standards and a Works on Waterways permit will be required for these works prior to construction.
During construction, some activities may result in collected runoff requiring discharge (e.g., trenching and excavations). These potential effects are limited to the construction period. It is also

During construction, some activities may result in collected runoff requiring discharge (e.g., trenching and excavations). These potential effects are limited to the construction period. It is also expected that any effects will be able to be suitably managed with standard construction measures, which would likely include collection and treatment prior to discharge.

To manage potential impacts associated with construction activities, environmental management plans prepared for the Project and implemented during construction and operations will include specific measures to minimise erosion, stormwater runoff and sedimentation consistent with best

practice. These measures will ensure that any residual impacts to water environment during construction are minor and temporary in nature.

Are any of these water environments likely to support threatened or migratory species?

No loss of a genetically important population of an endangered or threatened species, loss of critical habitat or significant effects on habitat values of a wetland supporting migratory birds is likely to occur as a result of the Project.

Best practice sedimentation and pollution control measures will be undertaken at all times to prevent offsite impacts to waterways and wetlands.

Are any potentially affected wetlands listed under the Ramsar Convention or in 'A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia'?

 \times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, please specify.

There are no Ramsar Wetlands within or in proximity to the referral area. The nearest Ramsar sites to the referral area are Murdeduke Lake (23.7 km south), part of the Western District Lakes Ramsar Site, and Corio Bay (34 km south-west), part of the Port Phillip (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site.

There are no major wetlands listed on the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia within or in proximity to the referral area. The nearest Important Wetlands are the Werribee-Avalon Area (30 km south-west) and Lake Murdeduke (23.7 km south).

The Project is not expected to have any impact to wetlands listed under the Ramsar Convention or in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia.

Could the project affect streamflows?

 \times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, briefly describe implications for streamflows.

The Project is unlikely to generate significant run off or alter stream flows. Where engineering requirements permit, infrastructure such as access tracks and hardstands will be constructed using permeable materials to minimise changes to hydrology.

Any works during construction around or near stream flows will be shallow and temporary. Any potential impacts to stream flows will be carried out in accordance with relevant design standards and requirements of the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (**CMA**) and the Works on Waterways permit process, where applicable.

Works around waterway crossings will be temporary and will be designed to avoid changes to streamflows or erosion. Any potential impacts will be appropriately managed through standard mitigation measures and procedures detailed in the Project's CEMP, including the use of:

- Appropriate crossing structures such as culverts.
- Sediment and erosion controls such as silt fences or coffer dams.
- Buffer zones and no-go zones around riparian areas.

Could regional groundwater resources be affected by the project? X NYD No Yes If yes, describe in what way.

Based on Visualising Victoria's Groundwater portal, groundwater depths across the Wind Farm Area range between approximately 5 m to 30 m and 10 m to 35 m at the Transmission Corridor across Midland Highway.

Potential interaction with groundwater includes turbine foundation excavations, underground cable trenching, and borrow pit development. While most groundwater across the site is expected to be deeper than excavation requirements, areas of lower topography may have shallower groundwater, increasing the potential for localised interaction.

Groundwater resources are not expected to be significantly impacted by the Project. However, further assessment and targeted geotechnical and hydrogeological investigation will be undertaken to confirm locations of existing groundwater resources and to develop design measures that avoid or minimise groundwater interaction.

Any incidental groundwater encountered during construction would be localised and appropriately managed through standard mitigation measures and procedures detailed in the Project's CEMP which may include sealing foundation bases where required and pumping and temporary storage of groundwater for appropriate disposal.

Could environmental values (beneficial uses) of water environments be affected? NYD X No X Yes If yes, identify waterways/water bodies and beneficial uses (as recognised by State Environment Protection Policies)

The Project is unlikely to have long-term adverse impacts on environmental values (beneficial uses) of water environments, as defined in the Environment Reference Standard (**ERS**) under the *Environment Protection Act 2017*.

Albeit unlikely, accidental spills, erosion and sedimentation due to construction activities, all have the potential to affect water quality. The Project will identify the potential impacts, if any, and propose suitable mitigation measures to include in the Project's CEMP and OEMP as the Project design and planning progresses.

Could aquatic, estuarine or marine ecosystems be affected by the project?

There are mapped seasonal and permanent waterways, waterbodies, and wetlands within the referral area (refer **Figure 9** of **Attachment 1**) including:

- Six unnamed DEECA current wetlands.
- Native Hut Creek.
- Leigh River.
- Woodbourne Creek.
- Wilson Creek.

These aquatic ecosystems have potential to be impacted, though it is considered unlikely that any effects on ecosystem function or health will result. The Project design will seek to avoid mapped seasonal and permanent waterways, waterbodies, and wetlands within the referral area. Any waterway crossings will be designed in accordance with industry standards and a Works on Waterways permit will be required for these works prior to construction.

Is there a potential for extensive or major effects on the health or biodiversity of aquatic, estuarine or marine ecosystems over the long-term?

X No Yes If yes, please describe. Comment on likelihood of effects and associated uncertainties, if practicable.

Extensive or major effects on aquatic ecosystems are not expected. There is potential for localised impacts on the water environments within the referral area, as noted in the above section.

Is mitigation of potential effects on water environments proposed?

Impacts will be avoided through design to the extent practicable. Where avoidance is not feasible, impacts are unlikely to be significant and would be appropriately managed through standard mitigation measures and procedures detailed in the Project's CEMP.

Mitigation measures such as selective siting, water quality monitoring, erosion monitoring, sediment control and bunding/spill management measures will all be implemented via a CEMP.

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

N/A

14. Landscape and soils

Landscape

Has a preliminary landscape assessment been prepared?

X No X Yes If yes, please attach.

A Preliminary Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal has been prepared by Hansen Partnership (2025) (**Attachment 8**) which considered the detailed description of the referral area, existing visual features and visibility of the proposed Wind Farm Area within the existing view from five representative view locations including:

- Bunjil's Lookout.
- Lethbridge town centre.
- Meredith Recreation Reserve.
- Shelford Recreation Reserve.
- Teesdale town centre.

Is the project to be located either within or near an area that is:

• Subject to a Landscape Significance Overlay or Environmental Significance Overlay? NYD NO Y Yes If yes, provide plan showing footprint relative to overlay.

The referral area encompasses land covered by the Environmental Significance Overlay (**ESO**) and Significance Landscape Overlay (**SLO**) of the relevant planning provisions. These overlays are planning controls designed to protect important environmental and landscape values. Specifically, the relevant local provisions of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme relevant to the site are:

- ESO1 Barwon Water Supply Catchment
- ESO2 Watercourse Protection.
- ESO3 Mt Misery Creek, Surface Hill Smythesdale, Klein And Swanston Road Area, Dereel, Swamp Road - Dereel, Yarrowee Creek, Teesdale Reserve, Moorabool Valley, Sutherland Creek, Meredith, Steiglitz
- SLO16 Rivers of the Barwon: Leigh River (Waywatcurtan) Corridor Environs.

Refer to Figure 5 of Attachment 1.

Identified as of regional or State significance in a reputable study of landscape values?
 NYD X No X Yes If yes, please specify.

The referral area is not identified as being of regional, local or State significance in a reputable study of landscape values.

The siting of the Project is consistent with section 2.1.4 of the *Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities* which require wind energy facilities to be located outside of National Parks, State Parks and Coastal Parks and other high quality environmental and landscape locations in the State such as Wilsons Promontory.

- Within or adjoining land reserved under the National Parks Act 1975 ?
 NYD X No X Yes If yes, please specify.
- Within or adjoining other public land used for conservation or recreational purposes ?

The referral area adjoins public land that is used for conservation and recreational purposes. These areas are to be avoided as much as feasibly possible from construction work activities and siting of Project infrastructure and will not be directly impacted by proposed activities. Land used for conservation or recreational purposes that adjoins the referral area include:

- Boonderoo Nature Conservation Reserve.
- Bamganie State Forest.

Refer to Figure 9 in Attachment 1.

Is any clearing vegetation or alteration of landforms likely to affect landscape values?

NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

Up to 74.263 ha of native vegetation removal is estimated to be removed for the Project. Clearing of vegetation has the potential to affect landscape values in the areas immediate to the clearing. Avoidance and minimisation of impacts to native vegetation particularly NTGVVP and habitats will be considered through construction and micro-siting techniques, including fencing retained areas of native vegetation and trees will be lopped or trimmed rather than removed where possible.

The Project will undertake measures to mitigate visual impact to the extent practicable, noting that there is opportunity to do so. A detailed Visual and Impact Assessment (**LVIA**) will be undertaken to determine the potential to affect landscape values.

Is there a potential for effects on landscape values of regional or State importance? \times NYD \times No \times Yes Please briefly explain response.

The Project is likely to result in some impacts to visual amenity, which will be further assessed through a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that will be undertaken to determine the potential to affect landscape values. However, the referral area does not include any area considered to be of regional or State importance and none have been identified within the surrounding area of locality of the Project site. Therefore, no impacts to such landscape values are expected.

Is mitigation of potential landscape effects proposed? NYD No X Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

The Project will undertake measures to mitigate visual impact to the extent practicable. The Project has engaged, and will continue to engage, with affected landowners and local communities to understand any concerns regarding landscape effects, which will be used to inform project design and development. The Project will establish visual screening opportunities where it is required and recommended by the detailed Landscape and Visual Assessment.

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

N/A

Note: A preliminary landscape assessment is a specific requirement for a referral of a wind energy facility. This should provide a description of:

- The landscape character of the site and surrounding areas including landform, vegetation types and coverage, water features, any other notable features and current land use;
- The location of nearby dwellings, townships, recreation areas, major roads, above-ground utilities, tourist routes and walking tracks;
- Views to the site and to the proposed location of wind turbines from key vantage points (including views showing existing nearby dwellings and views from major roads, walking tracks and tourist routes) sufficient to give a sense of the overall site in its setting.

Soils

Is there a potential for effects on land stability, acid sulphate soils or highly erodible soils? X NYD X No X Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

The CSIRO databases indicate that most of the Referral area contains regions where acid sulphate soil (**ASS**) have a low probability of occurrence. Detailed assessment of ASS would be undertaken to inform project design and development. The micro-siting of turbines and associated infrastructure will avoid any areas identified as having higher potential for ASS.

No Erosion Management Overlay exist within the referral area; however, further assessment will be undertaken to confirm the potential for any highly erodible soils that could be affected by the Project.

Are there geotechnical hazards that may either affect the project or be affected by it?

×	NYD	\times	No	\times	Yes	If yes, please briefly describe.
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Presence of geotechnical hazards within the referral area will be confirmed through a geotechnical assessment.

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

N/A

15. Social environments

Is the project likely to generate significant volumes of road traffic, during construction or operation?

x NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, provide estimate of traffic volume(s) if practicable.

The Project is expected to increase volumes of traffic during the construction phase which is expected to occur over 24-36 months. The volume of traffic generated during the construction phase would vary depending on whether there is an on-site borrow pit or material is sourced from off-site. If construction materials are sourced on-site, this would significantly reduce the number of heavy vehicles, as opposed to importing large volumes of construction material from external sites. The volume of traffic will also vary depending on the quality and quantity of material available within the proposed on-site borrow pit. Once operational, the Project is expected to generate negligible impacts on traffic volumes, limited to routine maintenance visits and/or on-site staff by light vehicles.

A traffic impact assessment will be prepared to provide a detailed assessment of the anticipated construction traffic and likely transport impacts of the Project. Based on the findings of the assessment, suitable mitigation measures will be developed and documented in a Traffic Management Plan.

Is there a potential for significant effects on the amenity of residents, due to emissions of dust or odours or changes in visual, noise or traffic conditions?

 \times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, briefly describe the nature of the changes in amenity conditions and the possible areas affected.

Temporary effects on residents during the construction phase due to dust, noise, traffic or visual effects are expected during construction. Where practicable, effects on amenity will be managed and minimised by implementing measures, including but not limited to the following:

- WTGs to be located at least 1 km from all dwellings (unless written consent from landowner is obtained for a reduction in this buffer).
- Project infrastructure including internal tracks, cabling and access gates will be positioned to minimise effects on amenity as much as feasibly possible during both construction and operation.
- Implementation of a CEMP prepared in accordance with best practice and to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority prior to construction.
- Regular watering down of access roads for dust suppression.
- Construction speed limits imposed to reduce dust and accelerated road degradation and to increase safety to other road users.
- Dedicated community liaison during construction to keep community informed of upcoming activities.

During the operational phase, there is the potential for effects on amenity due to changes in visual and noise conditions. Operational phase amenity impacts will continue to be mitigated during the detailed design phase with the benefit of further technical assessments. The preliminary visual effects have been assessed as part of the Preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal (**Attachment 8**) and are discussed in Section 11 and 14 of this referral form.

Noise effects during the construction period will be managed through compliance with EPA Victoria's *Civil Construction, building and demolition guide* (Publication 1834.1). This will be implemented as part of the Project's CEMP.

Noise associated with the operation of the Wind Farm has been assessed by the Preliminary Noise Impact Assessment (ERM, 2025a) (**Attachment 5**). The assessment finds that the Project meets the noise limit compliance at all host dwellings and two minor exceedance at non-host dwellings by 1 dB when predicted at a height of 4m above ground level. Although this minor exceedance was identified, management measures will be undertaken, including background noise monitoring at representative locations which account for potentially elevated levels of background noise during times of higher wind speeds. In addition to this, in accordance with the *Environment Protection Regulations 2021*, the Project will require a Noise Management Plan

which will set out a testing, compliance and reporting regime. Therefore, significant effects from noise associated with the operation of the Project are unlikely.

A Shadow Flicker Assessment (Moir, 2025) (**Attachment 4**) has also been prepared for the Project. The assessment considered all 13 non-associated dwellings located within 1,139.5 m (265 x blade chord length of 4.3 m) of the nearest turbine, where shadows from turbine blades may be visible. Of these, six (6) non-associated dwellings were predicted to experience shadow flicker levels in excess of 30 hours per year threshold under the *Draft National Wind Farm Development Guidelines* (Environment Protection and Heritage Council, 2010). Seven (7) turbines contributed to these exceedances. There are opportunities to mitigate these potential exceedances through further design development of the turbine layout and through application of operational controls. Additionally, the extent of shadow flicker may be reduced by several factors, including the presence of screening elements (e.g., vegetation, buildings, or other structures), seasonal variation, and the frequency of bright sunshine and cloudless conditions. Where shadow flicker at a non-associated dwelling is anticipated to exceed 30 hours per year, written consent will be sought from the affected landholder, in accordance with the *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facility in Victoria* (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2021).

Is there a potential for exposure of a human community to health or safety hazards, due to emissions to air or water or noise or chemical hazards or associated transport?

The Project does not anticipate introducing any health or safety hazards to the community due to emissions to air, water or chemical hazards.

Potential effects from noise emissions will be assessed as part of the design development and suitable mitigation measures developed as required under the Environment Protection Regulations.

A traffic impact assessment will be prepared to provide a detailed assessment of the anticipated construction traffic and likely transport impacts of the Project. Suitable mitigation measures will be developed and documented in a Traffic Management Plan as required.

Is there a potential for displacement of residences or severance of residential access to community resources due to the proposed development?

 \times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, briefly describe potential effects.

The Project is not anticipated to result in short or long term displacement of residences or severance of residential access to community resources. The design and siting of the Project will not affect residential access to community resources.

The closest townships with community facilities are Lethbridge, Teesdale, Shelford and Meredith, located approximately 2-7 km from the referral area. Severance of access to these townships during the construction of the Project is not expected.

Any effects on the transport network would be short term during construction and will be mitigated and managed through implementation of a Traffic Management Plan.

Are non-residential land use activities likely to be displaced as a result of the project?

Wind energy facilities are considered to be a compatible land use with agricultural activities. Typically, agricultural operations may lose around 1-3% of land due to displacement by wind farm infrastructure and associated works. The remaining land can continue to operate for agricultural purposes. Wind farm operations and infrastructure often provide increased benefits to agricultural operations, with access tracks providing all weather access to property and hardstands providing stable, dry and accessible areas for famers to temporarily locate their equipment and machinery. In addition, income from wind farm lease payments offers an additional, stable income for farmers.

Do any expected changes in non-residential land use activities have a potential to cause adverse effects on local residents/communities, social groups or industries?

 \times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, briefly describe the potential effects.

The Project is not expected to result in changes to non-residential land use as less than 3% of the referral area would be affected. The remaining land can continue to be used for agricultural operations for the duration of the Project.

Is mitigation of potential social effects proposed? NYD × No × Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

The Project will confirm land parcels near the referral area and identify potentially affected landowners, land managers, residents, community groups and industry stakeholders. Consultation has commenced with identified potentially affected stakeholders and the proponent will continue to consult on the potential impacts due to the Project. This consultation will inform an important part of the project and design development process, social impact assessment, and inform the development relevant mitigations and controls such as traffic management and access continuity plans, and business continuity plans.

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

N/A

Cultural heritage

Have relevant Indigenous organisations been consulted on the occurrence of Aboriginal cultural heritage within the project area?

- No If no, list any organisations that it is proposed to consult.
- **×** Yes If yes, list the organisations so far consulted.

The Project has commenced consultation with Traditional Owners, who are the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, the RAP for the entirety of the referral area.

What investigations of cultural heritage in the project area have been done?

(attach details of method and results of any surveys for the project & describe their accuracy)

A Preliminary Heritage Assessment (ERM, 2025b) (**Attachment 7**) has been prepared comprising a desktop review and assessment of potential impacts of the Project on both First Nations and historic heritage places and areas of archaeological potential.

Is any Aboriginal cultural heritage known from the project area?

 \times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, briefly describe:

- Any sites listed on the AAV Site Register
- Sites or areas of sensitivity recorded in recent surveys from the project site or nearby
- Sites or areas of sensitivity identified by representatives of Indigenous organisations

The referral area is traversed by various areas of cultural heritage sensitivity, particularly along existing waterways, including the Native Hut Creek and Leigh River, which meander through the centre of the Wind Farm Area and along the western boundary, respectively. Additionally, the Transmission Corridor intersects cultural heritage sensitivity at two locations, to the east of Lower Plains Road and west of Vicary Road (refer to **Figure 6** in **Attachment 1**).

There are five (5) registered Aboriginal places on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (**VAHR**) within the referral area. The registered places within the referral area comprise of artefact scatters made predominantly of silcrete and quartzite.

A Heritage Advisor will be engaged to prepare a mandatory CHMP for the Project.

Are there any cultural heritage places listed on the Heritage Register or the Archaeological Inventory under the *Heritage Act 1995* within the project area?



16. Energy, wastes & greenhouse gas emissions

What are the main sources of energy that the project facility would consume/generate?

- × Electricity network. If possible, estimate power requirement/output
- × Natural gas network. If possible, estimate gas requirement/output
- **X** Generated on-site. If possible, estimate power capacity/output
- X Other. Please describe.

Please add any relevant additional information.

The Project is proposed to comprise up to 53 WTGs and provide up to 330 MW of wind generation.

What are the main forms of waste that would be generated by the project facility?

- **×** Wastewater. Describe briefly.
- × Solid chemical wastes. Describe briefly.
- **×** Excavated material. Describe briefly.
- \times Other. Describe briefly.

Please provide relevant further information, including proposed management of wastes.

The main forms of waste that would be generated from the Project through the construction phase may include the following:

- Wastewater in the form of grey water and sewerage will predominantly be generated in the site compounds and will be stored in tanks on site and pumped into trucks before appropriate disposal from the Project site.
- Materials excavated from establishment of WTG foundation will predominantly be in the form of spoil. Spoil may need to be temporarily stored on site and re-used for fill and access tracks. If any material needs to be removed from the site, it would be transported to a licensed landfill facility.

What level of greenhouse gas emissions is expected to result directly from operation of the project facility?

- × Less than 50,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per annum
- Between 50,000 and 100,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per annum
- \times Between 100,000 and 200,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per annum
- \times More than 200,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per annum

Please add any relevant additional information, including any identified mitigation options.

Low levels of CO₂ emissions would be generated by the Project during construction and operation from construction machinery and traffic. This would be heavily offset by the Project generating electricity which will displace greenhouse gas emissions from other sources of power.

17. Other environmental issues

Are there any other environmental issues arising from the proposed project?

There is potential for the Project to cause electromagnetic interference to local communication systems, including point to point microwave links. However, the WTG layout has been designed to avoid impacts, including the avoidance of known EMI links. This aspect will be assessed through further investigations during design development, and further appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented, if required.

There is also potential for aviation impacts from the introduction of physical structures (i.e., WTGs, transmission towers, met masts) and adding low-intensity turbulence down-wind (from WTGs) which may affect low-flying aircraft. Thus, an preliminary Aviation Impact Assessment (Aviation Project, 2025) (**Attachment 6**) was undertaken which identified the following:

- The Project infrastructure would not compromise aviation navigation, communication facilities, or radar systems.
- The WTGs have potential to affect two Air Route lowest safe altitude (LSALTs), requiring the minimum altitude at these routes to be raised from 2,900 ft to 3,000 ft.
- The Project is located within Class G airspace (outside all controlled airspace and prohibited, restricted and danger areas).

Overall, the Aviation Impact Assessment (Aviation Project, 2025) found no significant constraints to aviation safety or operations. Further to this, the Project will comply with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (**CASA**) regulations including the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (Cth), particularly those relating to obstacle height limits and electromagnetic interference guidelines.

18. Environmental management

What measures are currently proposed to avoid, minimise or manage the main potential adverse environmental effects? (if not already described above)

× Siting: Please describe briefly

Situated within the proposed Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), the referral area is ideal for a Wind Energy Facility, owing largely to three factors:

- 1. The region's excellent wind resource.
- 2. The highly modified nature of the region's landscape, meaning renewable energy projects can be developed with minimal environmental impacts.
- 3. Proximity to significant grid infrastructure, which will allow for a sufficient grid connection to be established

Infrastructure for the Project has been sited to avoid the most environmentally sensitive parts of the referral area, with impacts to be further avoided and minimised through the final design of the Project's layout.

X Design: Please describe briefly

As described in the previous sections, the Project layout has been refined and designed to ensure environmental impacts are avoided where possible and minimised where they cannot be avoided. The Project land and number of turbines has been reduced, in an effort to reduce environmental, and amenity impacts. Refinement of the layout in consultation with landholders has led to significant reductions in impact.

Further refinement of the layout through the detailed design process is likely to further reduce the Project's environmental impact.

× Environmental management: Please describe briefly.

The Project is committed to best practice environmental management in detailed design, construction and operation. Project specific CEMP and OEMP would be developed to specifically address residual environmental risks after the application of the avoid, minimise and offset hierarchy. In relation to environmental management, the CEMP/OEMP would identify:

- Project objectives and targets.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Environmental legislation, policies, and guidelines relevant to the Project.
- Environmental risks relevant to the Project.
- Mitigation measures and/or sub-plans required to address specific environmental aspects.

- Compliance, auditing, and environmental reporting requirements.
 - X Other: Please describe briefly

19. Other activities

Are there any other activities in the vicinity of the proposed project that have a potential for cumulative effects?

 \times NYD \times No \times Yes If yes, briefly describe.

A number of operating wind farms are located in proximity to the referral area including the Mt Mercer Wind Farm, 8.6 km north-west and the Lal Lal Wind Farm, 10 km north from the closest point of the referral area. The Golden Plains Wind Farm, which is under construction, is located 10 km west of the Wind Farm Area. Any cumulative impacts associated to construction and operation will be assessed and managed through best-practice environmental management measures which would be detailed in the Project's CEMP and OEMP.

20. Investigation program

Study program

Have any environmental studies not referred to above been conducted for the project?
X No X Yes If yes, please list here and attach if relevant.
Has a program for future environmental studies been developed?
No 🗙 Yes If yes, briefly describe.
A number of further investigations are planned which will be necessary to inform the detailed
design of the Project. These studies and assessments are likely to include:
Aviation Impact Assessment
Blade Glint Assessment
Bushfire Assessment
• CHMP
Electromagnetic Interference Assessment
Eloca and Fauna
Controchnical studios
Hydrogeology Assessment
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Noise Assessment
Shadow Flicker Assessment
Surface Water Assessment
Social Impact Assessment
Soil Impact Assessment
Traffic and Transport.

Consultation program

Has a consultation program conducted to date for the project?

No \mathbf{X} Yes If yes, outline the consultation activities and the stakeholder groups or organisations consulted.

A sensitively designed and comprehensive Community and Stakeholder Consultation Program is underway for the Project. Further details regarding project stakeholders and associated engagement principles, tools and activities are summarised in the **Consultation Report for Referral (Attachment 9)** – along with the outcomes of engagement to date.

Key stakeholders along with the principal engagement methods and activities are outlined in brief below:

Project stakeholders

- Host landholders
- Boundary and project site neighbours
- Community members of Meredith, Teesdale, Shelford and Lethbridge
- State and Federal Members of Parliament
- Golden Plains Shire Council
- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- Government agencies and departments, including the Department of Transport and Planning and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Emergency Services, including the CFA
- Lethbridge Airport
- Local community groups and organisations, businesses and educational institutions.

To date, the following **engagement methods and activities** have been undertaken for the project:

- Project Website/ Community Hub:
 - A dedicated <u>project website/ Community Hub</u> has been established to share project information and updates about the project with project stakeholders.
- Community Information Sessions:
 - Two rounds of in-person Community Information Sessions have been undertaken for the project - March 2024 (Lethbridge, Meredith and Teesdale) and November 2024 (Lethbridge, Meredith, Shelford and Teesdale).
- Online Webinars and Information Sessions:
 - Two online information sessions have been held 19 September and 30 October 2024.
- Neighbour Engagement
 - Engagement with neighbours located within the project boundary commenced in late 2022, and extended in early 2023 to those neighbours that border the project.
- Ongoing targeted stakeholder meetings have been established including:
 - Golden Plains Shire Council, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, aviation stakeholders, boundary neighbours, Stakeholder and Community Roundtable Meetings (various impacted stakeholder groups included).
- Australia Post Mailouts, Local Courier Mailouts and Electronic Direct Mail:
 - Australia Post mailouts are used to deliver project information directly to local residents' letterboxes. A local courier service has also been engaged to deliver flyers to local residents to increase local mailout reach.
- 1800 number and project email:
 - A free 1800 number and project email has been established for stakeholders to contact the project team directly.

Has a program for future consultation been developed?

🗙 NYD 🗙 No 🗙 Yes If yes, briefly describe.

A robust Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed for the project that contains an Engagement Action Plan outlining the key engagement activities corresponding to each project milestone. This plan is reviewed and adjusted following each key engagement milestone to ensure that community and stakeholder feedback regarding engagement activities is considered and applied to future engagement opportunities.

Community and stakeholder engagement will continue throughout 2025 and beyond, focusing on referral submission and working with community and project stakeholders as ACCIONA Energia awaits the Minister's decision as to the approval pathway. Once the pathway is known, ACCIONA

Energia will share a draft consultation plan to illustrate its proposed engagement throughout the planning process.

ACCIONA Energia is committed to continuing the bespoke engagement activities established to date throughout the project's feasibility, investigations and EES phases to ensure that the many unique project stakeholder voices are heard and acknowledged. Additionally, ACCIONA Energia plans to bolster its engagement program by continuing to initiate proactive engagement with community stakeholders, including local educational institutions, emergency service providers, local businesses and community organisations.

Authorised person for proponent:

I, **Jacqueline Pertz, Project Coordinator, ACCIONA Energía**, confirm that the information contained in this form is, to my knowledge, true and not misleading.

Signature

Date 05/06/2025

Person who prepared this referral:

I, **Jenny Luk, Partner, ERM,** confirm that the information contained in this form is, to my knowledge, true and not misleading.

Signature _____

Date 05/06/2025