Officer Assessment Report
Energy and Infrastructure Assessment

Meering West Wind Farm

PA2503749 and PA2503750

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Transport and Planning

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Disclaimer

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Executive Summary

The proposed Meering West Wind Farm is located across two local government areas (LGAs); Gannawarra Shire Council and Loddon Shire Council. A separate permit is required for the parts of the project in each LGA.

Key Information	Details	
Application number	PA2503749	PA2503750
Planning scheme	Gannawarra	Loddon
Received	5 June 2025	5 June 2025
Statutory days	18 days	19 days
Applicant	Meering West Wind Farm Pty Ltd as trustee for the Meering West Wind Farm Trust c/- Aurecon Australasia Pty Ltd (Aurecon)	
Location	Various land parcels across both Gannawarra Shire and Loddon Shire, as described in the site description section of this report	
Description	Development of a 155-turbine wind farm, 1000 MWh / 500 MW battery, alteration of access to roads, and removal of a total 5.52 hectares of native vegetation across the Gannawarra and Loddon Shire council area	
Proposal	Use and development of a 141-turbine wind energy facility, utility installations (500 MW battery energy storage system (BESS)), and utility infrastructure, including a terminal station, three collector substations, a 5.94 km above ground transmission line connecting the collector station to the proposed terminal station, and a 270m of 220kV above ground powerline and a section of 550kv powerline within the terminal station for the transmission network connection (into the proposed VNI West). Ancillary infrastructure, including a meteorological mast, access tracks, internal underground cabling and operations and maintenance facilities. Temporary facilities to support construction, including two temporary concrete batching plants, and a temporary construction compound and turbine component laydown areas. Removal of 5.209 hectares (ha) of native vegetation. Display of business identification signs.	Use and development of a 14-turbine wind energy facility, removal of 0.311 ha of native vegetation and display of business identification signs. Ancillary infrastructure, including a meteorological mast, access tracks, internal underground cabling and operations and maintenance facilities.
Development value	$2 billion (total development cost)	

Key Information	Details	
Why is the Minister responsible?	Clause 72.01-1: Energy generation facility with an installed capacity of 1 megawatt or greater, Utility installation used to store electricity if the installed capacity is 1 megawatt or greater, Utility installation used to transmit or distribute electricity. Clause 53.22 (Significant Economic Development).	Clause 72.01-1: Energy generation facility with an installed capacity of 1 megawatt or greater. Clause 53.22 (Significant Economic Development).
Zone	Farming Zone (FZ) Transport Zone (TRZ1 and TRZ2)	Farming Zone (FZ)
Overlays	Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedules 2 and 4 Vegetation Protection Overlay – Schedules 1 and 2 Specific Controls Overlay Schedule 2 Bushfire Management Overlay	Vegetation Protection Overlay - Schedules 1 and 2
Particular Provisions	Clause 52.05 (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)	Clause 52.05 (Signs) Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation) Clause 52.32 (Wind Energy Facility) Clause 53.22 (Significant Economic Development)
Referral Authorities	Secretary to Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) (Recommending for vegetation removal) Secretary to DEECA (Recommending for renewable energy facility in declared irrigation district) Head, Transport for Victoria Department of Transport (Determining for creation or alteration of access to an arterial road) Victorian WorkCover Authority (Determining for the BESS)	Secretary to Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) (Recommending for vegetation removal)
Objections	109 (including Gannawarra Shire Council, Loddon Shire Council and Goulburn Murray Water) 102 objectors objected to both applications	102 (including Loddon Shire Council and Goulburn Murray Water)
Submissions	15, including the following agencies / authorities Country Fire Authority (CFA), VicTrack, North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA), Civil Aviation Safey Authority (CASA) and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (GWMW)	14, including the following agencies / authorities CASA, CFA, GWMW and NCCMA
Irrigation district	Yes	No
Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)	Yes – North West Renewable Energy Zone	Yes – North West Renewable Energy Zone
Cultural Heritage	A mandatory CHMP #20208 for the project was approved on 14 October 2026.	

Key Information	Details
EE Act	The proponent undertook a self-assessment of the project which concluded that an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) was not required. As such, the proponent did not refer the project under the EE Act.
EPBC Act	On 7 January 2026, the project was determined to be a controlled action under s75 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) as it was considered to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance (MNES). The controlled action is not being assessed under the bilateral agreement with Victoria, and the two planning applications can be determined prior to the Commonwealth's decision on the controlled action. A more restrictive Commonwealth decision would mean the planning permits may need to be amended at a future date.
Delegation:	Approval to determine under delegation received on 27 October 2026.
Recommendation:	Issue planning permits PA2503749 and PA2503750 subject to conditions.

Process and Documentation

Planning Process

1. The subject of this report is the assessment of the project under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (PE Act).
2. Given the two applications are for a single project and were managed concurrently, their key milestone dates have been identical, except where specified below:

Milestone	Date
Lodgement of applications	6 June 2025
Applications amended under section 50 of the PE Act	3 July 2025
Further information requested	22 July 2025
Further information received and both applications amended under section 50 of the PE Act	24 November 2025
Further information requested	18 December 2025
Further information requested (on behalf of DEECA)	2 February 2026
Further information requested	27 April 2026
Public notice period	3 July 2026 – 7 August 2026
Amendment of PA2503749 under section 57A of the PE Act	15 October 2026

Decision Documents

3. The subject of this report includes the decision documents submitted with the applications which refer to the project in its entirety across both Gannawarra Shire Council and Loddon Shire Council (as advertised with the applications and described below). Other documents considered are also listed below.

Decision documents for applications PA2503749 and PA2503750
<u>Application Documents</u> Indicative Project Layout Plans prepared by Aurecon and dated 13 October 2026 Site Maps and Turbine Elevations prepared by Aurecon, as follows: – Dwelling Location within 2km from Turbine Layout dated 17 April 2026 – Electrical Design dated 23 April 2026 – Key Existing Easements and Infrastructure dated 2 October 2025 – Land Use dated 17 April 2026 – Location of Nearby Energy Projects dated 22 October 2025 – Mapped Areas of Cultural Sensitivity dated 17 April 2026 – Mapped Waterways and Wetlands dated 17 April 2026 – Regional Context dated 21 October 2025 – Proposed Turbine Elevation dated 16 March 2026

Decision documents for applications PA2503749 and PA2503750

Development Plans and Elevations, as follows:

- Meteorological Mast Plans prepared by Ardill Payne and dated 23 July 2024, as follows:
  - Title Sheet and Drawing Register
  - General Notes
  - General Mast Elevation
  - Mast Assembly Layout
  - Footing Details
  - Mast Section Details
  - Guy Connector Plate Details
  - Top Mast Assembly and Boom Arm Details
- 500MW BESS Plans prepared by Grid Link, as follows:
  - Elevations (MWWF-BS-DWG-ELV-01-001 Rev A)
  - BESS Overall General Arrangement (MWWF-BS-DWG-GNA-01-001 Rev C)
- 500/220kV Terminal Station Plans prepared by Grid Link, as follows:
  - Ultimate General Arrangement (MWWF-EP-DWG-GNA-01-001 Rev B)
  - Elevations (MWWF-EP-DWG-ELV-02-001 Rev A)
- 220/33kV Collector Substation Plans prepared by Grid Link, as follows:
  - Typical General Arrangement (MWWF-EP-DWG-GNA-02-001 Rev A)
  - Elevations (MWWF-EP-DWG-ELV-01-001 Rev A)
- BESS 220/33kV Collector Substation Plans prepared by Grid Link, as follows:
  - General Arrangement (MWWF-EP-DWG-GNA-05-001 Rev A)

Planning Report prepared by Aurecon and dated 26 June 2026

Owner Consents received 26 May 2026

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 13 April 2026

Surface and Groundwater Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 20 November 2025

Preliminary Traffic Impact Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 30 March 2026

Proposed Access Point Map prepared by Aurecon and dated 2 April 2026

BBUS and Collision Risk Assessment prepared by Biosis and dated 27 April 2026

Draft Bat and Avifauna Management Plan prepared by Biosis and dated 15 June 2026

Flora and Fauna Assessment prepared by Biosis and dated 23 June 2026, including superseded Native Vegetation Removal Reports

Native Vegetation Removal Reports (NVRR), as follows:

- NVRR ID: 338_20261014_UMD
- NVRR ID: 338_20261014_S1N
- NVRR ID: 338_20261014_8L1

Level 1 and 2 Brolga Assessments prepared by Biosis and dated 24 April 2026

Habitat Zone Photos prepared by Biosis and dated 26 April 2026

Decision documents for applications PA2503749 and PA2503750

Pre-Construction Predicative Noise Assessment prepared by Resonate and dated 23 April 2026

Supplementary Cumulative Noise Assessment prepared by Resonate and dated 15 June 2026

Auditor Verification of Pre-Construction Predictive Noise Assessment and Addendum prepared by Bajwa Enviro Consult and dated 28 May 2026

Aeronautical Impact Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 14 April 2026

Aviation Safety Risk Assessment prepared by Aviation Projects and dated June 2026

Hazard and Risk Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 14 April 2026

Shadow Flicker and Blade Glint Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 23 April 2026

Telecommunications Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 22 April 2026

Land Tenure plan prepared by Aurecon and dated 13 October 2026

Preliminary Traffic Impact Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 30 March 2026

DTP Requests for information (RFI), dated 22 July 2025, 18 December 2025, 2 February 2026, 25 May 2026, and 1 June 2026

Requests under section 50 of the PE Act, as follows:

- 3 July 2025 (to address gaps in the application)
- 24 November 2025 (to change the applicant)

Request under section 57A of the PE Act on 15 October 2026

Responses to requests for information received, dated:

- 21 November 2025 (submission of a broad package of documents, including amended documents, to respond to the RFI dated 22 July 2025)
- 24 November 2025 (submission of a Shadow Flicker and Blade Glint Assessment)
- 17 April 2026 (submission of an access point plan and associated covering letter responding to Head, TfV's request for further information)
- 27 April 2026 (submission of broad package of amended documents to respond to the RFIs dated 18 December 2025 and 2 February 2026)
- 25 May 2026 (submission of an updated Shadow Flicker and Blade Glint Assessment with its appendix included)
- 26 May 2026 (submission of updated landholder consents)
- 28 May 2026 (submission of an updated Traffic Impact Assessment with its appendix included)
- 28 May 2026 (submission of Auditor Verification of Pre-Construction Predictive Noise Assessment and Addendum)
- 5 June 2026 (withdrawal of native vegetation removal swept path maps)
- 11 June 2026 (confirmation of parcels comprising subject site)
- 14 June 2026 (submission of email response to DEECA Water RFI)
- 15 June 2026 (submission of covering letter and amended biodiversity reports, responding to DEECA PEA RFI)
- 16 June 2026 (submission of updated Pre-Construction Predictive Noise Assessment and Supplementary Cumulative Noise Assessment)
- 16 June 2026 (submission of Aviation Safety Risk Assessment and updated Planning Report)
- 24 June 2026 (submission of high-resolution Flora and Fauna Assessment)
- 29 June 2026 (submission of advice about borrow pits)

Decision documents for applications PA2503749 and PA2503750

Section 55 referral responses

Head, Transport for Victoria

- Referred on 30 November 2025
- Requested further information on 23 December 2025
- Re-referred on 7 May 2026
- Referral response and advice received 4 June 2026
- Updated referral response and advice received 15 October 2026

WorkSafe Victoria

- Referred on 30 November 2025
- Referral response received 19 January 2026
- Re-referred on 7 May 2026
- WorkSafe confirms January referral response on 05 June 2026

DEECA Water

- Referred on 15 May 2026
- Requested further information on 2 June 2026
- Referral response received 13 July 2026

DEECA PEA– dated 11 September 2026

- Referred on 30 November 2025
- Requested further information about clause 52.17 on 22 December 2025
- Requested further information about flora and fauna on 22 January 2026
- Re-referred on 7 May 2026
- Requested further information 28 May 2026
- Requested updated Native Vegetation Removal Reports on 2 July 2026
- Referral response and advice received 17 July 2026
- Updated referral response and advice received 29 September 2026

Interagency advice

- Freight Victoria – 11 December 2025
- CFA – 11 December 2025
- DEECA PEA – refer above to referrals
- Head, TFV – refer above to referrals

Submissions

- 15 submissions to PA2503749, including:
  - CFA – 29 July 2026
  - CASA – 20 August 2026
  - North Central Catchment Management Authority – 7 September 2026
  - VicTrack – 19 August 2026
  - Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water – 6 July 2026
- 14 submissions to PA2503750, including:
  - CFA – 29 July 2026
  - CASA – 20 August 2026
  - North Central Catchment Management Authority – 7 September 2026
  - Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water – 6 July 2026

Decision documents for applications PA2503749 and PA2503750

Objections

- 109 objections to PA2503749, including:
  - Gannawarra Shire Council – 6 August 2026
  - Loddon Shire Council – 6 August 2026
  - Goulburn Murray Water – 21 August 2026
- 102 objections to PA2503750, including:
  - Loddon Shire Council – 6 August 2026
  - Goulburn Murray Water – 21 August 2026

Proposal

4. Applications PA2503749 and PA2503750 seek approval for the use and development of the land for a wind energy facility, utility installations (battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated utility infrastructure), removal of native vegetation, earthworks, business identification signage and alteration of access to a road in a Transport 2 Zone.
5. The project originally included 164 turbines when notice was given in July 2026, However, in October 2026 the proponent amended the PA2503749 (Gannawarra) to delete 9 turbines and remove a number of land parcels from the project area, in response toa landholder indicating they no longer wanted to be involved in the project.
6. The project can be summarised as follows:

- Maximum of 155 wind turbines (WTGs)
  - Up to 141 WTGs will be located within Gannawarra
  - Up to 14 WTGs will be located within Loddon
- Wind turbines to the following specifications:
  - Maximum blade tip height of 280 metres (m)
  - Maximum rotor diameter of 172 m
  - Minimum blade tip clearance of 80m above finished ground level
  - Maximum hub height of 194m
  - No aviation lighting is proposed on the turbines
  - Note that the proponent has sought approval for a turbine envelope to allow some flexibility. Turbines will have a maximum 172m diameter, but the rotor may be mounted on varied tower heights. A 280m tip height would have a 108m minimum blade clearance. A 252m tip height would have an 80 m minimum blade clearance.
- BESS with an installed capacity of 500 MW / 1000 MWh.
- Associated utility infrastructure, including:
  - Terminal station (to facilitate connection to the proposed Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) transmission line
  - Three collector substations
- Approx. 5.94km of above ground 220 kV powerline running in east-west between the terminal station near the intersection of Meran Road and White Elephant Road and the collector station further east along Meran Road, entirely within the project land.
- Approx. 270m of above ground 220 kV powerline and a short section of 550 kV powerline within the terminal station to match the VNI West voltage for grid connection.
- 33kV underground cabling

(Note: The proponent has sought approval for one BESS, terminal station and two associated substations is two separate envelopes to allow some flexibility in the siting of this infrastructure. The first proposed location is near WTGs no. 120 and 129, close to the intersection of Meering West Road and Crump Road. The second proposed location is within the property near the intersection of Meran Road and White Elephant Road, next to WTGs no. 52, 23 and 55.)

- Ancillary infrastructure, including:
  - One meteorological mast
  - Access tracks
  - Operations and maintenance facilities
  - Temporary facilities to support construction, including a two temporary concrete batching plants, and temporary construction compounds and turbine component laydown areas.

- Site access provided by approximately 101 access points, primarily from Meran Road and Meering West Road.
- Business identification signage with a total display area of less than 3m^2
- Removal of up to 5.52 ha of native vegetation:
  - 5.209 ha of native vegetation, including 39 large trees in Gannawarra Shire
  - 0.311 ha of native vegetation patches, including 2 large trees in Loddon Shire

7. All utility installation infrastructure, including the BESS, terminal station, 220 kV east / west powerline, and substations, is located solely within the Gannawarra Shire.
8. A breakdown of the project components within each local government area (LGA) are detailed as follows:

Parameter	Gannawarra Shire	Loddon Shire	Total
Wind turbines	141	14	155
BESS	1	0	1
Terminal station	1	0	1
Collector substations	3	0	3
Operations and maintenance facility	1	0	1
Temporary construction compound	1	0	1
Temporary concrete batching plants	2	0	2
Zones	Farming Zone (FZ) Transport Zone 1 and 2 (TRZ1 and TRZ2)	Farming Zone (FZ) Transport Zone 2 (TRZ2)	
Overlays	Specific Controls Overlay – Schedule 2 (SCO2) Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedules 2 and 4 (ESO2 and ESO4) Vegetation Protection Overlay – Schedules 1 and 2 (VPO1 and VPO2) Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)	Vegetation protection Overlay Schedules 1 and 2 (VPO1 and VPO2)	
Native Vegetation Removal	5.209ha 39 Large Trees	0.311ha 2 large trees	5.52ha 41 large trees
Native Vegetation Offset Requirement	1.7550 GHU	0.1150 GHU	1.8690 GOU

9. The proposal is located near the rural town of Kerang in northern Victoria as shown in Figure 1.

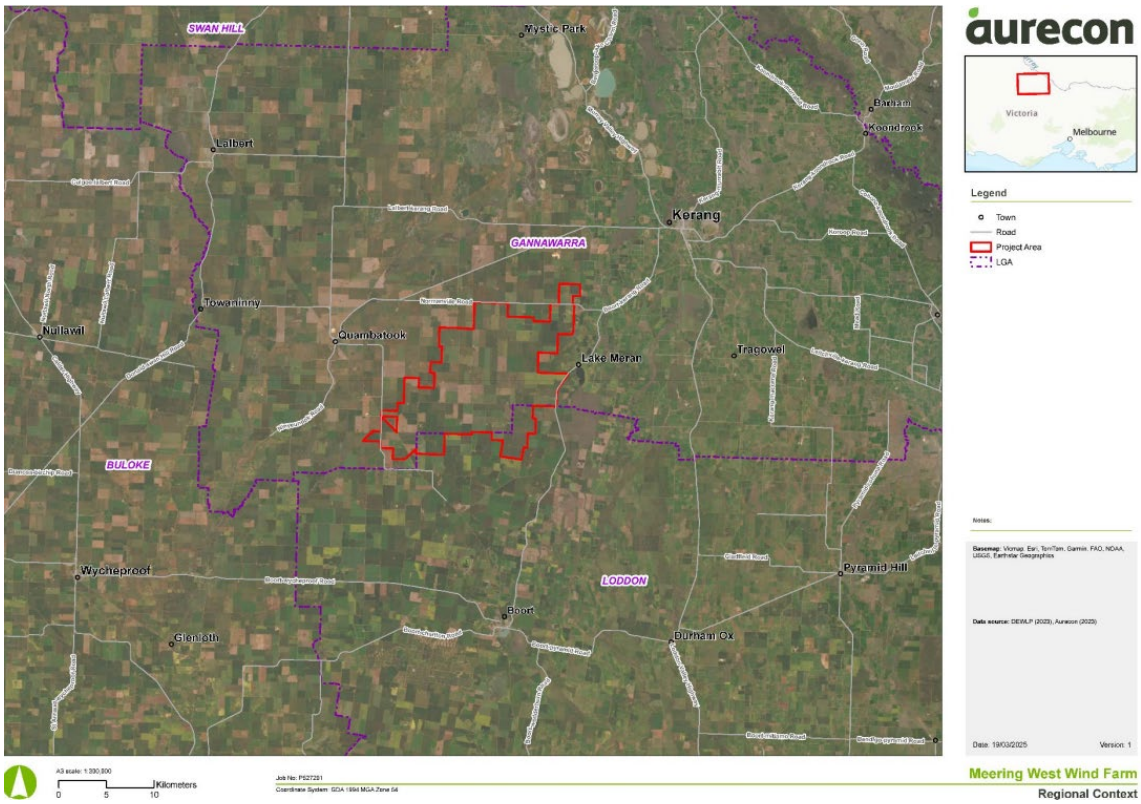

Figure 1: *Regional Context Plan (Source: Planning Report)*

10. The applicant has provided the following the following concept plans and images of the proposal:

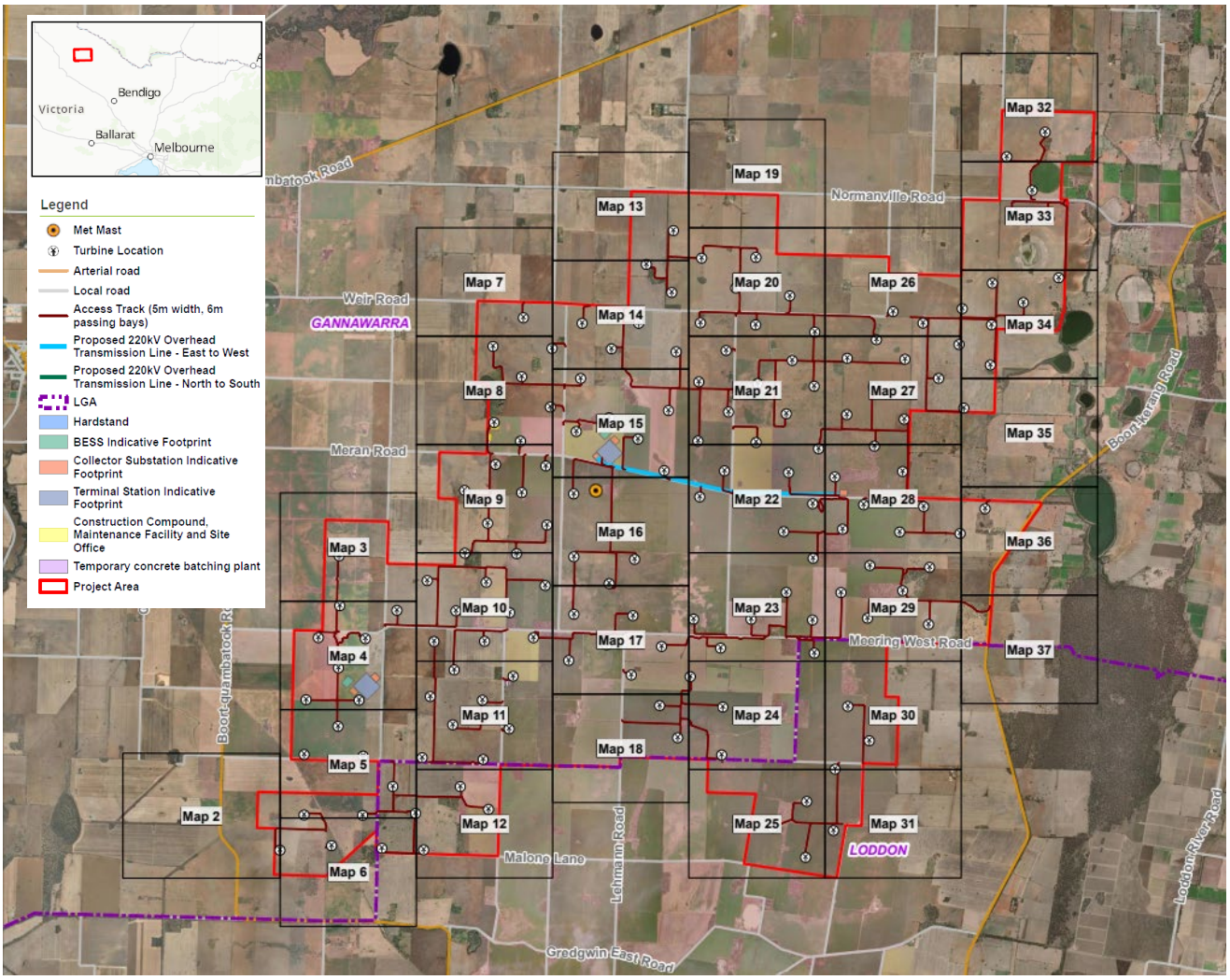

Figure 2: *Indicative project layout (Source: Application)*

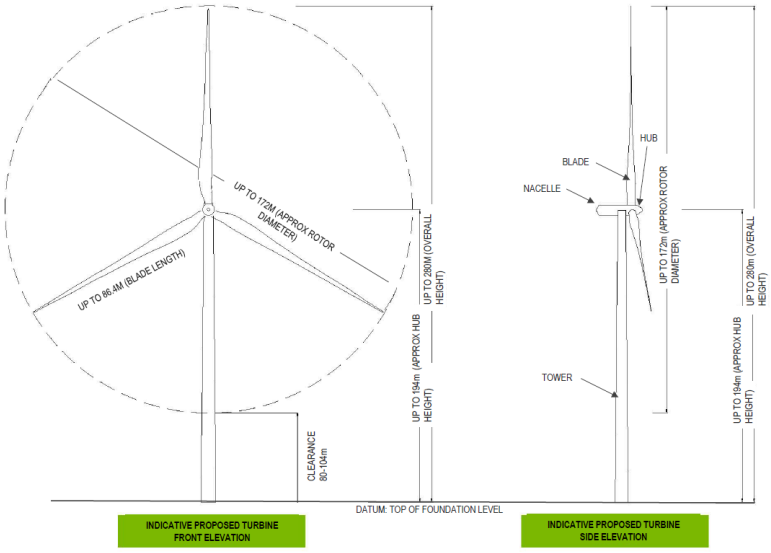

Figure 3: *Proposed Turbine Elevations (Source: Application)*

Subject Site and Surrounds

Site Description

11. The proposed development is located within the Gannawarra Shire and Loddon Shire Local Government Areas (LGAs) and is approximately 110 km north of Bendigo and 12 kilometres south-west of Kerang.
12. The site is located within the North West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) declared under section 63 of the *National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005*.
13. The site encompasses approximately 20,000 ha, with most of the land within the Shire of Gannawarra (approximately 18,000 ha) and the remaining area intersecting with the Shire of Loddon (approximately 2,000 ha).
14. The subject site is located in the catchment areas of the Avoca and Loddon Rivers which form part of the Murray Darling Basin. The Loddon River is located approximately 8 km east of the subject site and the Avoca River is approximately 5 km west of the subject site.
15. There are various small areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity (CHS) located with the site. There are no Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) or Inventory (VHI) sites with the project boundary.
16. The subject site is located on country associated with the Barapa people, Wamba Wamba and Wemba Wemba peoples, and Wiran people but is not located in a Registered Aboriginal Party area.
17. Multiple un-named drainage lines flow through the subject site, including two larger channels. A lunette is located in the north-eastern corner of the subject site.
18. The subject site can be accessed via several routes; the key access points are as follows:
    - Eastern access via Normanville Road, Meran Road and Meering West Road, all linking to Boort-Kerang Road;
    - Western access through Normanville Road and Weir Road, which connect to Kerang-Quambatook Road, as well as Meran Road and Meering West Road, which connect to Quambatook-Boort Road;
    - Northern access via Denyer Road, connecting to Kerang-Quambartook Road; and
    - Southern access via Lehmanns Road.
19. The site is predominantly agricultural land and utilised mostly for dryland cropping. The majority of the subject site consists of privately owned farmland which contains associated structures, such as dwellings, machinery sheds, grain silos and internal access tracks, are present throughout the subject site. A site visit was undertaken in October 2026.
20. A over 100 titles exist for land comprising the site, with a total of 31 host landowners. Title documents for the site have been provided, and there are no covenants, encumbrances, or agreements under section 173 of the PE Act on the land. Several easements affect the site, including:
    - Water supply and drainage in favour of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission (various);
    - Powerline in favour of State Electricity Commission; and,
    - Drainage channels and water supply/storage not specified to be in favour of any agency (various).
21. The site is predominantly freehold land but there are some Crown land parcels, particularly along roads and bushland reserves.
22. There are 18 turbines proposed to be located with 1 km of a dwelling. Written consent from the owners of these dwellings was provided with the application in accordance with clause 52.32-3. The proposed minimum setback distances from the turbines to the closest dwellings are listed below:
    - WTG10 - 775 m
    - WTG16 – 922 m
    - WTG29 – 599 m
    - WTG30 – 839 m
    - WTG37 – 401 m
    - WTG70 – 992 m
    - WTG76 – 672 m
    - WTG81 – 992 m

- WTG83 – 905 m
- WTG86 – 893 m
- WTG96 – 977 m
- WTG99 – 856 m
- WTG106 – 693 m
- WTG107 – 899 m
- WTG118 – 919 m
- WTG123 – 311 m
- WTG128 – 628 m
- WTG132 – 881 m

23. The site is located within a designated Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) under the *Building Act 1993*.
24. The northeastern corner of the site is located within the Loddon Valley irrigation district (declared under Part 6A of the *Water Act 1989*). The Normanville Irrigation Channel passes through the northern and central portions of the site in the Gannawarra LGA as shown in Figure 4 below.
25. The majority of the subject site has been historically cleared to support agricultural uses and remnant vegetation and fauna habitats have been largely removed. However, there are still some threatened flora and fauna species and native vegetation present (or potentially present) on or surrounding the site, as described in the biodiversity section of this report below.

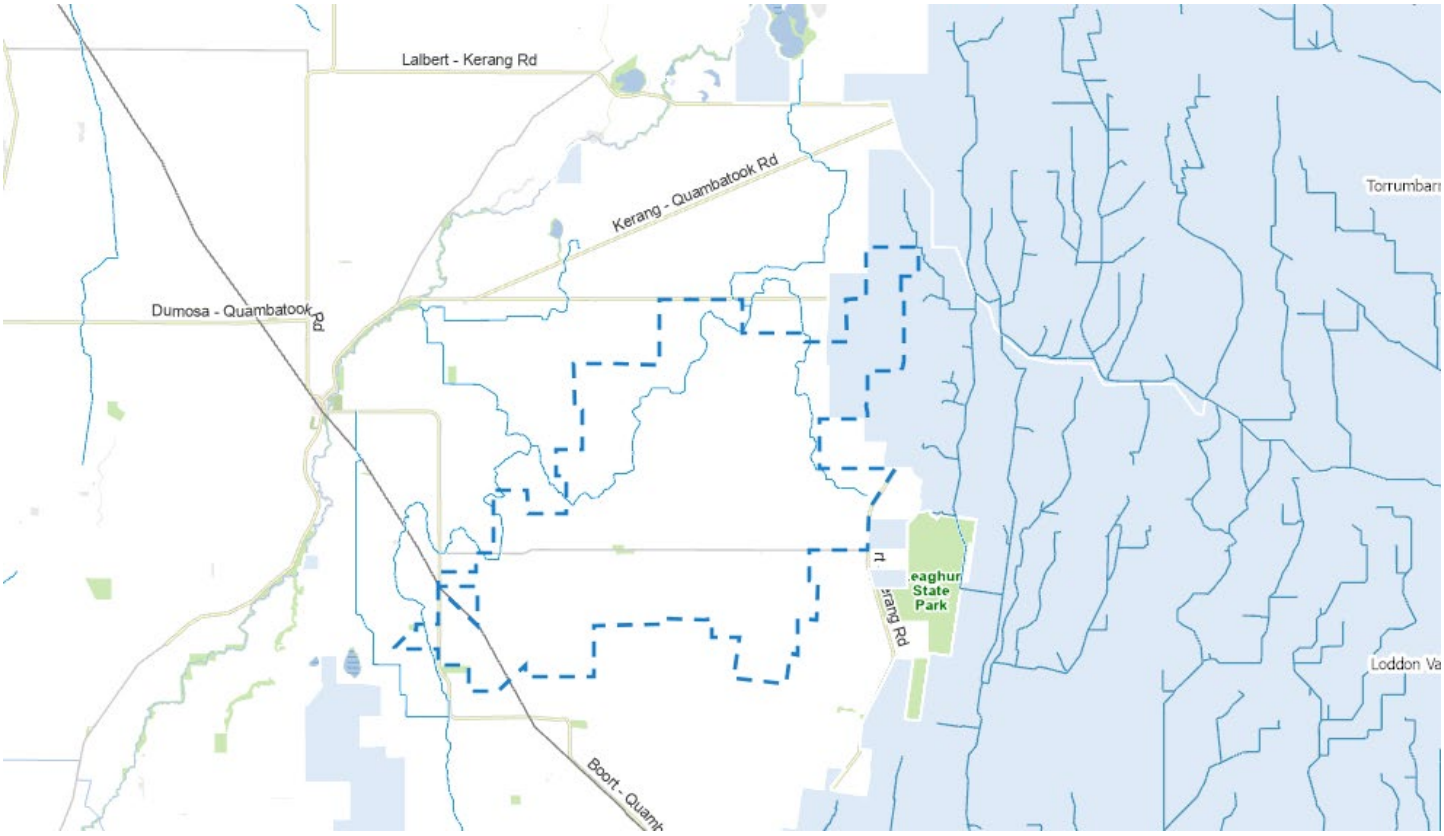

Figure 4: *Location of the Normanville Irrigation Channel and other irrigation channels (blue solid lines), irrigation district (blue fill) and subject site (blue dashed line).*

Broader Surrounds

26. The land surrounding the wind farm site is predominantly used for dryland and irrigated agriculture, including cereal cropping, pasture and livestock grazing.

27. The broader landscape is characterised by a highly modified, generally flat to gently undulating agricultural setting.
28. The nearest township is Kerang, located approximately 15 km to the northeast of the site. Other nearby regional townships include Cohuna, approximately 40 km to the east, Boort, approximately 20 km to the south and Swan Hill, approximately 55 km to the north.
29. The Kerang Aerodrome (owned and operated by Gannawarra Shire Council) is located approximately 13 km northeast of the site and Swan Hill Airport (owned and operated by Swan Hill Rural City Council) is located 55 km north of the site.
30. The surrounding area contains a network of irrigation infrastructure. The land to the east of the site is located in the Loddon Valley irrigation district as shown in Figure 3 above.
31. Several conservation reserves, lakes and areas of environmental significance occur within the broader area, including:

    - Salt Lake located in the north-east corner of the subject site;
    - Lake Bael Bael and Little Marsh (part of the Koorangie Wildlife Reserve) and the Bael Bael Grassland Nature Conservation Reserve, approximately 9 km north;
    - Lake Elizabeth and the Wandella Nature Conservation Reserve, approximately 9 km northeast;
    - Lake Meran and the Leaghur State Park, approximately 4 kilometres east;
    - Sandhill Lake Bushland Reserve (also part of the Koorangie Wildlife Reserve) and the Avoca Rover, approximately 11km northwest; and,
    - Lake Murphy and the Tragowel Swamp Nature Conservation Reserve, approximately 5km and 12km to the east respectively.

32. Lake Bael Bael and the surrounding lakes in the Koorangie Wildlie Reserve are part of the Kerang Wetlands RAMSAR site. The Koorangie Wildlife Reserve, Lake Meran Wildlife Reserve and Lake Murphy Wildlife Reserve are all hunting reserves.
33. The locality contains a number of operating and approved renewable energy generation and storage projects, including the operating Gannawarra Solar Farm and Gannawarra BESS located approximately 7 km north of the site on Lalbert-Kerang Road, the approved (but not constructed) Normanville Energy Park located adjoining the site to the north, the approved Kerang 1 and Kerang 2 Solar Farms and Kerang Greenswitch Solar Power projects approximately 15 km east, the approved Tragowel Solar Farm approximately 15 km east and the approved Macorna Solar Farm approximately 23 km east.
34. There are also a number of proposed energy facilities in the surrounding region including the Cannie Wind Farm located approximately 10km northeast, currently going through an environment effects statement (EES) process.

Referrals

35. The application was referred to the following authorities under section 55 of the PE Act, as summarised below:

Organisation and relevant application(s)	Clause/Type/ Provision	Response Date	Response	DTP Assessment
Secretary to Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA Water) **PA2503749**	66.02-12 (Recommending) An application to use or develop land for a renewable energy facility located within an irrigation district declared under Part 6A of the *Water Act 1989*.	13 July 2026	No objection subject to the applicant taking all necessary steps to prevent negative impacts to regional and local irrigation assets.	It is considered appropriate to include Construction and Operational Management Plan (CEMP) conditions on any permit to issue, which would include requirements associated with the protection of regional and local irrigation assets.
Secretary to Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA Regions) **PA2503749 and PA2503750**	66.02-2 (Recommending) For the removal of native vegetation in the 'detailed assessment pathway'.	29 September 2026	No objection subject to conditions requiring notification of permit condition requirements to the persons undertaking the vegetation removal, specification of the amount of native vegetation approved for removal, offsets, a Native Vegetation Protection Plan (NVVP) and a CEMP.	It is recommended that DEECA's conditions as a referral authority and those provided as interdepartmental advice, should be included, noting that the figures related to the removal of native vegetation should be adjusted to reflect the NVRRs received 15 October 2026.
WorkSafe Victoria **PA2503749**	66.02-7 (Determining) to use land for a utility installation where a fire protection quantity is exceeded under the Dangerous Goods (Storage	17 January 2026	No objection subject to conditions requiring: Must comply with the risk controls outlined in the Hazard Risk Assessment prior	These conditions must be included on any permit to issue for PA2503749.

Organisation and relevant application(s)	Clause/Type/ Provision	Response Date	Response	DTP Assessment
	and Handling) Regulations 2022		to the BESS arrival on site Fire Management and Emergency Management Plan in line with CFA guidelines Prior to commencement of construction the applicant must seek and have regard to written advice from the relevant fire authority's dangerous goods units.	
Head, Transport for Victoria **PA2503749**	66.03 (Determining) for the creation or alteration of access to a freeway or arterial road.	15 October 2026	No objection subject to conditions (inter alia): preparation of a Traffic Management Plan (TMP), including an existing conditions survey, designation of pre-construction, construction and transport routes, engineering plans demonstrating traffic movements, rehabilitation of existing public roads and the appointment of a Road Quality Auditor. Even though Head, TfV is not a referral authority for PA2503750, they have recommended that	These conditions must be included on any permit to issue for PA2503749. In accordance with advice from Head, TfV, identical conditions should be included on any permit to issue for PA2503750. This will provide for consistency in managing traffic and transport impacts during the development, operation and decommissioning of the project.

Organisation and relevant application(s)	Clause/Type/ Provision	Response Date	Response	DTP Assessment
			Head, TfV's recommended conditions be included on both permits.	

Public Notice

36. In accordance with section 52 of the PE Act, public notice of both applications was given concurrently between 3 July 2026 and 7 August 2026. Notice was given in the following manner:

Section of PE Act	Notice was given to:
52(1)(a)	Owners and occupiers of adjoining land
52(1)(b)	Gannawarra Shire Council (PA2503749) Loddon Shire Council (PA2503750)
52(1)(c)	Clause 66.06 of the Gannawarra and Loddon Planning Schemes requires notice of both applications to be given to DEECA, and to the Head Transport for Victoria under the Gannawarra Planning Scheme. However, in accordance with clause 66, the conditions from both agencies provided in response to section 55 referrals are adequate and the department was satisfied that no notice was required.
52(1)(d)	Owners and occupiers, who do not receive notice under section 52(1)(a), of all land within 5 km of the site; and The following agencies, authorities and councils: – EnergySafe Victoria – VicGrid – First Peoples State Relations – Barapa Aboriginal Corporation – Wamba Wemba Aboriginal Corporation – Wiran Aboriginal Corporation – Country Fire Authority – Gannawarra Shire Council (PA2503750) – Loddon Shire Council (PA2503749) – Civil Aviation Safety Authority – Airservices Australia – Swan Hill Rural City Council (Swan Hill Airport) – Buloke Shire Council (Wycheproof Airport) – North Central Catchment Management Authority – VicTrack – Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water – Goulburn Murray Water – Coliban Water

Section of PE Act	Notice was given to:
	– Bureau of Meteorology – Agriculture Victoria

37. Application PA2503749 was amended after notice was given for both applications. In accordance with section 57B of the PE Act it was considered that as a result of the amendedments to the application the grant of a permit would not cause detriment to any person.

Objections and Submissions

38. A total of 109 objections and 15 submissions, across both applications, have been received at the time of writing this report.
39. The following concerns were raised in the objections:

- Biodiversity impacts including;
  - Impact to Southern Brolga and other protected wildlife and biodiversity in the area
  - Wildlife surveys not undertaken during peak seasons (April-August)
  - Application should go through an EES process given proximity to Ramsar Wetland
  - Environmental threat to RAMSAR wetland
- Impact on farming - disrupt core day to day farming activities, agricultural activity and farming output.
- Construction and operation of wind farm will restrict movement of heavy machinery, oversized farm equipment and livestock across adjacent properties and local access roads.
- Devaluation of land
- Cumulative impacts and pressure due to VNI West transmission line and multiple large-scale energy/infrastructure projects in the surrounding area
- Incompatible with agricultural land use
- Inadequate documentation
- Poor consultation with community that do not meet VicGrid developer guidelines.
- Severe agricultural and fire risk
- Landscape and Visual impacts. The area is considered to be 'low sensitivity' as identified in the LVIA.
- Farming operations disrupted during construction phase through impact to local road network leading to inefficiencies, delays and potential financial loss.
- Restriction to aerial firefighting
- Electromagnetic impacts. Interference to GPS guidance systems, precision farming operations and aerial spraying.
- Bushfire risk and assumption that local firefighting resources are available and sufficiently equipped.
- Unprecedented scale of 280m high WTGs.
- No compensation for neighbours affected by turbines
- Concerns regarding blade throw on public roads in the event of structural failure of the WTGs.
- Human health impacts: sleep disturbance due to noise, visual impacts, shadow flicker and emotional stress
- Impact to precision irrigation infrastructure and long-term agricultural productivity
- Inadequate acoustic report and noise modelling failing to take in to account the quiet environment of the flat plains.
- A peer review prepared by L Huson & Associates report dated August 2026 which several objectors relied upon states that:
  - The noise predications are overly optimistic and appear unreasonable for the BESS and the wind farm

  - The FZ warrants consideration of high acoustic amenity. When high amenity is applied, there is non-compliance evident
  - A lack of comprehensive assessment of low frequency noise for the BESS
  - Tonal corrections to calculate effective noise levels have not been properly applied to the BESS ancillary equipment
  - The closeness of the WTGs will cause wake turbulence on neighbouring turbines and increase amplitude and sound power of each turbine which have not been considered
- Objection to the application being assessed through the DFP pathway given the scale, unresolved ecological issues and level of community concern which removes the opportunity for a planning panel process or third-party appeal rights.
- Disproportionate impacts on non-hosting farms. Neighbouring properties will bear long-term amenity, operational and market burden without compensation.
- Unassessed impacts on visual amenity and property values for non-hosting farms
- An incomplete CHMP
- Impact upon Tourism
- Concern over BESS and fire safety
- Impact to non-hosting properties with farming practices that have been certified as Demeter Biodynamic (enhanced form of organic farming). Contamination impacts as a result of chemical shedding and microplastics from location of WTGs, concrete pads, turbine blade erosion to soil & water resulting in not being able to demonstrate key areas for certification.
- Undermine accreditation under the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program
- Increased traffic on local roads
- Lack of detail around Decommissioning
- Threat to irrigated agricultural and dairy sectors
- Strain on local infrastructure which is unfunded
- Inadequacy if time allowed to respond to applications

Gannawarra Shire Council & Loddon Shire Council

40. The Gannawarra Shire Council and Loddon Shire Council each submitted an objection, dated 7 August 2026, raising primary concerns regarding the proposal, including:

Key Concerns	Gannawarra Shire Council	Loddon Shire Council	DTP Response
Potential impacts on environmental, cultural, economic values warrant a referral through the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process	☑	☑	The proponent undertook a self-assessment of the project, demonstrating that the individual criteria and combined criteria did not meet the referral threshold requirements and concluded that a referral under the EE Act was not required.
Impact on local road network during construction	☑	☑	Head, TfV have provided conditions, including a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) which considers construction impacts to both LGAs. The TMP will be prepared with all relevant local road authorities. Refer transport and traffic assessment below.

Key Concerns	Gannawarra Shire Council	Loddon Shire Council	DTP Response
Amenity impacts to neighbouring landholders (i.e. landscape and visual, noise and shadow flicker)	☑	☑	Consideration of these matters is discussed in the assessment section of this report.
Change to the rural landscape character and Impacts on rural amenity	☑	☑	Recommended conditions on both permits (unless specified) would require: – On-site landscaping plan for the utility infrastructure (only Gannawarra permit) – Off-site landscaping plan – Shadow flicker restricted to 30 hours per annum (unless an agreement is in place) – Predictive Noise Assessments for the final turbine layout and utility infrastructure – Verification report of the wind turbine noise predictive noise assessment to be prepared by an environmental auditor.
Direct and indirect environmental impacts, relating to biodiversity, native vegetation, flooding and hydrology.	☑	☑ Raised that the project is in close proximity to lakes, Leaghur State Forest and Ramsar listed wetlands. The proposed site contributes to local water into catchment.	Construction impacts relating to stormwater runoff will be captured in the CEMP condition on both permits. Refer to the clause 52.17 biodiversity, surface water and ground water sections of the report.
Cumulative impacts of multiple renewable energy development	☑	☑	Considered throughout the thematic sections of the report.

Goulburn Murray Water (GMW)

41. An objection was received from Goulburn Murray Water (GWM) (an agency who were not referral authorities under section 55 of the PE Act), dated 21 August 2026, which raised the following matters:

- GMW submits that a majority of project land parcels are within the Goulburn Murray Water Irrigation District and serviced by GWM irrigation infrastructure, which holds a current water use license.
- GMW has advised that there are no plans for decommissioning irrigation infrastructure in this region.
- Given the site is a serviced property, has a water use license in place, and the infrastructure is planned to be retained by the rural water corporation (not decommissioned), GWM does not support the proposal as the site is not suitable location for this proposed development.

42. Despite the objection, GWM suggested several conditions to be included in the permit should the proposal be approved by the responsible authority. These conditions related to requirements for compliance with EPA Publication 1834.2 (*Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide (September 2025)*); setbacks from GMW assets, waterways and drainage lines; licensing for works on GMW managed land easement, reserve or crown land; management of on-site wastewater, stormwater, surface water and groundwater impacts; protection of GMW telemetry network or infrastructure; preparation of CEMP, OEMP, Emergency Management Plan and Fire Water Management Plan; groundwater monitoring bores; and implementation of measures to avoid, mitigate and monitor potential contamination risks.
43. It is noted that the majority of the project site is not located in an Irrigation District.
44. Refer to the Surface Water section of this assessment regarding the discussion relating to the irrigation district and impacts to GWM assets. GMW's conditions relating to setback requirement to irrigation assets will be included on both permits.
45. The above matters are considered in the assessment section of this report. A response to some of the other prominent matters raised in the objections is provided in the table below:

Objector Concern	DTP Officer Response
Property values	The consideration of property values and land devaluation is not included within the decision guidelines of the planning scheme and cannot be considered within the assessment and determination of the project.
Application Pathway (DFP/EES)	There were several submissions relating to the assessment pathway for the project. Pursuant to Clause 53.22 (Significant Economic Development) of the Gannawarra and Loddon planning schemes, the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for assessing applications for land to be used for the purpose of a Renewable Energy facility where the capacity is 1 megawatt or greater. This pathway does not exempt the project from responding to all other relevant clauses of the planning scheme, other legislation or guidelines. These requirements have been assessed in the body of the officer's report. On 7 January 2026, the project was determined to be a controlled action under s75 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) as it was considered to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance (MNES). It is noted that this process is concurrent with the planning permit process and that this controlled action is not being assessed under the bilateral agreement with Victoria. As such, the two planning applications can be determined prior to the Commonwealth's decision on the controlled action. Regarding the requirements for an EES, it is noted that the proponent undertook a self-assessment of the project, demonstrating that the individual criteria and combined criteria did not meet the referral threshold requirements and concluded that a referral under the EE Act was not required. Notwithstanding this, biodiversity matters are addressed throughout the officer's report with supporting documentation provided by the proponent to determine and address impacts of the project upon the surrounding biodiversity. Further, this information has been issued to DEECA for review to assess the project impacts.
Farming Impacts	Concern about impacts to specific farm practices, such as biodynamic farming and the LPA program in addition to typical farming activities. Impact on farming has been considered as part of the officer assessment. Conditions that relate to biosecurity risks and hazards will form part of the conditions required for a Construction Environmental Management Plan, Operation Environmental Management Plan and Transport Management Plan to address these concerns.

Objector Concern	DTP Officer Response
Community engagement / consultation	As outlined in this report, public notice of the applications was given in two newspapers and to all properties within 5km of the site in accordance with the requirements of s52 of the PE Act. Additionally, it is understood that community engagement activities were undertaken, commencing in 2021 through to 2026 including; community sponsorships established, consultation with project landholders and local Councils, pop up information sessions at the Kerang Show, Kerang Market, Kerang and Quambatook, door knocking, mailout and flyers, a website, a brolga information mailout and ongoing attendance at local events by the proponent team.

Submissions

46. Fifteen submissions were received including from government agencies and authorities (who were not referral authorities under section 55 of the PE Act), as summarised below:

Submitter	Date received	Summary of submission	DTP Response
CASA	20 August 2026	No objection, and recommended that: – The wind farm should be lit with at least 200 candela steady red lighting at night and during low visibility. – The visual impact on the community should be a consideration when assessing lighting options. – Relevant aerodrome (e.g., Kerang Airport and Quambatook Aerodrome) and aviation operators should be consulted to ensure that they can accept any proposed changes. Prior to any changes to airspace, CASA will require confirmation from the aerodrome operator of their acceptance before any such changes are implemented. – Details of the WTGs should be reported to Airservices and Department of Defence. – AirServices Australia should be contacted to publish a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) advising pilots that the construction of tall structures in the area is imminent.	The recommendations (excluding aviation safety lighting) have been incorporated into the conditions of both permits.
CFA	30 July 2026	No objection, subject to conditions requiring the following plans to the satisfaction of CFA: – Risk Management Plan (RMP) – Emergency Plan (EP) – Fire Management Plan (FMP)	Conditions to this effect are recommended to be included on any permits issued.
Grampians Wimmera Mallee	6 July 2026	No objection with no conditions.	Noted.

Submitter	Date received	Summary of submission	DTP Response
(GWM) Water			
North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA)	7 September 2026	No objection with no conditions. Advice was provided relating to the following: – Two ephemeral un-named lakes within the project land should be considered as areas of cultural heritage sensitivity (CHS), with the CHMP assessing impacts on the full extent of the lake and lunette features – Detailed flood levels have not been determined for the area; however, it is likely some parts of the area would be affected by flooding during a 1% AEP event.	Noted. Refer to the cultural heritage and surface water sections of the report.
VicTrack	19 August 2026	No objection, subject to conditions protecting railway land, infrastructure and services: – A license for the services/utilities crossing from VicTrack prior to commencement of buildings and works. – Before the commencement of development, including demolition and bulk excavation, the Rail Operator must be contacted V/Line Third Party Access Portal to obtain the Rail Operator's conditions and safety requirements for works on, over or adjacent to the railway land.	These conditions have been included only on the Gannawarra permit.

47. On balance, it is considered that the matters raised in the objections and submissions, which are relevant to the assessment of the planning permit application, are suitably addressed by the application, subject to the recommended conditions.

Assessment

Key Considerations

48. The Gannawarra and Loddon Planning Schemes (Schemes) contain policies and controls that guide the assessment of wind energy facilities, utility installations and native vegetation removal. These are found in the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), Planning Policy Framework (PPF), zones, overlays, and other relevant provisions. The assessment below addresses the relevant sections of the Schemes while having regard to the matters which must be considered in accordance with section 60 of the PE Act, including the objections and submissions, referral authority responses, significant social, economic and environmental effects, approved cultural heritage management plan, and relevant approved policy and strategy documents.

49. The following are deemed the key considerations in assessing the acceptability of the proposal:

- Strategic policy context and planning controls

- Whether the proposal responds to the vision and strategic directions of the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and the Planning Policy Framework (PPF)
- Suitability of the land use in the FZ, and impacts on agricultural land
- Suitability of the proposal against the relevant overlays and particular provisions
- Biodiversity and native vegetation impacts
- Flooding and water quality
- Fire risk and emergency management
- Vehicle access, road and traffic considerations
- Amenity impacts in terms of noise, light spill, visual impact, electromagnetic interference and shadow flicker and construction impacts
- Aviation safety
- Acceptability of the proposed business identification signs
- Social and economic impacts

Mandatory considerations under section 60 of the PE Act

s60 Mandatory consideration	How this is addressed in this report
Relevant planning scheme	Addressed through the sections that identify and discuss permit triggers, the MPS and PPF, zones, overlays, particular provisions and relevant decision guidelines.
Objectives of planning in Victoria	The most relevant objectives include those relating to the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land; protection of natural and man-made resources and ecological processes; securing a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment; balancing present and future community interests; facilitating development that supports community wellbeing and economic growth; and integrating environmental, social and economic considerations in decision-making. These matters have been addressed through integrated assessment of the application, as discussed throughout the report in sections that outline strategic policy considerations, land use compatibility and orderly planning, renewable energy and climate action objectives, agricultural, environmental, social, landscape and amenity considerations.
Objections and submissions	Summarised in the Public Notice section and considered through the relevant assessment sections.
Any decision and comments of a referral authority	Summarised in the Referrals section, with determining referral authority requirements and recommending referral authority conditions identified for inclusion where appropriate.
Any significant environmental effects	Addressed through biodiversity, native vegetation, hydrology, fire, construction, landscape, amenity and environmental management considerations throughout the report. The Climate Change Act, FFG Act, EE Act and EPBC Act and requirements arising under those Acts are addressed as relevant in Attachment 1.
Any significant social and economic effects	Social effects are addressed through discussion on community concerns, amenity, consultation, health and safety, traffic, aviation, landscape and cumulative impact considerations throughout the report. Economic effects are addressed through renewable energy benefits, regional investment, employment, agricultural land use, local economic impacts and decommissioning considerations throughout the report.

s60 Mandatory consideration	How this is addressed in this report
1A(f) Any other relevant matter	Addressed within the assessment of the relevant zones, overlays and particular provisions, including clauses 52.05, 52.17, 52.29, 52.32. Clause 65 decision guidelines have also been considered. The assessment has had regard to the matters relevant to the decision, including the MPS, PPF, purpose and decision guidelines of relevant zones, overlays and particular provisions, orderly planning, the effect on amenity, the suitability of the land for the proposed use and development, environmental, social and economic effects, traffic and access, infrastructure, native vegetation, referral authority responses, objections and submissions, and proposed permit conditions.

Permit Triggers

50. A planning permit for the wind energy facility is triggered by the following clauses of the Schemes:

Clause	Permit Trigger	Applies to application/s
35.07-1 (FZ)	Use of land for a wind energy facility.	PA2503749 and PA2503750
35.07-1 (FZ)	Use of land for a utility installation.	PA2503749
35.07-4 (FZ)	Construct a building or construct and carry out works associated with a use in section 2 of Clause 35.07-1. Construct a building within the minimum setback from a road or boundary specified in a schedule to this zone. Earthworks specified in schedule 1 to the Farming Zone, being earthworks which change the rate of flow or the discharge point of water across a property boundary, and earthworks which increase the discharge of saline groundwater.	PA2503749 and PA2503750
36.04-1 (TRZ1)	Use of the land for a wind energy facility.	PA2503749
36.04-2 (TRZ1)	Construct a building or construct or carry out works associated with a section 2 of Clause 36.04-1.	PA2503749
42.01-2 (ESO2 and ESO4)	Remove, destroy or lop any vegetation, including dead vegetation.	PA2503749
42.02-2 (VPO1 and VPO2)	Remove, destroy or lop native vegetation on land within the road reserve and within 50 metres of the road reserves designated by schedule 1 to the Vegetation Protection Overlay.	PA2503749
	Remove, destroy or lop any vegetation specified in schedule 2 to the Vegetation Protection Overlay.	PA2503750
52.05-14	Construct or put up for display a business identification sign.	PA2503749 and PA2503750

Clause	Permit Trigger	Applies to application/s
52.17-1	Remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead native vegetation.	PA2503749 and PA2503750
52.29-2	Create or alter access to a road in a Transport Zone Schedule 2 (TRZ2).	PA2503749
52.32-2	Use and develop land for a wind energy facility.	PA2503749 and PA2503750

Strategic Direction and Policy Context

51. Overall, the Purpose and Vision for Victoria (Clause 01), Municipal Planning Strategy (Clause 02) and the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) of the Schemes encourage the facilitation of renewable energy and storage projects, on balance with the protection of the environment and agricultural land. In particular, clause 01.01 (Purposes of this Planning Scheme) identifies that a key purpose of the scheme is "to support responses to climate change".
52. The project is supported by Plan for Victoria (2025), which seeks to ensure that 'Regional Victorian communities will attract and benefit from investment in renewable energy – wind, solar and battery storage – projects'.
53. Additionally, clause 19.01-2S, clause 19.01-2R, *Victoria's Renewable Energy Action Plan, 2018* and *Victoria's Climate Change Strategy, 2021* all outline the importance of wind energy generation and battery storage projects in Victoria's renewable energy transition.
54. The project is located with the declared North West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). The siting of wind energy facilities within REZs is encouraged by the *2025 Victorian Tranmission Plan* (VTP) which seeks to direct new renewable energy projects into REZs.

Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework

55. Clause 02.01 of the Schemes comprises the MPS, sets out the vision and strategic direction for the municipalities and includes strategic framework plans and strategic directions.
56. The key strategic directions considered relevant to the applications include:

    - Clause 2.03-2 – Environmental and landscape values;
    - Clause 2.03-3 – Environmental risks and amenity;
    - Clause 2.03-4 – Natural resource management;
    - Clause 2.03-5 – Built environment and heritage
    - Clause 2.03-7 – Economic development;
    - Clause 2.03-8 – Transport, and,
    - Clause 2.03-8– Infrastructure.

57. Broadly, the strategic directions of the Gannawarra and Loddon Planning Schemes both seek to encourage a diverse and sustainable economy and direct renewable energy facilities to locations where they will not adversely affect agricultural land or the environment.
58. The PPF establishes planning principles for guiding decision making for planning applications across Victoria. Relevant PPF clauses include:

    - Clause 12.01-1S – Protection of biodiversity;
    - Clause 12.01-1L – Flora and Fauna Protection (Gannawarra);
    - Clause 12.01-2S – Native vegetation management;
    - Clause 12.03-1S – River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs;
    - Clause 13.01-1S – Natural hazards and climate change;

- Clause 13.02-1S – Bushfire planning;
- Clause 13.03-1S – Flood planning
- Clause 13.03-1L – Levee banks (Gannawarra)
- Clause 13.03-1L – Flooding (Loddon)
- Clause 13.05-1S – Noise management;
- Clause 13.07-1S – Land use compatibility;
- Clause 14.01-1S – Protection of agricultural land;
- Clause 14.01-1L – Agricultural (Loddon);
- Clause 14.01-1L - Protection of agricultural land – Gannawarra;
- Clause 14.02-1S – Catchment planning and management;
- Clause 14.02-1L – Murray Darling Catchment (Gannawarra);
- Clause 14.02-2S – Water quality;
- Clause 14.02-3S – Protection of declared irrigation districts;
- Clause 15.01-6S – Design for rural areas;
- Clause 15.03-2S – Aboriginal cultural heritage;
- Clause 17.01-1S – Diversified economy;
- Clause 17.01-1R – Diversified economy – Loddon Mallee North;
- Clause 17.01-1R – Diversified economy – Loddon Mallee South;
- Clause 18.01-1S – Land use and transport integration;
- Clause 18.01-2S – Transport systems;
- Clause 18.02-4S – Roads;
- Clause 18.02-4S – Roads – Gannawarra;
- Clause 18.02-7S – Airports and airfields;
- Clause 18.02-6S – Kerang Airport;
- Clause 19.01-1S – Energy supply;
- Clause 19.01-2S – Renewable energy;
- Clause 19.01-2R – Renewable energy – Loddon Mallee South; and,
- Clause 19.01-2L – Renewable energy facilities (Loddon).

59. Overall, the proposal is consistent with the relevant planning policies within the MPS and PPF. Further details about the proposal's response to the MPS and PPF are provided in the relevant sections below.

Zoning and Overlays

Farming Zone (FZ) and Agricultural Impacts

60. The FZ (Clause 35.07) seeks to provide for the use of land for agricultural purposes, and for non-agricultural uses that do not adversely affect the use of the land for agriculture, encourages the retention of productive agricultural land and promotes the retention of rural employment to support rural communities.
61. All the proposed wind turbines, the BESS and ancillary infrastructure are proposed within the FZ.
62. Clause 14.01-1S also seeks to protect the state's agricultural base by preserving productive farmland through the following strategies:

    - *Identify areas of productive agricultural land, including land for primary production and intensive agriculture.*
    - *Consider state, regional and local, issues and characteristics when assessing agricultural quality and productivity.*
    - *Avoid permanent removal of productive agricultural land from the state's agricultural base without consideration of the economic importance of the land for the agricultural production and processing sectors.*

- *Protect productive farmland that is of strategic significance in the local or regional context.*
- *Protect strategically important agricultural and primary production land from incompatible uses.*
- *Identify areas of productive agricultural land by consulting with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and using available information.*
- *In considering a proposal to use, subdivide or develop agricultural land, consider the:*
  - *Desirability and impacts of removing the land from primary production, given its agricultural productivity.*
  - *Impacts on the continuation of primary production on adjacent land, with particular regard to land values and the viability of infrastructure for such production.*
  - *Compatibility between the proposed or likely development and the existing use of the surrounding land.*
  - *The potential impacts of land use and development on the spread of plant and animal pests from areas of known infestation into agricultural areas.*
  - *Land capability.*
- Balance *the potential off-site effects of a use or development proposal (such as degradation of soil or water quality and land salinisation) against the benefits of the proposal.*

63. The MPS identifies productive agricultural land and includes strategic directions focused on the retention of this land for farming.
64. The decision guidelines of the FZ require consideration of the following:

- **General issues:** The MPS, PPF, the ability of the land to accommodate the use and development, whether the use is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses and whether it makes use of existing infrastructure.
- **Agricultural issues:** The effect of the use and development agricultural production and nearby agricultural uses, soil quality, and removal of agricultural land.
- **Environmental issues:** Impacts on the natural physical features of the area, soil and water quality, flora and fauna impacts, and effluent disposal.
- **Design and siting issues:** Minimising impacts on agricultural land, the impacts of the siting, design, height, bulk, colours and materials to be used, and traffic and construction management.

65. Having regard to the relevant decision guidelines at clause 35.07-6 and the PPF, the proposed use and development is an acceptable outcome in the FZ as follows:

- The operational footprint of the project will occupy a small extent of the subject site and wind energy infrastructure has been proven to be compatible with agricultural operations across Victoria, enabling the continuation of normal farm management practices.
- The proposed development will provide supplementary income to landowners, providing for the stability and resilience of their agricultural activities. Further, the proposal will contribute to the diversification of the local economy and the sustainability of the rural community.
- The submitted Surface Water and Groundwater Impact Assessment demonstrates that any hydrological impacts during construction or operation would be localised and temporary, and could be managed through conditions recommended on any permit to issue including bunding, secondary containment and consulting with landowners on bore impacts.
- The submitted flora and fauna assessment demonstrates that the project has been designed to avoid and minimise biodiversity impacts to and acceptable level. Any impacts will be addressed via conditions recommended to be included on any permit to issue, including offset requirements. Detailed consideration of biodiversity impacts is further on in the assessment section of this report.
- Recommended conditions on any permit to issue will ensure that colours and finishes of buildings are non-reflective and are in keeping with the landscape.

– Proposed setbacks to roads are considered acceptable and conditions recommended on any permit to issue will ensure consultation with the relevant road manager to ensure potential traffic impacts are managed acceptably.

Transport Zone 1 (TRZ1)

66. The TRZ1 seeks to (as relevant) provide for an integrated and sustainable transport system, provide for the use and development of land that complements, or is consistent with, the transport system or public land reservation, and ensure the efficient and safe use of transport infrastructure and land comprising the transport system.
67. The project intersects a section of an existing freight rail line within the TRZ1. A single underground cable ancillary to the project is proposed to cross beneath the TRZ1. A permit is required under clause 36.04-1 and 36.04-2 of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme for use and development, accordingly.
68. Pursuant to Clause 36.04-3 of the TRZ1, *an application by a person other than a relevant transport manager on land shown on a planning scheme map as TRZ1 or TRZ2 must be accompanied by the written consent of the Head, Transport for Victoria, indicating that the Head, Transport for Victoria consents generally or conditionally to either: the application being made; the application being made and to the proposed use or development.*
69. The written consent for the application to be made from the Head, Transport for Victoria was provided in a letter dated 26 June 2026.
70. Having regard to the decision guidelines at clause 36.04-5, the proposed use and development is an appropriate outcome in the TRZ for the following reasons:

    - The cable will run under the trainline, negating any effect it will have on trainline once constructed.
    - The applications have been referred to the Head, Transport for Victoria, with no condition or concerns raised with regard to the trainline or works proposed within the TRZ1.
    - VicTrack were given notice of the application under Section 52 of the PE Act. VicTrack did not object subject to the following conditions:

        1. *Before the commencement of buildings and works associated with services/utilities that cross the railway land, a licence for the services/utilities crossing rail must be obtained from VicTrack to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority in consultation with VicTrack.*
        2. *Before the commencement of the development, including demolition or bulk excavation, the Rail Operator must be contacted through the V/Line Third Party Access Portal, https://tpa.vline.com.au/ to obtain the Rail Operator's conditions and safety requirements for works on, over or adjacent to the railway land. During and post construction, all conditions and safety requirements of the Rail Operator must be complied with.*

71. Subject to these conditions being included on the Gannawarra permit to which it relates, it is considered that the proposal appropriately responds to the purpose and decision guidelines of the TRZ.

Environmental Significance Overlay

Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 2 (ESO2): Highway Protection Environs (PA2503749)

72. The ESO2 seeks to maintain and enhance the amenity and tree-lined character of main roads in Gannawarra Shire.
73. The statement of environmental significance for the ESO2 is:

    Travelling along the highways that traverse the municipality provides views of the open rural landscape which is a feature that defines the rural image of the municipality. The visual appearance and presentation of the town approaches and entrances are important for the towns' community, tourism and business functions.

This overlay will assist in the implementation of relevant strategic policies contained in the Municipal Planning Strategy and relevant local policies.

74. The Gannawarra application (PA2503749) seeks to remove 0.09 ha of vegetation in the road reserve of the Boort-Kerang Road which is affected by the ESO2 (see Figure 5). The vegetation proposed for removal is Plains Woodland (EVC 803) and is required to enable the construction of swept paths for site access near the central-eastern portion of the site.
75. The proposed vegetation removal is considered acceptable when assessed against the decision guidelines of clause 42.01 as:

    - The areas of vegetation proposed for removal are small areas of much larger patches, and the retained vegetation will continue to provide the tree-lined amenity sought by the ESO2.
    - The applicant has prepared an avoid and minimise statement for project which confirms that they have avoided the removal of vegetation as much as reasonably practical (refer to the clause 52.17 section of this assessment for more information on the avoid and minimise approach).

76. Both DEECA and the Head, TfV did not object to the application and did not request any conditions specific to the purpose of the ESO2. (noting that both organisations were also a referral authority in relation to clause 52.29 and clause 52.17 as discussed further below).



Figure 5: *Location of vegetation proposed for removal in ESO2 (Gannawarra). Source: Flora and Fauna Assessment).*

<u>Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 4 (ESO4): Areas of poor drainage or potentially subject to inundation (PA2503749)</u>

77. The ESO4 seeks:

    - To identify land in urban and non-urban areas which is potentially liable to inundation by overland flow or sheet flooding and is likely to suffer from poor drainage which could inhibit development.
    - To ensure that any development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and with local drainage conditions and will not cause any significant rise in flood levels or flow velocity.

78. The statement of environmental significance for the ESO4 is:

Flooding is a major issue for Gannawarra Shire. The municipality is located on the alluvial plains of four major waterways, the Murray, Loddon and Avoca Rivers and Pyramid Creek. Each of these waterways has a natural tendency to flood over a wide area.
Significant areas of the municipality are subject to poor drainage.
This overlay will assist in the implementation of floodplain management studies and support strategic policies in the Municipal Planning Strategy.

79. The Gannawarra application (PA2503749) seeks to remove 0.18 ha of vegetation in the road reserves of the Boort-Kerang Road and Normanville Road which is affected by the ESO4 (noting that 0.07 ha of this also overlaps with the VPO1 as assessed below). The vegetation proposed for removal is Plains Woodland (EVC 803) and Ridge Plains Mallee – intact (EVC 096) and is required to enable the construction of swept paths and an access track in the central-eastern portions of the site.
80. The proposed vegetation removal is considered acceptable when assessed against the decision guidelines of clause 42.01 as:

- As above, the applicant has prepared an avoid and minimise statement for project which confirms that they have avoided the removal of vegetation as much as reasonably possible (refer to the clause 52.17 section of this assessment for more information on the avoid and minimise approach).
- Notice of the application was given to the floodplain management authority (North Central CMA) who did not object to the proposed vegetation removal.



Figure 6: *Location of vegetation to be removed in the ESO4 and VPO1 (Gannawarra). Source: Flora and Fauna Assessment.*

Vegetation Protection Overlay

Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 1 (VPO1): Roadside and Corridor Protection (PA2503749)

81. The VPO1 seeks to protect and preserve indigenous vegetation and endangered flora and fauna in road reserves, enhance corridor habitats and to achieve high-quality roadside landscapes.
82. The statement of nature and significance for the VPO1 is:

Remnant vegetation along roadsides and within roadside corridors is significant for the conservation and recreation values it provides. Roadsides and areas within roadside corridors often contain trees, shrubs and native grasses which have largely disappeared from nearby land.

Remnant vegetation often contains mature trees and/or trees with hollows which are rare in this area and are vital for fauna habitat and conservation.

83. The Gannawarra application seeks approval to remove 0.07 ha of native vegetation, including two large patch trees in the VPO1 in the north-eastern corner of the project land, on Normanville Road. The native vegetation removal is required to allow for the construction of side access/access tracks. The vegetation proposed for removal is comprised of Ridge Plains Mallee – intact (EVC 096) and is part of the FFG and EPBC community 'Plains mallee boxed woodland of the Murray Darling Depression, Riverina and Naracoorte Coastal Plains Region'.
84. The Secretary to DEECA did not object to the application, subject to the inclusion of conditions which have been included on the permit requiring:

- Notification of permit condition requirements to persons undertaking the vegetation removal;
- Specification of the total amount of native vegetation approved for removal;
- Offset requirements, evidence and timing;
- Native Vegetation Protection Plan (NVVP); and,
- Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

85. The proposed vegetation removal is considered acceptable when assessed against the decision guidelines of clause 42.02 as:

- The applicant has prepared an avoid and minimise statement for project which confirms that they have avoided the removal of vegetation as much as reasonably possible (refer to the clause 52.17 section of this assessment for more information).
- The vegetation removed forms part of larger patches of vegetation the remainer of which is being retained.
- The proponent will be required to offset the removal of the vegetation via conditions on any permits issued.

<u>Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2 (VPO2): Significant Roadside and Corridor Vegetation (PA2503750)</u>

86. The VPO2 seeks to protect and enhance roadside native vegetation and corridors of native vegetation in Loddon Shire.
87. The statement of nature and significance for the VPO2 is:

As substantial areas of Loddon have been modified as a result of agriculture and urban development, the remaining areas of native vegetation are significant for habitat, biodiversity and the land management benefits they provide, such as erosion control and water table regulation.
Roadsides often contain the only remnant vegetation in a cleared agricultural landscape.
Significant native vegetation in the Loddon Shire includes Box Iron Bark Forest and native grass lands, including significant herbaceous varieties.
Roadside and corridor vegetation is especially significant as it provides habitat corridors for fauna to access larger areas of remnant vegetation.

88. The Loddon application (PA2503750) seeks approval to remove 0.07 ha of native vegetation in the VPO2 in the south-eastern side of the project land, near Meering West Road (see Figure 7). The native vegetation removal is required to allow for the construction of side access/access tracks. The vegetation proposed for removal is comprised of Ridge Plains Mallee – intact and derived (EVC 096) and Plains Woodland – intact (EVC 803). Some of the vegetation proposed for removal is part of the FFG and EPBC community 'Plains mallee boxed woodland of the Murray Darling Depression, Riverina and Naracoorte Coastal Plain Bioregion'.
89. The Secretary to DEECA did not object to the application, subject to conditions which have been included on the permit requiring:

- Notification of permit condition requirements to persons undertaking the vegetation removal;
- Specification of the total amount of native vegetation approved for removal;

- Offset requirements, evidence and timing;
- NVVP; and,
- CEMP.

90. The proposed vegetation removal is considered acceptable when assessed against the decision guidelines of clause 42.02 as:

- The applicant has prepared an avoid and minimise statement for project which confirms that they have avoided the removal of vegetation as much as reasonably possible (refer to the clause 52.17 section of this assessment for more information).
- The vegetation removed forms part of larger patches of vegetation, the remainer of which is being retained.
- The proponent will be required to offset the removal of the vegetation via conditions on any permit issued.

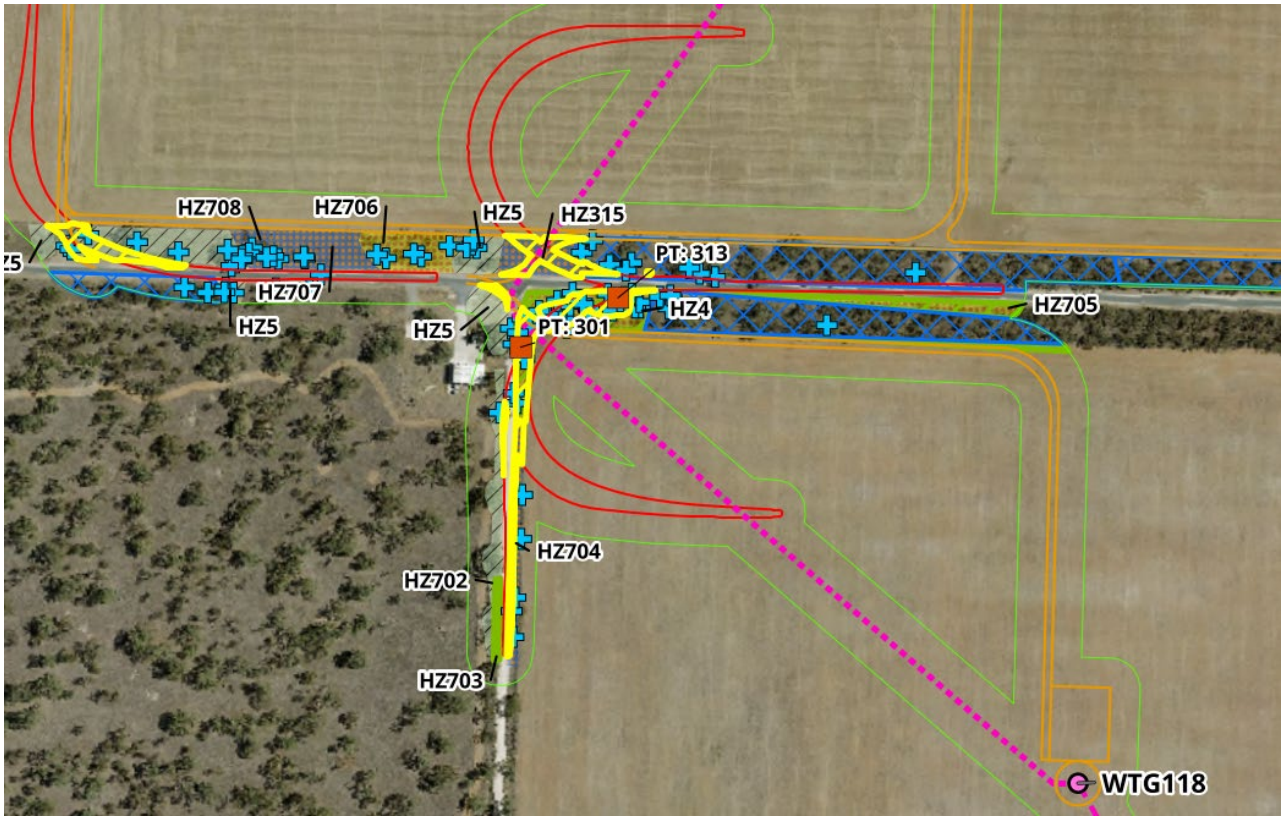

Figure 7: *Location of vegetation to be removed in the VPO2 (Loddon). Source: Flora and Fauna Assessment.*

Other VPO Schedules

91. The subject site is also partially affected by the VPO2 (Gannawarra) and VPO1 (Loddon). However, the project does not propose any vegetation removal requiring a permit in those overlays.

Bushfire Management Overlay

92. The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) applies to minor portions of the subject site in the Gannawarra LGA.
93. The proposed wind energy facility and utility installation uses do not require planning permission under the BMO. Further below in this assessment, fire risk is considered in further detail against the relevant planning scheme provisions.

Specific Controls Overlay

94. The Specific Controls Overlay Schedule 2 (SCO2) applies to portions of the subject site in the Gannawarra LGA. The SCO2 applies specific controls for the Goulburn-Murray Water: Connections Project and Water Efficiency Project.
95. There are no permit requirements in the SCO2.

Particular and General Provisions

Clause 52.05 (Signs)

96. Clause 52.05 seeks to regulate the development of land for signs and ensure they are compatible with the surrounding area.
97. The applications both seek planning permission for the display for a business identification sign for the project.
98. Neither application specifies any details of the exact location, size or structure of the signs, however the Gannawarra application specifies that one sign is proposed near the entrance to the operations and maintenance facility.
99. Generally, the provision of some signs to the proposed facility is considered reasonable given the proposed land use is very dispersed, and business identification signage will assist in directing visitors to the project.
100. As both applications are in the FZ (Category 4 – Sensitive area), clause 52.05-14 requires that the 'total display area to each premises' must not exceed 3m^2. In the context of the wind farm, 'to each premises' has been interpreted to mean that the total display area of the signs in each LGA/for each permit must not exceed 3m^2.
101. As such, conditions are recommended on both permits to:

    - limit the total display area of the signs to be less than 3m^2 per permit;
    - confirm that the signs must not be illuminated or contain flashing light; and,
    - ensure the signs are appropriately maintained.

102. With these recommended conditions, it is considered that the signs will be compatible with the existing landscape, will not dominate the public realm or vistas, will not be distracting to pedestrians or vehicles and are acceptable.

Clause 52.06 (Car parking)

103. Clause 52.06 seeks to ensure that an appropriate number of car parking spaces is provided for new uses.
104. Pursuant to clause 52.06-6, car parking must be provided to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
105. The applications have not specifically designated a final car parking design for the project. Rather, indicative plans have been provided for the construction compound located near Meran Road (in the Gannawarra application) and can accommodate at least 147 car spaces. Additionally, a substantial amount of internal access roads are proposed which will enable vehicles to park elsewhere on site while undertaking operations and maintenance activities, including closer to the turbines.
106. It is considered that the location and size of the proposed car parking area is acceptable, and a condition has been included on the Gannawarra permit requiring the final details of the car parking area to be shown on the approved plans.

Clause 52.17 (Native vegetation)

107. Pursuant to clause 52.17-1 of the Schemes, a permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation. The applications seek the combined removal of a total of 5.52 hectares (ha) of native vegetation:

- 5.209 ha in Gannawarra (Native Vegetation Removal Report (NVRR) ID: 338_20261014_UMD), comprising:
  - 4.751 ha in patches
  - 0.458 ha of scattered trees
  - 39 large trees (37 large patch trees and 2 large scattered trees)
- 0.311 ha in Loddon (NVRR ID: 338_20261014_S1N), comprising:
  - 0.311 ha in patches
  - 0 scattered trees
  - 2 large trees

108. DTP acknowledges that the NVRR in the proponent's advertised Flora and Fauna Assessment originally sought the removal of 5.458 ha in Gannawarra Shire. The NVRR was substituted on 13 July 2026 pursuant to section 57 of the PE Act to correct minor inconsistencies. The correct and current amount of native vegetation sought to be removed in Gannawarra is 5.209 ha as listed above.
109. The native vegetation proposed for removal is comprised of three EVCs: Ridged Plains Mallee EVC 96, Lignum Swampy Woodland EVC 823 and Plains Woodland EVC 803.
110. The location of the proposed native vegetation removal is spread out across various parts of the site and is shown in Figures 6.1 to 6.111 of the Flora and Fauna Assessment. Most of the vegetation removal is associated with the works for site access in road reserves and the construction of internal access tracks.
111. The purpose of clause 52.17 is to ensure that there is no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.
112. The application includes the following measures to avoid and minimise native vegetation removal:

- Siting infrastructure in already cleared and cropped farmland;
- Reduction of total native vegetation impact from 8 ha (original design) to 5.52 ha (current);
- Locating access tracks to minimise impacts to roadside vegetation whenever possible;
- Micro-siting turbine layouts to avoid scattered and large trees; and,
- Engaging an arborist to assess the Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) to further avoid impacts to trees and micro-site the location of site access points.

113. The applicant has advised that offset requirements for the proposal can be met via purchase of a third-party offset through DEECA's Native Vegetation Credit Register (NVCR). The Flora and Fauna Assessment includes evidence that the required offsets are currently available through the NVCR.
114. The applications were referred to the Secretary to DEECA who advised that they do not object to the grant of permits subject to conditions requiring:

- Notification of permit condition requirements to persons undertaking the vegetation removal;
- Specification of the amount of native vegetation approved for removal;
- Offset requirements, evidence and timing;
- Native Vegetation Protection Plan (NVVP); and,
- Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

115. DTP recommends including DEECA's conditions on any permits issued for the project.
116. With these conditions included on both permits to issue, the application is considered to meet the decision guidelines of clause 52.17 and the DEECA Guidelines. Refer to additional discussion of biodiversity matters further on in this assessment.

Clause 52.29 (Land adjacent to the principal road network)

117. The proposal includes one new vehicle crossing along the Boort-Kerang Road, which is located within TRZ2 under the Gannawarra Planning Scheme.

118. Pursuant to clause 52.29-2, a permit is required to create or alter access to a road in a TRZ2 under the Gannawarra Planning Scheme.
119. The purpose of clause 52.29 is to ensure appropriate access to the Principal Road Network or land planned to form part of the Principal Road Network.
120. The application was referred to Head, TfV who support the proposal, subject to the inclusion of permit conditions requiring:

    - Preparation of a TMP
    - TMP must be updated if there is a significant increase in vehicles numbers above the anticipated vehicle movements, or change to an endorsed vehicle route
    - Head, TfV approval of the Road Quality Auditor who will undertake duties as defined in the TMP
    - Engineering plans for the road works and upgrades
    - Traffic management, road upgrade and maintenance works carried out to the satisfaction of Head, TfV

121. There are no site access points within the TRZ2 under the Loddon Planning Scheme, and a referral to the Head, TfV is not required. However, the Head, TfV advised that the traffic impacts extend beyond Gannawarra municipal boundary and provided interdepartmental advice for the application in Loddon Shire, which mirrors the formal referral response. For administrative purposes and to address impacts across both municipalities, the Head, TfV conditions will be applied to both permit applications.
122. The proposed site access is considered acceptable, as established further in the Traffic and Transport section of this assessment.

Clause 52.32 (Wind Energy Facility)

123. The purpose of clause 52.32 is to facilitate the establishment and expansion of wind energy facilities, in appropriate locations, with minimal impact on the amenity of the area.
124. There are 18 proposed turbines located within 1 km of a dwelling. The applications include written consents from owners of the dwellings within 1 km of a proposed wind turbine, as measured from the centre of the turbine at ground level, complying with clause 52.32-3.
125. The planning permit applications meet the application requirements of clause 52.32-4.
126. Clause 52.32-5 includes the following decision guidelines that the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

    - The effect of the proposal on the surrounding area in terms of noise, blade glint, shadow flicker and electromagnetic interference.
    - The impact of the development on significant views, including visual corridors and sightlines.
    - The impact of the facility on the natural environment and natural systems.
    - The impact of the facility on cultural heritage.
    - The impact of the facility on aircraft safety.
    - Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, November 2021).

127. Refer to the thematic sections below for an assessment of the applications against relevant clause 52.32-5 decision guidelines.

Clause 53.22 (Significant Economic Development) and VCAT Review Rights

128. The purpose of clause 53.22 is:

    - To prioritise and facilitate the planning, assessment and delivery of projects that will make a significant contribution to Victoria's economy and provide substantial public benefit, including jobs for Victorians.

- To provide for the efficient and effective use of land and facilitate use and development with high quality urban design, architecture and landscape architecture.

129. The applications are category 1 applications under clause 53.22-1, as confirmed in the proponent's planning report advertised with the applications, and the applications include sufficient detail to demonstrate the feasibility of the proposal, satisfying relevant application requirements at clause 53.22-3.
130. As such the applications are both exempt from the decision requirements of sections 64(1), (2) and (3), and the review rights of sections 82(1) of the PE Act.

Other key considerations

Biodiversity

131. Clause 12.01-1S (Protection of biodiversity), clause 12.01-1L (Flora and Fauna Protection), clause 12.01-2S (Native vegetation management), clause 12.03-1S (River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs), clause 65.01, the Wind Farm Guidelines and the PE Act all seek to protect and enhance Victoria's biodiversity.
132. The Schemes include the following key strategies in relation to biodiversity (in summary):

- Protect and retain native vegetation, remnant grasslands, habitat corridors, riparian areas, wetlands, and roadside vegetation, with particular focus on habitats for threatened species and communities.
- Avoid and minimise impacts of land use and development on biodiversity, including habitat fragmentation, cumulative impacts, and the spread of pest plants, animals, and pathogens.
- Strengthen biodiversity connectivity by maintaining and re-establishing vegetation links, wildlife corridors, green spaces, and large-scale native vegetation corridor projects.
- Ensure development is designed and located to protect environmental values, including adjacent Crown land, conservation reserves, national parks, Ramsar wetlands, and other nationally or internationally significant biodiversity sites.
- Use strategic biodiversity information to identify, protect, manage, and conserve important biodiversity areas and habitats for rare and threatened species.
- Encourage land use, farming practices, and urban development that support, protect, and enhance native flora and fauna habitats.
- Apply the native vegetation three-step approach when vegetation removal is proposed: avoid, minimise, and offset.

133. The applications include a:

- Flora and Fauna Assessment, prepared by Biosis and dated 23 June 2026.
- Draft Bat and Avifauna Management Plan (BAMP) prepared by Biosis and dated 15 June 2026.
- Level One and Two Brolga Assessments prepared by Biosis and dated 24 April 2026.
- Bird and Bat Utilisation Surveys (BBUS) and Collision Risk Assessment prepared by Biosis and dated 27 April 2026.

134. As the majority of the subject site has been historically cleared to support agricultural uses, remnant vegetation and fauna habitats have been largely removed. However, there are still some threatened flora and fauna species and biodiversity values present (or potentially present) on or surrounding the site. This includes:

- EVCs in the Murray Mallee Bioregion; Ridged Plains Mallee EVC 96, Lignum Swampy Woodland EVC 823 and Plains Woodland EVC 803
- 107 large trees in patches, 147 large scattered trees and 125 small scattered trees
- 103 native flora species and 152 native fauna species on the site
- DEECA Mapped Wetlands
- Threatened fauna species in, or in direct proximity to the subject site:

- Listed under both the EPBC and FFG Acts: Hooded Robin, Diamond Firetail, Common Greenshank and White-throated Needletail, Blue-winged Parrot, Caspian Tern
- Listed under the EPBC Act only including: Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Brown Treecreeper, Latham's Snipe, Fork-tailed Swift and Red-necked Stint
- Listed under the FFG Act only including: Black Falcon, White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Lace Monitor
- Other listed species recorded within 10 km of the site including the Australia Bittern, Curlew Sandpiper, Southern Whiteface and Sloane's Froglet
- Migratory bird and bat species including those listed above and in Table 7 of the Flora and Fauna Assessment. 26 species were observed within the BBUS surveys as flying within Rotor Swept Height (RSH). This is in part due to the project's location approximately 10 km west of the Kerang RAMSAR Wetlands and in proximity to many waterbodies such as Salt Lake located in the north-east corner of the project area.

135. The key biodiversity impacts of the proposed project are:

- Direct and indirect impacts to flora (including remnant vegetation and fauna habitat); and
- Risk of bird and bat collisions with wind turbines.

Flora impacts

136. As discussed in the clause 52.17, VPO and ESO sections of the report above, the applications seek the removal of a total 5.52 ha of native vegetation, most of which is in public roads (approximately 3.7 ha).
137. This includes potential habitat for four EPBC Act listed fauna species (Hooded Robin, Brown Treecreeper, Diamond Firetail and Southern Whiteface), and five FFG Act listed species (Grey-crowned Babbler, Lace Monitor, Bearded Dragon, Apostlebird, and Diamond Dove).
138. As above, DTP considerers that the proponent has adequately avoided and minimised the impacts of the project on native vegetation and habitat.
139. Conditions will be included on any permits issued requiring native vegetation offsets, a NVPP, and a CEMP.

Fauna impacts

140. Given the project's proposed long-term operation as a wind farm (approximately 30 years), there is potential for ongoing bird and bat collisions with wind turbines.
141. The proponent has undertaken several seasons worth of bird and bat surveys to support the applications, including:

- Eight seasons of bird and bat surveys
- Brolga level 1 and 2 assessments
- Targeted surveys for threatened bird species (including migratory shorebirds, threatened raptors, Latham's Snipe and White-throated Needletail)

142. The proponent also undertook collision risk monitoring which demonstrated that up to:

- 10 species with up to one flight per annum that would be at some risk of collision across the entire wind farm.
- Six with one to five flights per annum that would be at some risk of collision across the entire wind farm.
- One with greater than five flights per annum that would be at some risk of collision across the entire wind farm (Straw-necked Ibis).

143. The proponent has incorporated the findings of these studies into a draft BAMP prepared in consultation with DEECA. The aim of the BAMP is to reduce bird and bat collision risk. The BAMP includes several design and operational mitigation measures to reduce the list of bird and bat collision with turbines. These measures include:

- The establishment of a permanent, turbine-free buffer of 500 m around Salt Lake and 900 m around Great Spectacle Lake to reduce risk of collision with migratory shorebird species. These buffers have already been built into the project's design.
- A management program for the control of invasive species likely to attract raptors (including Black Falcons).
- A carcass removal program (requiring the timely removal of carcasses of livestock and other larger animals from the wind farm to help reduce the incidence of collision with turbines by raptors feeding on carcasses).
- Selecting wind turbines that avoid perching opportunities for raptors.
- The use of turbine curtailment for high-risk periods/locations, including Black Falcon nests, near Salt Lake and Spectacle Lake, and during key agricultural activities.
- Impact triggers for bird and bat species (e.g. procedures for shutdown, curtailment, reporting, investigation and response to detection of birds/bats)
- Potential installation of Bird protection systems that automatically curtail turbines on approach to reduce fatalities to Black Falcon (e.g. IdentiFlight®).

144. Interdepartmental advice on threatened avifauna was sought from DEECA who outlined that (in summary):

- The highest potential risk on threatened avifauna from the project is the risk of turbine collision to Black Falcon, Little Eagle, migratory species and threatened waterbirds.
- The application adequately assesses the potential collision risk to Black Falcon, subject to conditions, including the finalisation of the BAMP in consultation with DEECA.
- The potential collision risk to migratory species and threatened waterbirds has been adequately addressed, subject to conditions requiring a finalised BAMP. DEECA noted that because of the intermittent inundation of Salt Lake and Great Spectacle Lake (and therefore intermittent utilisation by migratory birds and threatened waterbirds), it will be critical to ensure that the BAMP monitoring program is of sufficient duration to occur when these species are likely to be utilising the site (i.e. when the lakes are holding water).
- The project is unlikely to result in any significant impacts on Brolgas, subject to a finalised BAMP.

145. DTP agrees with DEECA's recommendation for a final BAMP to be prepared and approved and has included this as a condition on both permits.
146. With these mitigation measures in place, the project will not have unreasonable impacts on biodiversity or threatened species.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

147. Under section 4B(1) of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act), the Minister for Planning is required to give proper consideration to the objectives of the FFG Act, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of her functions under the PE Act.
148. The objectives set out in section 4 of the FFG Act are:

- to guarantee that all taxa of Victoria's flora and fauna, other than taxa specified in the Excluded List, can persist and improve in the wild and retain their capacity to adapt to environmental change; and
- to prevent taxa and communities of flora and fauna from becoming threatened and to recover threatened taxa and communities so their conservation status improves; and
- to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including
  - flora and fauna and their habitats; and
  - genetic diversity; and
  - ecological communities; and
  - ecological processes; and

- to identify and mitigate the impacts of potentially threatening processes to address the important underlying causes of biodiversity decline; and
- to ensure the use of biodiversity as a natural resource is ecologically sustainable; and
- to identify and conserve areas of Victoria in respect of which critical habitat determinations are made.

149. In addition, section 4B(2) of FFG Act states that a Minister and a public authority, so far as is consistent with the proper exercising of their functions, must consider any instrument made under the FFG Act, including:

- Biodiversity Strategy; and
- action statements; and
- critical habitat determinations; and
- management plans.

150. Section 4B(4) of FFG Act further states that consideration must also be given to the potential impacts on biodiversity, including:

- long and short-term impacts; and
- beneficial and detrimental impacts; and
- direct and indirect impacts; and
- cumulative impacts; and
- the impacts of potentially threatening processes.

151. An assessment of the project's impacts on FFG-listed species is provided in sections above.
152. On balance, it is considered that the project will support the objectives of the FFG Act by contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and assisting Victoria's transition to renewable energy. By lessening reliance on fossil fuel-based energy generation and helping to reduce the effects of climate change, the project reduces a key threatening process to biodiversity and supports the long-term survival of native flora, fauna and ecological communities, consistent with the objectives of the FFG Act.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

153. On 7 January 2026, the project was determined to be a controlled action under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) as it was considered to have a significant impact on the following matters of national environmental significance (MNES):

- Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A)
- Listed migratory species (sections 20 and 20A)

154. An assessment of the project's impacts on remanent vegetation and EPBC-listed species is provided above. On balance, it is considered that the project supports the protection of EPBC listed species by contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through the generation of renewable wind energy and by avoiding and minimising impacts to threatened species and habitat as far as reasonably practical.
155. DTP notes that the controlled action is not being assessed under the bilateral agreement with Victoria. These planning applications can be determined prior to the Commonwealth's decision on the controlled action. If the EPBC decision requires changes to the design of the facility, any planning permit issued and any documents endorsed under the permit could be amended (if required), to align with the requirements of the EPBC decision.

Bushfire Risk

156. The subject site is located within a Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) with minor portions within the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO): in the south-western corner and a pocket of vegetation on the western boundary which is also affected by the VPO2 (Significant roadside and corridor vegetation).

157. The proposed wind energy facility and utility installation uses do not require a planning permit under the BMO. Regardless of this, fire risk is a key consideration for all energy generation and storage projects.
158. Clause 13.02-1S (Bushfire planning), clause 52.34 (Wind energy facilities) and clause 65.01 require the consideration of bushfire risk to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities and to prioritise the protection of human life.
159. The applications are supported by a Hazard and Risk Assessment (HRA) prepared by Aurecon and dated 14 April 2026, which has been prepared in accordance with the *CFA's Design Guidelines and Model Requirements: Renewable Energy Facilities* (the CFA Guidelines).
160. Appendix B of the HRA is a Risk Management Plan (RMP) that identifies the following potential significant hazards and off-site risks related to fire risk:

    - Wind turbine toppling / collapse
    - Wind turbine generator fire
    - Battery cell fire / thermal hazard
    - Battery cell equipment failure
    - Battery cell operational hazard
    - Explosion hazard
    - Transformer arcing / fire / explosion
    - Loss of containment (oil)
    - Outdoor switchgear failure
    - Grass or mallee fire / stray ember induced fire
    - Fire

161. To mitigate these risks, the RMP includes technical / design controls and safety management controls, including the following:

    - A 10 m fuel exclusions zone around WTGs
    - Nacelles must be equipped with automatic fire detection, alarm and fire suppression systems.
    - Fire detection and suppression system to be included in the BESS design
    - Emergency shutdown incorporated in the BESS design
    - Adequate spacing of battery modules and heat shields.
    - Remote emergency shutdown and monitoring of the BESS.
    - A 10 m firebreak around the BESS and associated infrastructure
    - Vegetation within a fenced area for the BESS, terminal station, collector substations and O&M building, must be short cropped (<100 mm in height) and maintained during the declared fire danger period.

162. It is noted that the fire water system is yet to be designed. It is considered that there is sufficient space within the subject site and in proximity to the BESS to accommodate the required water supply.
163. The utility installations (including BESS) are proposed within the Gannawarra Shire. As such, only PA2503749 was referred to WorkSafe. Notice of both the applications was given to CFA. Neither objected to the issue of a planning permit subject to conditions.
164. WorkSafe is a determining referral authority and their conditions, including requirements for a Hazard Risk Assessment, Fire Management Plan, Emergency Management Plan as follows, must be included on any permit to issue for application PA2503749.
165. CFA made a submission to both applications on 30 July 2026, recommending conditions be included on both permits, requiring a Risk Management Plan, an Emergency Plan and a Fire Management Plan.
166. It is considered that subject to the inclusion of the CFA's recommended conditions on both permits, the application will be acceptable with regard to fire risk.
167. As the CFA Guidelines are a regularly updated document, the recommended conditions have been worded to specifically require the facility to be designed in accordance with the current version of the CFA Guidelines (version 4.4, June 2025).

Noise

Wind Turbine Noise

168. The wind farm applications include:

- A Preconstruction Predictive Noise Assessment prepared by Resonate and dated 23 April 2026 (PPNA);
- A Supplementary Cumulative Noise Assessment prepared by Resonate and dated 15 June 2026, submitted to address the cumulative noise impacts of the proposed wind farm and the recently approved Normanville Energy Park; and
- An Auditor Verification of Pre-Construction Noise Assessment (Auditor Verification or AVPCNA) prepared by Bajwa Enviro Consult and dated 19 September 2025, and addendum dated 28 May 2026.

169. It is noted that the supporting noise reports listed above consider the turbine layout following the section 50 Amendment of the applications with 164 turbines. The proposal was amended under 57A on 15 October 2026 to delete 9 turbines. The locations of the remaining turbines were not altered at the time of the amendment. Therefore, it is considered acceptable to use the original noise assessment reports as the deletion of turbines would not result in an increase in noise from the facility.
170. The predictive noise assessment report and the Cumulative Noise Assessment Report is prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced acoustician that meets the requirements of 52.32-4 as it:

- reports on a pre-construction (predictive) noise assessment conducted in accordance with New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics - Wind Farm Noise.
- provides an assessment of whether the proposed wind energy facility will comply with the noise limit for that facility under Division 5 Part 5.3 of the Environment Protection Regulations 2021.
- specifies the premises to which the noise agreements are in place and provides an assessment of whether the proposed wind energy facility will comply with the modified noise limit for that facility specified in the agreement.
- is prepared on the basis that the relevant noise standard under Division 5 of Part 5.3 of the Environment Protection Regulations 2021 will be New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics - Wind Farm Noise and includes an assessment of whether a high amenity noise limit is applicable under Section 5.3 of the standard.

<u>Findings in the PPNA and AVPCNA</u>

171. The AVPCNA concludes that the PPNA has been conducted in accordance with the New Zealand Standard 6808:2010 (the Noise Standard).
172. The noise modelling in the PPNA was based on a candidate turbine model; Vestas V172-7.2MW, with a maximum tip height of 280 m and a rotor diameter of 172 m. The noise modelling assumes that the wind turbines will operate in an unconstrained mode of generation (i.e. without noise reduced operating modes) and with blade serrations.
173. The noise modelling within the Cumulative Noise Assessment, which accompanies the PPNA, has reviewed other wind farms within 10km of the project, that being the Normanville Energy Park located to the north of the site (approved but not yet operational).
174. The PPNA identified 157 receivers located within 10 km of the proposed turbines as shown below in Figure 8. This includes 19 stakeholder receivers, being 13 located within the project boundary and 6 dwellings outside the subject site. These are represented in yellow.

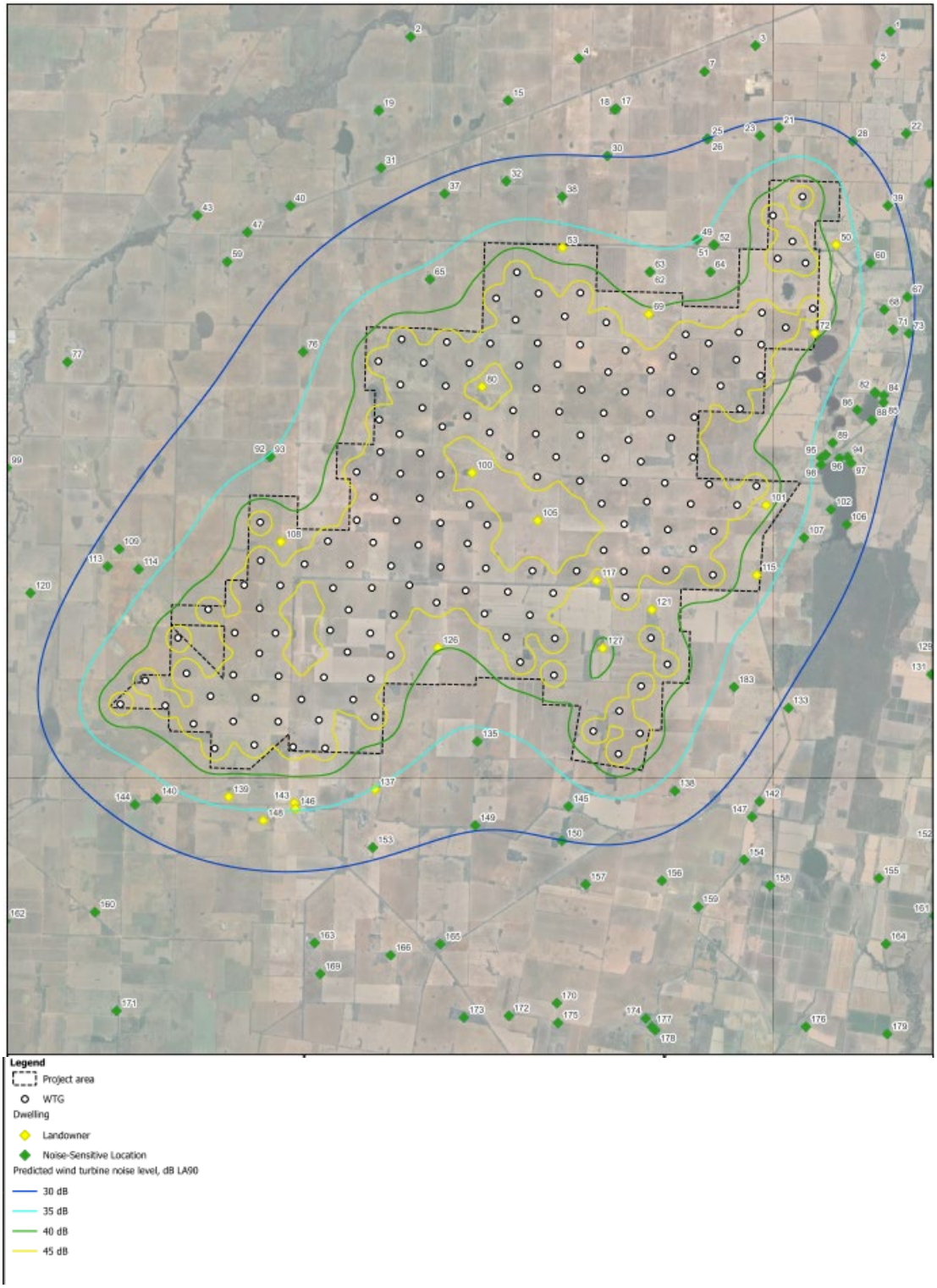

Figure 8: *Site map and identified noise sensitive receivers (Source: Figure D1 of PPNA dated 23 April 2026).*

175. The table below summarises the noise limits set by the Noise Standard for non-stakeholder receivers and stakeholder receivers outside the subject site. The noise limits set out in the Noise Standard do not apply to stakeholders within the subject site.

Receiver	Noise limit
Non-stakeholder	40 dB or background L_{A90} + 5 dB, whichever is the greater
Stakeholder outside the subject site with noise agreement	45 dB or background L_{A90} + 5 dB, whichever is the greater

176. The PPNA concludes that the proposal will comply with New Zealand Standard 6808:2010 and the noise limits determined in accordance with the Environment Protection Regulations 2021 (EP Regulations). The highest predicted noise level at non-stakeholder receivers is 37 dB LA90 at receivers 62, 63 and 64. The highest predicted noise level at stakeholder receivers within the subject site is 44 dB LA90 at receivers 80 and 117. The highest predicted noise level at stakeholder receivers outside of the subject site is 38 dB LA90 at 50; given that noise levels to stakeholders outside the subject site does not exceed 40 dB LA90, noise agreements are not required.
177. Section 5.6 of the New Zealand Standard 6808:2010 specifies that the relevant noise limits of the New Zealand Standard 6808:2010 should apply to the cumulative sound level of all wind farms affecting a noise sensitive receiver. This requirement relevantly applies to constructed wind farms.
178. The Cumulative Noise Assessment notes an assessment of potential cumulative noise considerations can be made for noise-sensitive locations and involved stakeholder dwellings of either wind farm that are within the predicted 35 dB LA90 cumulative noise contour from Meering West Wind Farm and Normanville Energy Park.
179. The assessment notes that the results demonstrate that the predicted cumulative noise levels are below the maximum applicable noise limit or target for all locations. The highest predicted cumulative noise level at any noise-sensitive location that is not a stakeholder in either proposed wind farm is 38 dB LA90. The highest predicted noise level at a stakeholder outside either subject site is 39 dB at receiver 50.

Consideration of Noise

180. Clause 13.05-1S (Noise management) requires the consideration of noise effects on sensitive land uses, including the consideration of the noise requirements of the EP Regulations under the Environment Protection Act 2017 (EP Act) (as considered in the above paragraphs).
181. Additionally, clause 52.32-5 and clause 13.05-1S require consideration of matters in relation to the noise effects of the proposal.
182. The starting point for the assessment of the noise effects is that the proposal is expected to comply with New Zealand Standard 6808:2010 as confirmed above.
183. Division 5 of Part 5.3 of the EP Regulations provides a bespoke framework for wind turbine noise.
184. The EP Regulations use the New Zealand Standard 6808:2010 as the default standard for operational noise limits which supports its use as a benchmark in a planning assessment. It is also relevant that the EP Act will prohibit unreasonable noise (s166), even where no condition is proposed in relation to management of operational noise in a planning permit. Noise emitted from turbines other than in compliance with the EP Regulations will be unreasonable noise. In addition, noise in compliance with the EP Regulations may still be unreasonable noise in contravention of s166 of the EP Act based on factors set out in paragraph (a) of the definition of 'unreasonable noise' in s3 of the EP Act.
185. Since July 2021, the Victorian EPA is the primary regulator of operational wind farm noise. The standard practice since July 2021, is not to include noise regulation conditions on permits where the EPA regulatory framework is sufficient to manage noise impacts of wind farm proposals.
186. Therefore, the remaining issue is whether the proposal's demonstrated capacity to comply with New Zealand Standard 6808:2010, and the requirement for the proposal to comply with other requirements of the EP Act framework, is sufficient to manage the noise effects of the proposal.
187. In *Uren v Bald Hills Wind Farm [2022] VSC 145*, the Supreme Court made findings or observations that suggest there are potential negative amenity impacts that the 1998 and 2010 New Zealand Standards do

not address. That is, that even when these standards are complied with, impacts including the following may still arise:

- The standards do not require differentiation between day and night hours, leaving the potential for disturbance of sleep at dwellings;
- The standards do not adequately account for intermittent noises, and only assess continuous or ongoing wind turbine noise;
- The 40dB(A) noise limit adopted by the 1998 New Zealand Standard is higher than most other jurisdictions, which prescribe 35dB(A) as an acceptable limit (either generally, or at specific locations or times).

188. In relation to the third matter, the 2010 New Zealand Standard introduces a 35dB(A) limit for 'high amenity areas' whereby 'a more stringent noise limit may be justified to afford a greater degree of protection of amenity during evening and night-time' (clause 5.3.1). Guidance on what areas should be characterised as high amenity areas is provided by the VCAT decision of *Cherry Tree Wind Farm Pty Ltd v Mitchell Shire Council & Ors [2013] VCAT 521* and in EPA Guidance. The 'high amenity area' classification has been interpreted by VCAT as not generally applying to the FZ. This interpretation has been adopted by the EPA. The same interpretation has been adopted for the purposes of this decision. There are no dwellings that are classified as having the benefit of the high amenity 35dB(A) limit.
189. The New Zealand Standard 6808:2010 is designed to reduce noise effects, not eliminate all potential negative amenity impacts.
190. The application has been submitted with the PPNA that predicts that of all surrounding non-stakeholder dwellings, the highest noise levels are predicted at receiver 62, 63 and 64 (37 dB L_{A90} predicted). It is unlikely that there will be adverse amenity impacts from noise from the facility.
191. Even if there are the possibility of adverse amenity impacts arising, notwithstanding the wind energy facility's expected compliance with the New Zealand Standard 6808:2010, that standard is still considered to achieve an appropriate balance of impacts from a planning perspective. The effects of the proposal and its noise on the environment and people, and the potential level of audible noise at dwellings permitted by the New Zealand Standard 6808:2010, is considered to be acceptable from a planning perspective when balanced against the benefits that the wind energy facility will produce. The benefits are addressed throughout this report.
192. It is considered that compliance with the New Zealand Standard 6808:2010 and the unreasonable noise requirement of the EP Act framework provides a sufficient level of protection to human health, community amenity and the environment. The New Zealand Standard 6808:2010 is considered to sufficiently manage the risk of wind turbine noise, whilst ensuring wind farm operators can operate responsibly and contribute to renewable energy generation in an economic manner.
193. Finally, clause 13.05-1S of the scheme relevantly contains a strategy, policy guidelines and policy documents regarding noise emissions.
194. Clause 13.05-1S also requires consideration as relevant of the Noise Limit and Assessment Protocol for the Control of Noise from Commercial, Industrial and Trade Premises and Entertainment Venues (Publication 1826.5, Environment Protection Authority, September 2025) (Noise Protocol). However, under the EP Regulations, the Noise Protocol does not apply to wind turbine noise, in lieu of the noise standards outlined above. Given the EP Regulations contains a bespoke framework for assessing wind turbine noise and appropriate noise limits, it is preferable to respond to that framework in this assessment.
195. Clause 13.05-1S also requires consideration as relevant of the Environment Reference Standard (Gazette No. S 245, 26 May 2021) (ERS).
196. The ERS sets out objectives for different land use categories. However, these are typical ambient sound level values and are neither noise limits nor noise design criteria. For the category of land that is of a kind likely to be affected by wind turbine noise, the ERS noise objectives are lower than the noise limits under the New Zealand Standard 6808:2010, particularly during the night. However, due to the unconventional way wind turbine noise propagates through environments (unconventional when compared to other

commercial industrial or trade noise), it is appropriate to rely on a standard developed specifically for sound emitted from wind energy facilities.

197. For these reasons, it is considered that despite the potential for some limited negative amenity impacts, it is sufficient to rely on the New Zealand Standard 6808:2010 for appropriate noise limits.
198. Additionally, the EPA–DTP Publication 3011 Wind Energy Facility Turbine Noise – Technical Guideline provides guidance on the application of noise limits in high amenity areas. DTP agrees with the proponent's assessment that the high amenity noise limit is not justified for the majority of the project because there are no houses within a zone where the high amenity noise limit applies.
199. The ERS requires consideration of the potential for noise and vibration to impact on human tranquility and enjoyment outdoors in natural areas. The PPNA has identified several natural areas within 3 km of the subject site, including a campground at the southern end of Lake Meran within Leaghur State Park.
200. Under the Noise Standard, the campground would be considered a 'high amenity area' with a noise limit of 35 dB; the predicted noise level of 31 dB LA90 complies.
201. The PPNA submits that other natural areas in proximity to the subject site lack camping areas and are likely to be limited to daytime activities such as recreational hunting; therefore, not qualifying as 'high amenity areas'. These recreational areas generally have predicted noise levels under 40dB except for land encompassing Great Spectacle Lake and Little Spectacle Lake and Quambatook 1208 Bushland Reserve. Both of these reserves are zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ).
202. The PPNA demonstrates PCRZ land encompassing Great Spectacle Lake and Little Spectacle Lake generally sits outside of the 40 dB contour except for a minor portion of land where the maximum predicted noise level is 45 dB LA90.
203. The PPNA demonstrates that Quambatook 1208 Bushland Reserve has a predicted noise level between 40 dB LA90 at its eastern end and 50 dB LA90 at its western end where it is 400 m from the nearest turbine.
204. The PPNA submits that the higher predicted noise levels for these two reserves are acceptable given they lack formal camping areas and because to generate these levels of turbine noise, the wind speed would be such that the background noise from wind blowing through vegetation would mitigate the turbine noise.
205. The AVPCNA did not take issue with the submissions made by the PPNA regarding these reserves. DTP agrees with the PPNA and AVPCNA and considers the predicted noise levels for these reserves to be acceptable.
206. It is recommended that conditions be included on any permit issued requiring an updated pre-construction predictive noise assessment to be undertaken prior to the commencement of construction, to confirm that the final project design and turbine selection can comply with the applicable noise limits.
207. It is noted that an objector submitted a peer review of the project's ENA prepared by L Huson & Associates Pty Ltd and dated April 2026 that outlines various concerns with the parameters of the PPNA. DTP considers that the PPNA has been appropriately prepared in line with the application requirements and the relevant standards as explained above and further notes the PPNA has been verified by an environmental auditor in accordance with the application requirements at clause 52.32-4.

Noise from sources other than wind turbines

208. Clause 13.05-1S also requires consideration, as relevant, of the Noise Protocol.
209. The PPNA has also been prepared in line with the Noise Protocol for the substation and BESS.
210. As outlined in the Proposal section of this report, two options (Option 1A and Option B) have been proposed for the siting of the BESS and associated infrastructure. Refer Figure to 9.

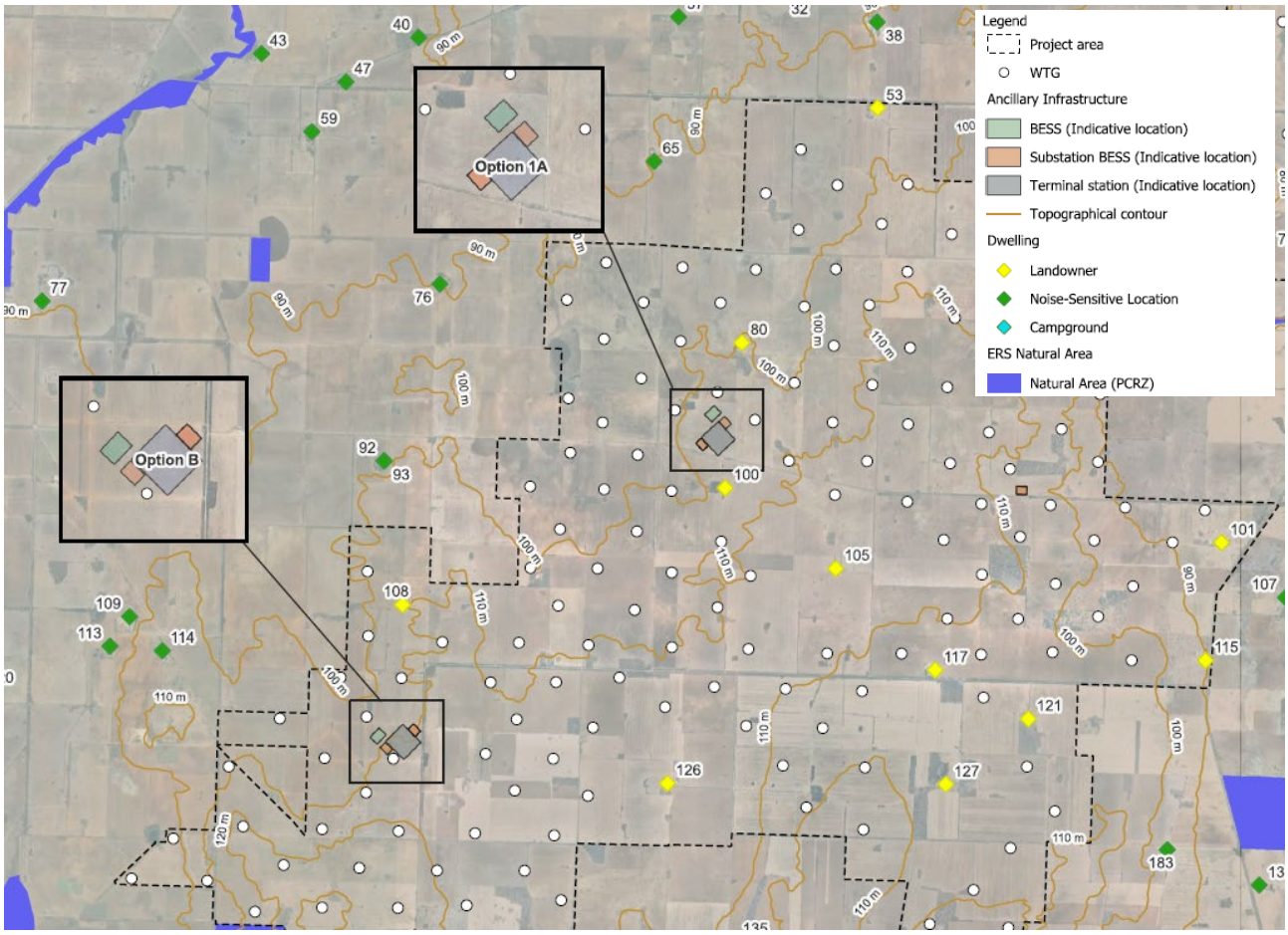

Figure 9: *Except of PPNA showing proposed BESS options 1A and B (Source: Application)*

211. Both options are sited within the Gannawarra Shire Municipality and have identical concept designs as shown in the Decision Plans. It is proposed to only proceed with one of the proposed BESS locations, which will be required to be identified in the plans via condition. The PPNA provides an assessment for both Option 1A and Option B and concludes that the BESS (and associated infrastructure) will meet the applicable night-time noise limit of 34dB. As the substation and BESS have the potential to operate any time in a 24 hour day across 7 days a week, DTP understands the PPNA to conclude that in meeting the lower night time noise limit, it will necessarily not exceed the higher daytime as shown in Figure 10 below:

Phase	Description	Noise limit, dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$
Day	Weekdays and Saturdays, 7 am to 6 pm	45
Evening	Weekdays and Saturdays, 6 pm to 10 pm Sundays and public holidays, 7 am to 10 pm	39
Night	10 pm to 7 am any day	34

***Figure* 10:** *Noise Protocol time periods and noise limits for the transformer station (Source: Table 9 of PPNA)*

212. The predicted noise levels for both options 1A and B are compliant with the applicable noise limits at the nearest involved stakeholders and are 14 dB or more below the applicable noise limits at the nearest non-involved receiver, as outline in the below table:

Time period	Highest predicted noise levels	Noise limit, dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$
Option 1A		
Day / Evening	Involved stakeholder, Receiver ID 100: 39 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$	39 (Evening)
	Non-involved noise sensitive location, Receiver ID 65: 23 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$	39 (Evening)
Night	Involved stakeholder, Receiver ID 100: 33 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$	34
	Non-involved noise sensitive location, Receiver ID 65: 18 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$	34
Option B		
Day / Evening	Involved stakeholder, Receiver ID 108: 33 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$	39 (Evening)
	Non-involved noise sensitive location, Receiver ID 114: 25 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$	39 (Evening)
Night	Involved stakeholder, Receiver ID 108: 28 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$	34
	Non-involved noise sensitive location, Receiver ID 114: 20 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$	34

Figure *11*: *Highest predicted noise levels for ancillary infrastructure (Source: Table 14 of PPNA)*

213. The predicted noise levels at all receivers within the vicinity of the substation and BESS are predicted to comply with the night period noise limit, with the nearest receiver (100 nearest to Option 1A) predicted to experience up to 39 dB.

214. Pursuant to EPA Publication 1826.5, noise from commercial and industrial premises must be adjusted for tonality, +2 dB for just detectable tonal character of the noise or +5 dB for prominent tonal character of the noise, as defined in Part I, Section B3 of the Noise Protocol. In cases where the adjustment is unclear, the objective method defined by the Noise Protocol should be used. Resonate' s assessment applies a +2 dB tonal adjustment for ancillary infrastructure (captured in the above noise predictions). However, the Auditor Verification recommends a +5 dB tonal adjustment unless a lower adjustment is justified by objective evidence. As predicted levels at Receiver 100 for Option 1A are at or within 1 dB, requiring a +5 dB adjustment could impact predicted compliance depending on the final detailed design. As such, the updated pre-construction predictive noise assessment will need to address this issue. A condition will be included on the Gannawarra permit requiring a final predictive noises assessment for the BESS to be prepared in accordance with EPA Publication 1826.5.

215. Finally, Regulation 119 of the EP Regulations requires that if two or more facilities are emitting noise, the operators of those facilities must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the facilities when combined, do not exceed the application Noise Limit.

216. A Cumulative Noise Assessment (CNA) was submitted to address the potential cumulative noise impacts from both the Meering West wind farm and the approved Normanville Energy Park.

217. When considering the risk of cumulative noise from the BESS (and associated infrastructure), it is noted that the BESS sites are located a significant distance apart. Of the two BESS options, Option 1A is the northernmost option and closest to Normanville Energy Park. While it is the closest of the two options, Option 1A is located over 15 km from the proposed Normanville Energy Park transformer station site. At this distance, the CNA considers there to be a negligible risk associated with cumulative ancillary infrastructure noise.

218. Conditions are recommended to be included on any permit issued, requiring an updated pre-construction predictive noise assessment be undertaken before construction starts, to confirm that the selected transformer/BESS and final project design can comply with the Noise Protocol.

219. The Victorian EPA will be responsible for enforcing the project's compliance with the Noise Protocol in accordance with the EP Regulations under the EP Act, as well as enforcing regulation 119. As such, operational noise conditions have not been included on the permit.

Electromagnetic Interference (EMI)

220. The decision guidelines of clause 52.32 (Wind energy facility) and the Wind Farm Guidelines require the responsible authority to consider the effect of the proposal on electromagnetic interference (EMI).
221. The application is supported by an EMI assessment (Telecommunications Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 22 April 2026). The assessment was undertaken for a layout of 165 turbines (noting the scope of the proposal has since been reduced to 155 turbines) and relies on data from the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) as well as coverage maps from various service providers.
222. Consideration was given to the potential impacts on fixed telecommunications towers, point-to-point links, point-to-multipoint, point-to-area, radar (meteorological, aeronautical and defence), farming GPS systems and the cumulative impacts from the project. Interference risks have been identified in most instances, with the following recommendations made:

    - Consultation with telecommunication licence owners and operators to confirm whether services will be impacted.
    - Consultation with the broadcasting licence owner to determine impact, with potential relocation of the transmission tower.
    - Consultation with Optus and Vodafone to confirm impact and confirm what mitigation options are available for users (such as signal amplifier).
    - Wireless internet is expected to be impacted for several nearby dwelling; mitigation such a switching to satellite broadband may be recommended.
    - Digital television broadcasting transmitters are expected to be impacted to nearby dwellings. Consultation with network owners to discuss any potential impacts.
    - GPS systems used for farming may be affected. It is recommended that a survey of these systems and consultation with landowners be undertaken.

223. Conditions will be included on the permits requiring a telecommunications and EMI survey be undertaken within 5 km of the site, including a procedure for investigating complaints and restoring any EMI or reception concerns to the receiver's pre-existing reception quality. This will ensure that the proponent will adequately address any identified interference in consultation with the relevant parties.
224. With regards to radar interference, notice of the application was given to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), Airservices Australia, and the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM).
225. No response was received from Airservices Australia or BOM, however, the EMI assessment states that BOM advised in September 2025 that they had no objection to the proposed development proceeding.

Surface Water

226. Both applications seek approval for earthworks specified in the schedule to the Farming Zone of the respective planning scheme, being earthworks which change the rate of flow or the discharge point of water across a property boundary, and earthworks which increase the discharge of saline groundwater.
227. Relevant PPF policies are as follows:

    - Clauses 13.03-1S, 13.03-1L of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme and 13.03-1L of the Loddon Planning Scheme seek to manage flood impacts within the Victoria and the respective shires.
    - Clause 14.02-1S and 14.02-1L of the Gannawarra Planning Scheme seek to protect and enhance waterway systems, including the Murray-Darling catchment.
    - Clauses 14.02-2S and 14.02-3S seek to protect water quality and declared irrigation districts.

228. The application includes a Surface and Groundwater Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 20 November 2025. This assessment demonstrates that only minor slivers of the eastern and western edges of the subject site are within the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood extent.
229. The report also identifies the following potential surface water impacts:

- Alteration of overland flows and waterlogging;
- Impedance of drainage lines and waterway contamination (from spills, waste, sedimentation and erosion); and
- Increased surface runoff (increasing the risk of local flooding / drainage impacts).

230. The assessment recommends the implementation of design measures and management controls through a CEMP and stormwater management plan. Subject to the implementation of these recommendations, the assessment considers residual surface water risks to be 'low'.
231. The assessment states that there are multiple unnamed ephemeral drains which flow across the subject site and approvals from North Central CMA may be required to conduct works on the waterway.
232. North Central CMA was given notice of the application and advised that they do not object to the granting of a permit and provided the following advice:

> *Detailed flood levels have not been determined for this area. However, the information available to North Central CMA indicates that it is likely some parts of the area would be affected by flooding during a flood with a 1% chance of occurring in any year. Because detailed flood modelling is not available, the level of flood risk cannot be confirmed with certainty.*

233. It is considered that the expected surface water impacts are acceptable subject to the implementation of the recommendations in the Surface and Groundwater Assessment, including a requirement for any permit to issue to include a stormwater management plan.
234. A small portion of the subject site within Gannawarra Shire is within a declared irrigation district. The application was referred to the Secretary to DEECA. The response advised:

> *Given that the wind turbines have been located with consideration of current and future irrigation needs, the proposed land use change is considered to align with the strategies outlined in Clause 14.02-3S of the VPPs.*

235. Additionally, GMW provided a submission to the application stating that they do not support the development of the wind farm in the irrigation district as the site is a serviced property with a water licence in place, and the infrastructure is planned to be retained. While GMW's position on this matter has been considered in this assessment, the department considers that the site is an appropriate location for a wind energy facility.
236. Should a permit issue, it is recommended that the CEMP, operational environmental management plan (OEMP) and decommissioning management plan conditions include requirements for the proponent to take all necessary steps during construction, operation and decommissioning to prevent negative impacts to regional and local irrigation infrastructure.

Groundwater

237. The Surface Water and Groundwater Assessment also identifies the potential for groundwater-related issues associated with the construction and operation of the project, including:

- Groundwater intrusion into the works area;
- Proper disposal of saline groundwater; and
- Groundwater saturation in shallow groundwater areas due to increased surface runoff.

238. The assessment includes mitigation measures to address these impacts, including:

- The preparation of an impact assessment should dewatering be required, to assess potential impacts to GDEs; and

- Disposal of saline groundwater via infiltration pits or reinjection into the groundwater
- The preparation of a stormwater management plan that includes:
  - Erosion control practices to stabilise soils and reduce runoff potential during construction; and
  - The use of vegetated swales, detention basins, permeable pavements and infiltration trenches, as appropriate, to reduce runoff and promote infiltration during heavy rainfall events.

239. The assessment submits that potential groundwater impacts are unlikely due to the groundwater level across most of the subject site being at least 20 m below ground level.
240. However, it is considered that the shallow groundwater level (approximately 0 to 10 m below ground level) in the north east corner of the site, and the sensitive environmental characteristics of this area, warrants the inclusion of conditions on any permits to issue to minimise potential groundwater impacts.
241. Should permits issue, it is recommended that the recommended CEMP condition, include the mitigation measures described in the Surface Water and Groundwater Assessment. It is also considered that potential groundwater impacts should be considered in the stormwater management plan recommended to be required via any permits to issue.

Landscape and Visual Impact

242. Clauses 12.05-2S (Landscapes), 52.32-5, the FZ and the Wind Farm Guidelines require the consideration of the impact of the project on significant landscapes, open spaces and public sightlines.
243. It is noted that the planning policies in the zone and PPF do not specifically require the consideration of the impact of the development on views from private properties, as similarly established planning principle that dwelling owners do not own rights to views as established in *Dance vs Colac Otway SC* [2024] VCAT 443, *Gore v Greater Geelong CC* [2023] VCAT 1358 and various other Tribunal decisions and High Court decision *Victoria Park Racing and Recreation Grounds Co Ltd v Taylor* (1937).
244. The Wind Farm Guidelines recommend that the siting and design of turbines minimise impacts on views from dwellings. However, the Wind Farm Guidelines and the planning scheme give more weight to the impact on views to and from public spaces, demonstrated by the following clause 52.32-4 application requirements:

  - *Accurate visual simulations illustrating the development in the context of the surrounding area and from key public view points.*
  - *An assessment of:*
    - *the visual impact of the proposal on the surrounding landscape.*
    - *the visual impact on abutting land that is described in a schedule to the National Parks Act 1975 and Ramsar wetlands and coastal areas.*

245. The application is supported by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared by Aurecon and dated 13 April 2026.
246. The site is partially affected by ESO2 and ESO4. ESO2 encumbers a portion along the western boundary of the project land along Boort-Kerang Road. Works within the ESO2 are limited to a small section of the proposed access track and associated native vegetation removal for the haulage route. No buildings or structures are proposed within this overlay. ESO4 is addressed in the hydrology section of this report.
247. The highway environs (ESO2) include views along the open rural landscape, which is a feature that defines the rural character of the Gannawarra municipality. Scenic views along Boort-Kerang Road will be maintained through the retention of roadside vegetation, with the introduction of proposed turbines often screened by intervening vegetation.
248. The LVIA assesses the predicted visual impacts of the project, including from 17 different public viewpoints within a 10 km radius, as shown in Figure 12.

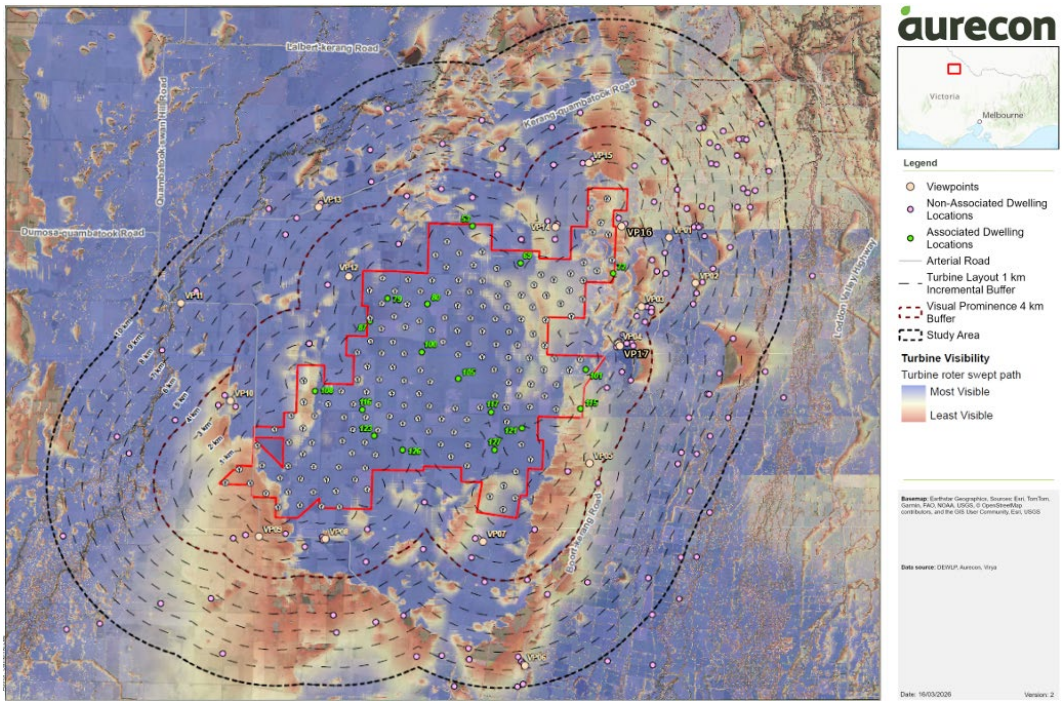

Figure 12: *Location of the 17 public viewpoints. Source: LVIA*

249. Lake Meran picnic area is the only public viewpoint with 'high' visual sensitivity. However, visual impact is rated as 'negligible' due to existing vegetation screening views towards the project, resulting in turbines not being visible from the lakeside picnic area.
250. The viewpoints and receptors experiencing the greatest level of visual impact from the wind farm (rated as 'Moderate') will be viewpoints 5, 8, 12, 14 and 16. All other view locations were rated 'Very Low, 'Low', or 'Negligible'. Representative photomontages of the predicted views are demonstrated in Figures 13-15.

Figure 13*: Photomontage of viewpoint 8 - Boort-Quambatook Road, Gredgwin. Source: LVIA*





Figure 14: *Photomontage of viewpoint 12 - Nolan Road, Quambatook. Source: LVIA*



Figure 35: *Photomontage of viewpoint 14 - Normanville Road. Source: LVIA*

251. The LVIA concludes that visual impacts of the proposed BESS, terminal station and three substations and transmission lines will be minimal due to their relatively low height compared with the proposed turbines.
252. Given the scale and co-location of the terminal station, substations and BESS, it is considered appropriate to recommend a condition for an on-site landscaping plan to reduce visual impacts of the BESS facility from surrounding roads, including Meran Road or Crump Road, subject to final siting of the facility. This requirement will apply only to the application in Gannawarra Shire where the BESS, terminal station and substation will be located.
253. The LVIA considers impacts to dwellings and includes mapping of the visual prominence zone (VPZ) (refer Figure 16). As the VPZ is based on the topography only and does not factor in existing vegetation or buildings that may screen or filter views, it represents the worst-case visibility scenario based on blade tip height of 300m within a 4 km radius of the project land.
254. Figure 16 indicates that the potential for high visual impacts to a viewpoint increases within the distance from dwelling indicated where the 'black line' intersects at 4 km and 'blue line' intersects at 6 km for public viewpoints.

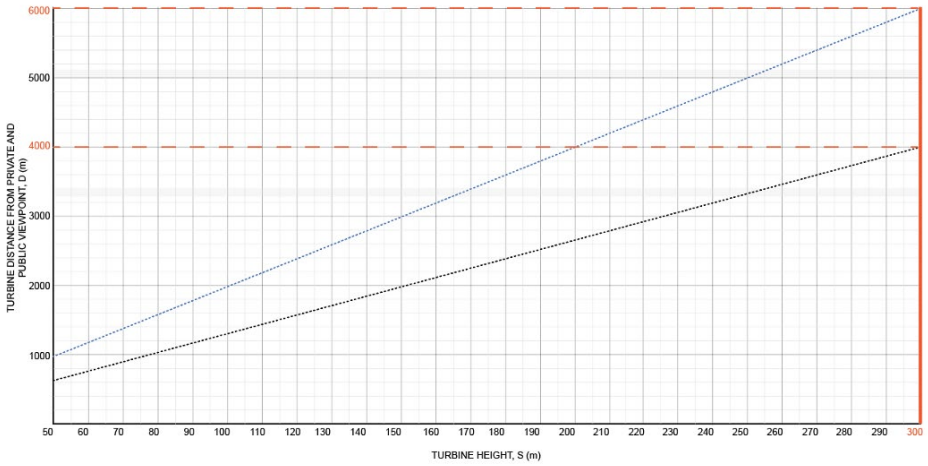

Figure 16: *Graph indicating visual magnitude thresholds for LVIA. Source: LVIA*

255. The LVIA considers 68 dwellings within 4 km of the project land (excluding 26 associated dwellings) to be more likely to experience visual impacts due to their proximity, even where existing vegetation or structures provide some screening. Of the 41 non-associated dwellings assessed, two dwellings are rated having 'high' visual impacts from the proposal. Representative viewpoints for the two dwellings are shown in Figures 15 and 17.



***Figure 47**: Photomontage of viewpoint 3 - Pickering Road, Dingwall. Source: LVIA*

256. While the project will result in visual amenity changes in the local landscape, including to views from dwellings, the landscape and visual impacts are considered acceptable subject to a condition requiring an off-site landscaping program to further reduce the visual impact of the proposed facility across to all dwellings with the 5 km. Extending the off-site landscaping requirements beyond the 4km VPZ represents a conservative method by capturing dwellings that may experience views of the project beyond the VPZ and is consistent with the approach adopted with other approved wind energy facilities.
257. The LVIA identifies nearby wind energy facilities being the approved Normanville Energy Park (directly abuts to the north) and the proposed Cannie Wind Farm (25km north-west). Nearby operational facilities include Gannawarra Solar Farm and Gannawarra BESS, approx. 6.3 km north of the project. Several approved, but primarily unconstructed solar energy facilities are also within the vicinity of the project.
258. Given the proximity of the Normanville Energy Park, there is potential for cumulative visual impacts to sensitive receivers, particularly dwellings located to the north of the project and surrounding Normanville Energy Park, where views of two or more wind farms are likely visible. It is considered that the proposal would be perceived as an extension of the Normanville Energy Park. The LVIA notes that there is a potential for increased local scale cumulative impacts to occur as a result of the project without any mitigation measures. As mentioned above, a condition will be included into both permits to include off-site landscaping treatments to further reduce any visual impacts.
259. The proposal is appropriately located within the declared North West REZ, where a greater presence and visibility of energy facilities is expected.
260. Subject to the above recommended conditions, the visual impacts on views from public viewpoints and dwellings are considered to be acceptable on balance with the benefits of the provision of a renewable energy generation and storage facility.

Shadow Flicker and Blade Glint

261. The Victorian *Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities* (DTP, 2023), outlines that:
    - Shadow flicker experienced immediately surrounding the area of a dwelling (garden-fenced area) must not exceed 30 hours per year as a result of the operation of a wind energy facility; and,
    - Turbines should be finished with a surface treatment of low reflectivity to minimise glint.
262. The applications both include a Shadow Flicker and Blade Glint Assessment prepared by Aurecon and dated 23 April 2026 which concludes that:
    - Blade glint is not expected to be an issue for the project due to the non-reflective paint used on modern wind turbines.
    - Non-host landowners are not predicted to be affected by shadow flicker effects greater than the recommended limits. The non-host dwelling predicted to experience the largest amount of shadow flicker per year was dwelling 52 at 19:04 hours per year.
    - 11 host-landholders are predicted to be affected by shadow flicker effects greater than the recommended limits. The host dwelling predicted to experience the greatest amount of shadow flicker per year was dwelling 80 at 83:44 hours per year.
    - There will be no cumulative shadow flicker impacts from the Normanville Energy Park and Meering West Wind Farm projects.

263. As the project is predicted to comply with the recommended shadow flicker limits, the impacts are considered acceptable subject to the inclusion of conditions on both permits requiring:
    - Shadow flicker from the wind energy facility must not exceed 30 hours per annum at any pre-existing dwelling as of 5 June 2025 (applications lodgement), unless an agreement has been entered into with the relevant landowner waiving this requirement; and,
    - Selection of non-reflective finishes.

Traffic

264. Clause 18.01-1S, 18.02-4S, 18.02-4L, the decision guidelines of the FZ and clause 65.01 all require consideration of access and traffic impacts relating to the proposed use and development.
265. The application includes a Preliminary Traffic Impact Assessment Report (PTIA) prepared by Aurecon and dated 30 March 2026, which considers the traffic impacts of the proposed facility on local and state roads during construction and operation.
266. The site is proposed to be accessed via approx. 68 vehicle access points for the delivery of turbine component and equipment, with the majority connecting to local unsealed roads. It is noted that the proposal includes only one new vehicle crossing along the Boort-Kerang Road, which is located within TRZ2 under the Gannawarra Planning Scheme.
267. The proposed access along the Boort-Kerang Road will be designed to ensure the existing flow of traffic remains uninterrupted nor compromise road safety. Primary access to the site is expected from Meran Road and Meering West Road. Secondary access from the west of the site via Quambatook-Boort Road, with site access proposed from Meran Road, Meering West Road and Flemming Road.
268. The majority of construction traffic, including heavy vehicles and turbine delivery component, is expected from Boort-Kerang Road.
269. During construction, turbine and tower components will be transported to the site via an over-size over-mass (OSOM) vehicles up to 93.4m in length from Port of Geelong. Delivery of turbine components will occur from Boort-Kerang Road to the east of the project land. The delivery route proposed from Port of Geelong is shown in Figure 18 below.

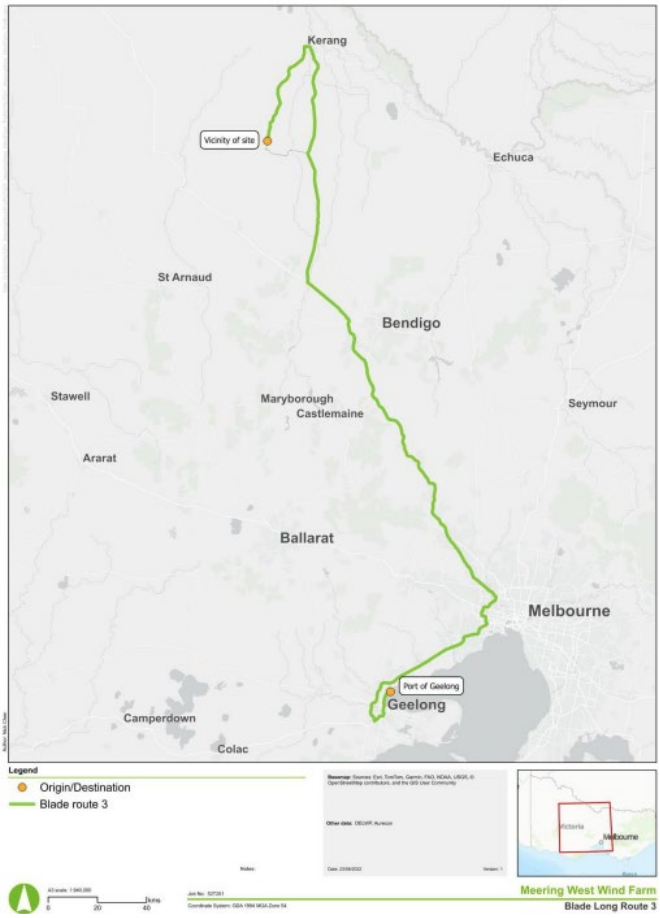

Figure 18: *OSOM haulage route from Port Geelong. Source: PTIA*

270. The haulage routes were reviewed by DTP's Heavy Vehicles team, who provided advice, dated 11 December 2025, that the proposed routes appear suitable and that the routes were utilised in the past. However, the advice also noted the PTIA has underestimated the amount of truck and dog movements to be used for the project. The impacts of the final construction traffic assessment will be addressed via Head, TfV conditions requiring a TMP.
271. The peak construction phase for the project is expected to span 18 months (within a three-year construction schedule) and estimates that there will be 55,172 total heavy-vehicle movements on road network. Construction staff are also expected to generate up to 1,028 light-vehicle daily trips per day, while 20,992 total OSOM vehicle movements, including escort vehicles, are estimated.
272. In terms of cumulative traffic impacts, construction of the approved Normanville Energy Park is anticipated to be completed prior to the commencement of the construction of the project. However, should the construction period overlap with Normanville Energy Park, the construction traffic assessment will be captured by a condition requiring the preparation of a TMP provided by Head, TfV. Operational traffic from both wind farms will be low and have a negligible impact on the road network.
273. The assessment concludes that, while the project will increase traffic volumes, the surrounding road network is expected to have adequate capacity to accommodate the additional traffic demand. Subject to the mitigation measures and management protocols, the increase in construction traffic is unlikely to have a material impact on the operation of the road network. The PTIA recommends the following:

    – Adoption of car-pooling and shuttle buses for construction staff to reduce light-vehicle movements;
    – Preparation of a Traffic Management Plan (TMP); and

- Preparation of a transport route audit for turbine component deliveries involved OSOM and over-dimensional (OD) vehicles, to identify suitable route options, constraints and any required temporary works or upgrades.

274. The PTIA includes swept path assessments of key intersections and recommends intersection works and/or upgrades at various locations along the OSOM/OD route as shown in Table 4-8 of the PTIA.
275. The application was referred to Head, TfV, who is a determining referral authority under the Gannawarra Planning Scheme. Head, TfV did not object to the proposal, subject to conditions, including but not limited to:

    - Preparation of a TMP
    - TMP must be updated if there is a significant increase in vehicles numbers above the anticipated vehicle movements, or change to an endorsed vehicle route
    - Head, TfV approval of the Road Quality Auditor who will undertake duties as defined in the TMP
    - Engineering plans for the road works and upgrades
    - Traffic management, road upgrade and maintenance works carried out to the satisfaction of Head, TfV

276. While referral to the Head, TfV is not required under the Loddon Planning Scheme, the Head, TfV advised that the traffic impacts extend beyond Gannawarra municipal boundary and provided interdepartmental advice for the application in Loddon Shire, which mirrors the formal referral response. For administrative purposes and to address impacts across both municipalities, the Head, TfV conditions will be applied to both permit applications.
277. Both Gannawarra and Loddon Councils raised concerns in their objection relating to the potential significant traffic impacts on local roads and intersections during construction, particularly from the delivery of turbine components and other oversized equipment, which affect residents, agricultural operators and emergency service access.
278. Both councils requested a detailed TMP and Road Use Management Agreement (RUMA) be prepared in consultation with the councils prior to construction. The TMP is required to be prepared in consultation with local road authorities. However, a RUMA is not required as it was not requested by Head, TfV, and the relevant road management measures are captured in the Head, TfV conditions.
279. Quarry materials for the project are proposed to be sourced from external quarries; however, the specific source locations and haulage route have not yet been identified. These matters will be considered and addressed by the Head, TfV's condition for a TMP.
280. Subject to conditions on any permit to issue, it is considered that the project will not have any unreasonable impacts on the road network and is acceptable. The proposed transport route is supported subject to the above conditions to ensure that the safety and function of the road network is not detrimentally affected during project construction.

Aviation

281. Clause 18.02-7S (Airports and airfields), clause 18.02-7L (Kerang Airport) and the decision guidelines of clause 52.32 (Wind energy facility) seek to assess the impacts of the project on aviation safety and safeguard the ongoing, safe and efficient operation of Victorian airports and airfields, including Kerang, Airport.
282. The *Obstacle Limitation Surface Plan, Plan Sheet 2 of 2, Number F1359 (Price Merrett and Associates Pty Ltd, 1999)* is a policy document at clause 18.02-7L.
283. Additionally, the *National Airports Safeguarding Framework (NASF) Guideline D: Managing the Risk to Aviation Safety of Wind Turbine Installations (Wind Farms)/Wind Monitoring Towers* provides additional guidance to decision makers (including the Minister for Planning) to inform the aviation assessment of wind farms.

284. The application is supported by an Aeronautical Impact Assessment (AIA) prepared by Aurecon, and dated 14 April 2026, which assessed the proposal's impacts on the nearby airports and aerodromes as summarised below:

Airport/Aerodromes	Distance from the project	Key Findings
Kerang Airport (certified and operated by Gannawarra Shire Council)	Approx. 13km south-east	– The project is located outside the obstacle limitation surface (OLS). – The project will encroach within the 10 and 25 nautical mile (nm) Minimum Safe Altitude (MSA) boundaries. As a result, consultation with Kerang Airport is required to seek an amendment to the 10 nm MSA increased from 1,800 feet (ft) to 2,300 ft and the 25 nm MSA increased from 2,000 ft to 2,400 ft between radial 180° to 270°.
Swan Hill Airport (certified and operated by Swan Hill Rural City Council)	Approx. 50 km north-west	– The project area lies beyond the airport's 25 nm MSA boundary. – The proposal does not infringe on the airport's protected airspace.
Wycheproof Airport (certified and operated by Buloke Shire Council)	Approx. 30.5km south-west	– The project boundary is located outside the OLS. – This airport does not have instrument flight procedures; therefore, MSAs are not applicable.
Quambatook Airport (uncertified aerodrome)	Approx. 8.5km north-west	– The project is located outside the OLS. – The proposal is not expected to impact existing aircraft operations.

285. The AIA concludes that the proposed wind farm:

- Is unlikely to generate adverse wake turbulence impacts on nearby aerodromes.
- Will not impact on any existing air routes, as all identified air routes have Lowest Safe Altitude (LSALTs) above the required obstacle clearance.
- Falls within a grid LSALT of 2000 ft. Given the maximum blade tip height of 1,345 ft and required minimum obstacle clearance of 1000 ft, consultation with Airservices Australia is required to seek an amendment to the grid LSALT from 2,000 ft to 2,400 ft.
- Will infringe the 10 nm MSA by 500 ft and 25 nm MSA by 400ft within the boundaries of Kerang Airport. Consultation with Kerang Airport is required to request to amend the 10nm MSA from 1,800 ft to 2,300 ft and 25 nm MSA from 2,000 ft to 2,400 ft.
- Is not located of any designated visual flight rules (VFR) lanes or reporting points.
- Is situated within Class G (uncontrolled) airspace and will not impact the current airspace classification.
- Is not expected to adversely impact the performance of communication and navigation facilities.
- Is not anticipated to adversely impact the performance of surveillance radars.
- Is not expected to impact meteorological mast facilities located within an aerodrome (Quambatook) site, which is located over 8 km from the project land.

286. A condition will be added to both permits to ensure the construction of the proposed turbines must not commence until the instrument flight procedures and Grid LSALT have been implemented and AirServices Australia to confirm the changes to the instrument flight procedures have been implement, to the satisfaction of responsible authority.
287. The application is also supported by Aviation Safety Risk Assessment (ASRA), prepared by Aviation Projects.

288. While the proponent's AIA recommends obstacle lighting for the project, the ASRA concludes that proposed wind turbine generators (WTGs) would not require obstacle lighting to maintain an acceptable level of safety to aircraft and would not impact the OLS of any aerodrome.
289. Notice was given to CASA, AirServices Australia, Gannawarra Shire Council and Loddon Shire Council.
290. CASA did not object to the application; however, CASA determined that the proposed WTGs, with a blade tip height of 280m (1,345 ft) above ground level, may present a hazard to aviation safety. To address this hazard, the CASA recommended the following mitigations measures:

    - The wind farm should be lit with at least 200 candela steady red lighting at night and during low visibility.
    - The visual impact on the community should be a consideration when assessing lighting options.
    - Relevant aerodrome (e.g., Kerang Airport and Quambatook Aerodrome) and aviation operators should be consulted to ensure that they can accept any proposed changes. Prior to any changes to airspace, CASA will require confirmation from the aerodrome operator of their acceptance before any such changes are implemented.
    - Details of the WTGs should be reported to Airservices Australia and Department of Defence.
    - AirServices should be contacted to publish a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) advising pilots that the construction of tall structures in the area is imminent.

291. No response from AirServices Australia has been received to date. No aviation related matters were raised in the councils' submissions.
292. It is recommended all mitigation measures provided by CASA be included on any permits issued, except for the installation of aviation safety lighting.
293. DTP does not support CASA's recommendation that obstacle lighting be installed on the wind turbines. This position is informed by the ASRA which conclude that the risk of aircraft collision with the turbines is tolerable in the absence of obstacle lighting. DTP also notes that the project does not penetrate any airport OLS. Further, the introduction of aviation safety lighting would result in additional visual impacts on the surrounding area that have not been assessed as part of the planning applications. Should aviation regulatory requirements change in the future, obstacle lighting could be installed on the turbines retrospectively.

294. Subject to the inclusion of a condition preventing works commencing prior to changes to the Kerang Airport MSA, and LSALT, and standard conditions about notification of obstacles and marking wind monitoring masts, DTP considers that the project's impacts on aviation operations, safety and airport accessibility are acceptable.

Heritage

Historic Heritage

295. The site is not affected by a Heritage Overlay nor any Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) or Inventory (VHI) sites.

Aboriginal Heritage

296. The site is partially located with an area of Aboriginal CHS and the applicant has worked with First Peoples – State Relations to configure the layout to have regard for sensitive cultural heritage sites within the subject site.
297. CHMP 20208 was prepared for the project and approved by First Peoples – State Relations on 14 October 2026. The planning applications are consistent with the activity described in the approved CHMP.

Social and Economic Effects

298. Sections 60(1)(f) and 60(1B) of the PE Act require the responsible authority to consider any significant social effects the use or development may have, including having regard to the number of objectors in considering whether the use or development may have a significant social effect.
299. A total of 109 objections and 10 positive submissions were received for both applications.
300. The project will contribute to the local community through the following initiatives that the proponent states they will implement:

- Subsidies of electricity bills for dwelling within 6-10km of a wind turbine;
- Annual payments of up to $8,000 for dwelling located between 2-2.5km of a turbine;
- Payments of up to $1000 for dwellings within 5.5-6km from a turbine;
- A Community grant fund to support community connectivity, community wellbeing and local skill building. The community grant fund will also have funds specifically allocated to First Nations Peoples;
- Support to local sporting clubs to continue throughout construction and operation; and
- Approximately $2.1m annually to Gannawarra & Loddon LGAs in lieu of rates.

301. It is considered that, on balance, the proposal achieves a net community benefit when balanced with its other social, economic and environmental outcomes.
302. This report's assessment of the application against the MPS and PPF of the Gannawarra and Loddon Planning Schemes is considered to satisfy sections 60(1)(f) and 60(1B) of the PE Act.

Decommissioning

303. In response to objections received, it is noted that key decommissioning activities would include:

- Removal of all above ground non-operational equipment
- Removal and clean up of any residual contamination
- Rehabilitation of all storage areas, construction areas, access tracks and other areas impacts by the decommissioning of turbines.

304. The future decommissioning of the proposed facility can be adequately addressed via permit conditions requiring a decommissioning management plan (DMP). These conditions will require the infrastructure to be removed from the site and the land to be rehabilitated and reinstated to its prior condition to ensure that there is no long-term permanent loss of agricultural land. It is also noted that the proponent advises that rehabilitation bonds are in place to ensure that land owners are not left responsible for decommissioning costs.

Staging

305. Given the scale of the proposed project, it is recommended that a condition be included on any permit to issue to allow the use and development to be completed in stages, providing that the corresponding conditions / obligations are also satisfied in stages.

Other Victorian and Commonwealth legislation

306. The subject of this report is the assessment of the project under the PE Act.
307. The table at Attachment 1 of this report provides an overview of the project's key approval and assessment requirements under other Victorian and Commonwealth legislation.

Conclusion

308. The proposal has been assessed against all matters at section 60 of the PE Act, is consistent with the relevant planning policies of the Gannawarra and Loddon Planning Schemes and is supported by the various referral agencies, subject to conditions which have been incorporated into the permits.
309. The project will contribute to the provision of renewable energy and storage and will support Victoria's legislative target of net zero emissions by 2050 under the *Climate Change Act 2017*. The project will also deliver short and long-term economic benefits, including the creation of jobs during construction and operation.
310. Overall, the project is considered to achieve an acceptable balance between the benefits of the proposed wind energy facility and battery and its potential environmental impacts, subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures which have been included as permit conditions.

Recommendation

311. It is recommended that Planning Permits No. PA2503749 and PA2503750 for the use and development of the Meering West Wind Farm project (as described in this report), be issued under delegation from the Minister for Planning, subject to conditions.
312. It is recommended that the following stakeholders be notified of the decisions in writing:

Application ref:	Planning Scheme:	Decision:	Notify:
PA2503749	Gannawarra	Planning permit (Form 4) with conditions	Gannawarra Shire Council Head, TfV Secretary to DEECA DEECA Water WorkSafe Victoria CASA CFA Goulburn Murray Water North Central Catchment Management Authority VicTrack Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water All objectors and submitters
PA2503750	Loddon	Planning permit (Form 4) with conditions	Loddon Shire Council Head, TfV Secretary to DEECA CASA CFA Goulburn Murray Water North Central Catchment Management Authority Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water All objectors and submitters

[redacted]

Dated: 29 October 2026

[redacted]

Dated: 2 November 2026

[redacted]

Dated: 2 November 2026

Appendix A – Requirements under other legislation

313. The table below provides an overview of the project's key approval and assessment requirements under other Victorian and Commonwealth legislation:

Act	Discussion
***Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (AH Act)**	The AH Act seeks to avoid adverse effects to Aboriginal cultural heritage values as far as reasonably practicable. Where adverse effects cannot be avoided, measures must be implemented to minimise and mitigate adverse effects. The subject site includes areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity, and therefore a mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is required. A CHMP was approved on 14 October 2026 by First Peoples – State Relations acting under delegation by the Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet. The applications are consistent with the activity described in the CHMP.
***Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (The Charter)**	The Charter gives legal recognition and protection in Victoria to many important human rights, particularly civil and political rights. DTP is committed to upholding its responsibilities under the Charter. As a public authority under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter), the Minister must give proper consideration to relevant human rights when making decisions (the procedural obligation), and act compatibly with those rights (the substantive obligation) pursuant to section 38(1) of the Charter. The purpose of this section is to record the matters that must be considered in deciding to approve the planning permit applications. In order to satisfy the procedural obligation and give proper consideration to relevant human rights, there is a requirement to: - understand the relevant human rights of a person or class of persons that may be impacted by a decision; - consider the possible impact of a decision on the human rights of a person or persons; - identify any countervailing interests or obligations; and - balance competing private and public interests to assess whether any impact on a relevant human right by the decision is justified, in the sense that it is appropriate in all the circumstances. The following rights may be relevant in deciding on the planning permit applications: - right to privacy (section 13); - the right to take part in public life (section 18); - cultural rights (section 19); and - property rights (section 20). <u>Right to Privacy (s 13)</u> Section 13(a) of the Charter provides that a person has the right not to have their privacy, family, home, or correspondence, unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with. An interference will be lawful if it is permitted by a law that is precise and appropriately circumscribed, and will be arbitrary only if it is capricious, unpredictable, unjust or unreasonable, in the sense of being disproportionate to the legitimate aim sought. 'Privacy' is a right of considerable breadth. Relevantly, privacy protects a person's place of residence, regardless of whether they have a legal interest in that residence. What constitutes an interference with this aspect of the right to privacy has been

Act	Discussion
	approached in a practical manner and may cover actions that prevent a person from continuing to live in and enjoy their home. The area that is the subject of the decision does include private land, and the decision may impact the capacity owners of land within the project site, and neighbouring land, may otherwise have had with respect to future changes in use or development of their land. In some cases the permit applications will impact the scope of what landowners may permissibly do in terms of development of their land. The permit applications may have the effect of allowing a new use that impacts the ability to use farming land for residential purposes within close proximity of wind turbines. In the event that any landowners are in impacted in their ability to use or develop their property, to the extent that this would tend to interfere with their privacy rights, such rights would only be limited under the Charter where the interference is unlawful or arbitrary. Given the decision would be pursuant to a precise and appropriately circumscribed law that is predictable and proportionate to the legitimate aim of increasing renewable energy supply in the State of Victoria, it is open for the Minister to conclude that any interference is not unlawful or arbitrary, and therefore the decision is compatible with the right to privacy under s 13 of the Charter. <u>Right to take part in public life (s 18)</u> Section 18 of the Charter provides that every person in Victoria has the right, and is to have the opportunity, without discrimination, to participate in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives. The right extends to a person's entitlement to attend a public forum to help make decisions on local issues. Engagement with community, councils, peak industry bodies, and surrounding landowners was undertaken through notice of the applications. The details of the engagement, feedback received, and assessment, are outlined in this report. Considering all of these factors, it is open to the Minister to be satisfied that the consultation is sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the PE Act, and that the process leading to the Minister's approval is compatible with the right to take part in public life. <u>Aboriginal Cultural Rights (s 19)</u> Section 19(2) of the Charter recognises that Aboriginal persons hold distinct cultural rights and provides that they must not be denied the right, with other members of their community to (among other things) maintain their distinctive spiritual, material, and economic relationship with the land and waters, and other resources, with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs (section 19(2)(d)). Consultation with the First Peoples – State Relations (FP-SR) was undertaken by giving notice of both planning permit applications and through the preparation of a CHMP

Act	Discussion
	which was approved on 18 October 2026. It is noted that there currently is no RAP for the activity area and an Activity Advisory Group was not appointed for the CHMP. Areas of aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity fall within the project sites. As such, where development envisioned under the permit applications falls within areas of aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity, it will continue to be addressed as required under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018. It is therefore open to the Minister to be satisfied that the decision does not limit cultural rights. <u>Property rights (s 20)</u> Under section 20 of the Charter, a person must not be deprived of their property other than in accordance with law. This right requires that powers which authorise the deprivation of property are conferred by legislation or common law, are confined and structured rather than unclear, are accessible to the public, and are formulated precisely. Case law recognises that Acts like the PE Act, and planning schemes made under it, remove and regulate the right an owner in fee simple would otherwise have to develop land. The regulation of the right to develop land is not considered an acquisition of property rights. Case law also recognises that owners of land have no specific right to immunity from this class of regulation. Nonetheless, the permit applications may impact or limit a change in use or development of property (even though it does not deprive landowners of possession or ownership). To the extent the decision impacts private landowners' ability to use, develop or enjoy their property, any such interference with property rights of landowners will be in accordance with the law, namely the PE Act. Accordingly, the decision will not limit the right to property under s 20 of the Charter. These planning applications have been assessed in a manner that is compatible with the human rights identified in the Charter.
***Climate Action Act 2017* (CA Act)**	The purpose of the CA Act includes (but is not limited to): - to facilitate the consideration of climate change issues in specified areas of decision making of the Government of Victoria; and, - to set policy objectives and guiding principles to inform decision-making under this Act and the development of government policy in the State. Section 20 of the CA Act states that: *The Government of Victoria will endeavour to ensure that any decision made by the Government and any policy, program or process developed or implemented by the Government appropriately takes account of climate change if it is relevant by having regard to the policy objectives and the guiding principles.* This assessment has had consideration of the policy objectives and the guiding principles of the CA Act.

Act	Discussion
	The project is anticipated to generate 1.5 GW of electricity which will help achieve the emissions reduction targets in Part 2 of the CA Act. It is noted that the community were invited to be involved in the decision-making process via public notice under s52 of the PE Act. Under the CA Act, six principles are to inform decision-making. <u>Informed decision making (section 23)</u> The permit applications have been informed by assessments relating to flooding, and bushfire as relevant. The permit applications consider potential reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. It is considered that positive climate impacts will result from the proposal, resulting in better air quality and reducing Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions. <u>Integrated decision making (section 24)</u> The assessment of the permit applications includes consideration of climate change risks outlined in the VPP, including fire and flooding, amongst others. <u>Risk management (section 25)</u> The assessment includes consideration (as noted above) to fire and flooding, and increasing resilience to climate change risks, as discussed in the Meering West Wind Farm hazard & risk assessment (including a bushfire assessment) and the Meering West Wind Farm surface and groundwater assessment. <u>Equity (section 26)</u> The permit applications seek approval for additional renewable energy generation. Impacts on the community and neighbouring landowners has been considered and was considered to be acceptable due to appropriate siting of the proposed facilities ensuring that adjacent properties could continue to use their land unimpeded. <u>Community engagement (section 27)</u> The community has been engaged with and provided feedback as outlined in the Meering West Wind Farm planning report. <u>Compatibility (section 28)</u> The proposal responds to other relevant State policy and objectives as discussed throughout this report. <u>*Overall summary with respect to consideration of climate change:*</u> The permit applications are consistent with the CA Act in that they aim to support land use and development to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts and support emissions reduction targets.

Act	Discussion
	The permit applications facilitate greater provision of renewable energy generation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This supports emissions reductions targets identified in the Climate Action Act 2017 of net zero emissions by 2045, along with interim emissions reduction targets of 28-33% by 2025, 45-50% by 2030 and 75-80% by 2040.
***Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* (CLR Act)**	The *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* (CLR Act) provides for the reservation of land for a range of public purposes, stipulates how reserved land must be dealt with and prescribes key governance arrangements for committees of management appointed to manage reserved land.
***Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act)**	The EE Act requires the preparation of an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) for activities considered to have, or to be capable of having, a significant effect on the environment. *The Ministerial Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978* (DTP 2023) outlines the criteria for referring a project to the Victorian Minister for Planning who will determine if an EES is required. The proponent undertook a self-assessment of the project, demonstrating that the individual criteria and combined criteria did not meet the referral threshold requirements and concluded that an EES was not required.
***Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)**	Under the EPBC Act, an action that has, will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance (MNES), must be referred to the Commonwealth Minister for Environment and Water. On 7 January 2026 the project was determined to be a controlled action under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) as it was considered to have a significant impact on the following matters of national environmental significant (MNES): - Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A) - Listed migratory species (sections 20 and 20A) The controlled action is not being assessed via under the bilateral agreement with Victoria, and the two planning applications can be determined prior to the Commonwealth's decision on the controlled action.
***Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act)**	The FFG Act seeks to promote the conservation of Victoria's native flora and fauna. The responsible authority (in their assessment of the project's environmental impacts has considered impacts on FFG threatened species. The responsible authority is also required to give proper consideration to the objectives of the FFG Act, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of functions under the PE Act. It is noted that consideration has been given to Section 4 of the FFG Act, including its objectives and principles, and other areas where the responsible authority is expected to give proper consideration, including to relevant instruments made under the FFG Act. Under the FFG Act a permit is required to take, kill, injure, disturb or collect threatened species or protected flora species from public land. There are permit exemptions under the FFG Act which apply to the non-commercial removal of protected flora from private land, unless there is 'critical habitat' that has been declared on the land. The project is predicted to impact seven FFG listed flora species (Yarran, Umbrella Wattle, Buloke, Bush Minuria, Fuzzy New Holland Daisy, Weeping Myall and Small Burr-grass) and has potential to impact a number of FFG listed fauna species including; Black Falcon, Grey-crowned Babbler, Hardhead, Hooded Robin, Little Eagle, White-

Act	Discussion

	bellied Sea-Eagle and White-throated Needletail. The proponent will need to obtain a permit under the FFG Act prior to the removal of these communities and species.
	
	DTP notes that native vegetation offsets are required to be secured prior to the removal of any native vegetation, which is consistent with FFG Act objectives that seek to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity. DTP also notes that the proposed development, by contributing to efforts to reduce emissions will not be likely to worsen climate change impacts and therefore will mitigate the impacts of potentially threatening processes to address important underlying causes of biodiversity decline.
	
	Under section 4B of the FFG Act, the Minister is required to give proper consideration to the objectives of the FFG Act, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of her functions under the PE Act.
	
	The objectives set out in section 4 of the FFG Act are:
	
	- to guarantee that all taxa of Victoria's flora and fauna, other than taxa specified in the Excluded List, can persist and improve in the wild and retain their capacity to adapt to environmental change; and
	- to prevent taxa and communities of flora and fauna from becoming threatened and to recover threatened taxa and communities so their conservation status improves; and
	- to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including:
	  - flora and fauna and their habitats; and
	  - genetic diversity; and
	  - ecological communities; and
	  - ecological processes; and
	- to identify and mitigate the impacts of potentially threatening processes to address the important underlying causes of biodiversity decline; and
	- to ensure the use of biodiversity as a natural resource is ecologically sustainable; and
	- to identify and conserve areas of Victoria in respect of which critical habitat determinations are made.
	
	In addition, section 4B(2) of FFG Act states that a Minister and a public authority, so far as is consistent with the proper exercising of their functions, must consider any instrument made under the FFG Act, including:
	
	- Biodiversity Strategy; and
	- action statements; and
	- critical habitat determinations; and
	- management plans.
	
	Section 4B(4) of FFG Act further states that consideration must also be given to the potential impacts on biodiversity, including:
	
	- long and short-term impacts; and
	- beneficial and detrimental impacts; and
	- direct and indirect impacts; and
	- cumulative impacts; and
	- the impacts of potentially threatening processes.
	
	Consideration

Act	Discussion
	The planning permit applications facilitate the development and operation of a 155-turbine wind energy facility. The impacts from the facility have been considered with regards to impacts on biodiversity matters including the FFG Act. The assessment concludes that the impacts are acceptable, subject to mitigations and monitoring.


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