

Planning Application for a proposed Utility Installation associated with Berrybank Wind Farm

Planning Assessment

Global Power Generations (GPG)

December 2017

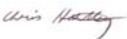
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INTRODUCTION

Environmental Resources Management (Australia) Pty Ltd has been engaged to act on behalf of Berrybank Development Pty Ltd in relation to Berrybank Wind Farm.

This planning application seeks approval for the *use and development of a utility installation (220kV transmission lines and substation and associated works) and the removal of native vegetation; and to make alterations to a road located in a Road Zone Category 1(to include a crossover at Lismore Road) in relation to Berrybank Wind Farm.*

By way of background, Berrybank Wind Farm was approved by the Minister for Planning under Planning Permit Nos. 2009/2820 (Golden Plains Shire) and 2009/2821 (Corangamite Shire) on 24 August 2010.

Planning Permit No. 2009/2820 allows for the:

'Use and development of land for a wind energy facility (comprising up to 49 generators), including anemometers (wind monitoring masts), business identification signage, access roads, sub-station, water storage tanks and removal of native vegetation subject to conditions.'

Planning Permit No. 2009/2821 allows for the:

'Use and development of land for a wind energy facility (comprising up to 50 generators), including anemometers (wind monitoring masts), business identification signage, including access roads, substation, water storage tanks and removal of native vegetation subject to conditions.'

Endorsed plans were issued in accordance with Condition 1 of both permits on 9 August 2013 by the (then) Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) (now Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)). The endorsed plans of Berrybank Wind Farm include an indicative alignment of the proposed alignment of the external transmission lines, however approval of the transmission lines were not formally sought as part of the Planning Applications. As such they are not considered to be approved under P2009/2820 and P2009/2121. We note the proposed alignment of the transmission lines is identical to that shown on the endorsed plans attached in Annex A of this report.

An amendment to each of the above mentioned permits and associated endorsed plans to increase the turbine heights (amongst other things) has recently been proposed pursuant to Section 97(I) of the *P&E Act* and reviewed by an Independent Planning Panel in November 2017. The utility installation and external transmission line alignment proposed as part of this proposal is relevant equally to the approved design as well as the proposed amended design sought under the S. 97(I) application.

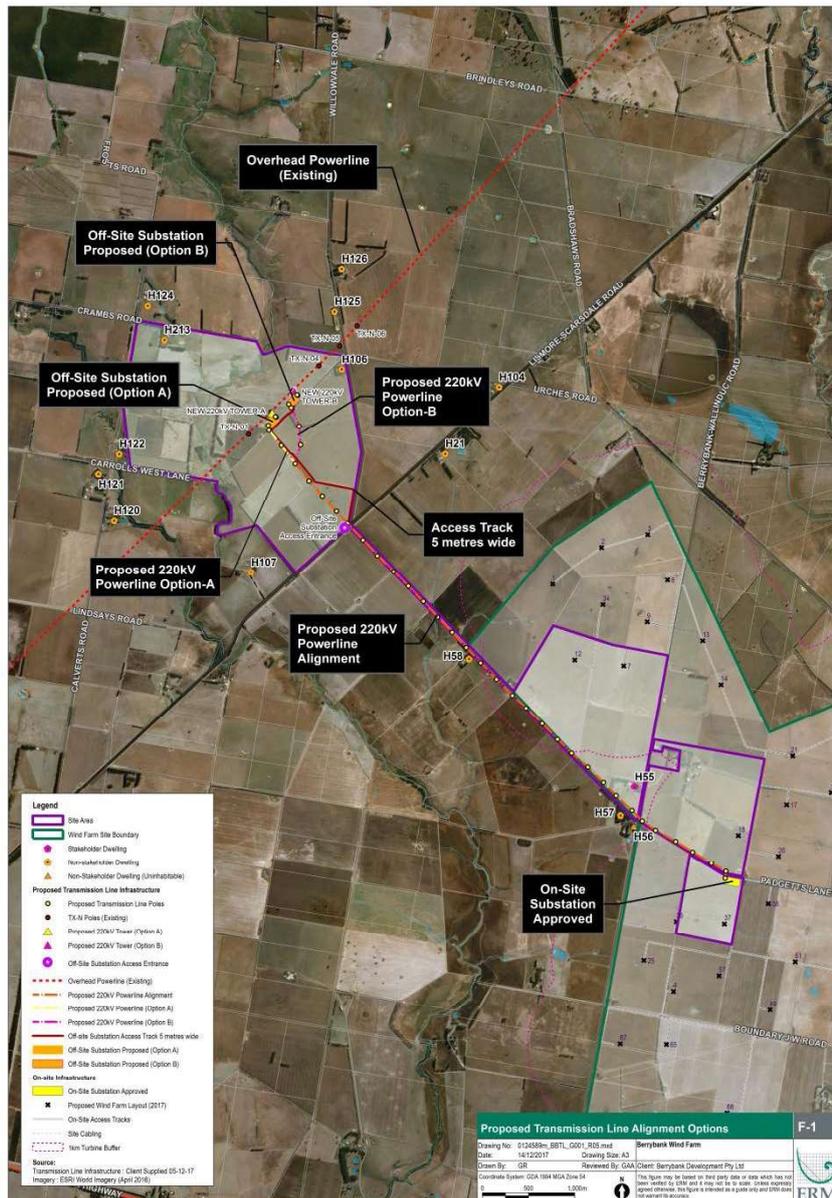
THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the use and development of a utility installation (220kV transmission lines and substation and associated works); the removal of native vegetation; and to make alterations to a road located in a Road Zone Category 1 associated with Berrybank Wind Farm located to the north west of the wind farm site.

The proposed utility installation would include transmission lines of 220kV and an offsite substation occupying an area of approximately 1ha. The utility installation would connect the approved Berrybank Wind Farm to the existing electricity transmission network using a proposed 220kV transmission tower. Refer to Annex H for a statement submitted by AusNet regarding their position towards the proposal.

The alignment of the transmission lines has been proposed to minimise native vegetation removal and allow for the connection to the existing 220kV transmission line which is located north of Lismore Road and south of Crambs Road (refer to Figure 1).

Figure 1 Proposed Transmission Line Alignment Options



A total of 0.069 hectares of native vegetation is proposed to be removed. This vegetation is described as:

- Seven patches of native vegetation for the electricity poles (each pole with a disturbance area of 2 x 2 metres) - Poles 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, and 25;
- Area of easement and vegetation removal for powerline between poles 7 and 8; and
- Area of grassland associated with access track on Lismore-Scarsdale Road (5 x 5 metres).

The location of the native vegetation to be removed is shown on Figure 2 of the attached biodiversity assessment.

This vegetation has a strategic biodiversity score of 0.284. This matter is further discussed later 5 of this report.

Two options for the final layout of the transmission lines and substation are proposed as part of this planning application (referred to as Option A and Option B). Whilst planning approval is sought for both options, only one option will be realised, with the final decision being made upon reaching an agreement with relevant authorities regarding the 'best fit' approach.

The differences between the two options are minimal, with both alignments running along Padgetts Lane to proposed Pole 32. From this point the Option A alignment proposes to continue straight to the existing transmission lines whereas the Option B alignment proposes to extend to the east of the Option A alignment. Each alignment is proposed to be connected to its own appropriately located offsite substation. A transmission tower which will connect the proposed transmission lines to the existing electricity grid will form part of the proposed on-site infrastructure works.

Landscaping for screening purposes is proposed at the proposed substation in the form of Hedge Wattle, Golden Wattle, Sweet Bursaria, Cranberry Health, Spiny Headed mat-rush, Black Anther Flax-lily, Blackwood, Drooping She-oak, River Red-gum, Swamp Gum and Manna Gum on the eastern and western boundaries of the substation. The planting density is proposed to be 32 plants per 100 sqm and the revegetation area with tubestock is proposed to be approximately 1500 sqm.

The results of the noise, traffic and surface water assessments do not differ for both options. Both options have been designed to avoid native vegetation and the impacts of each are discussed in the native vegetation assessment included later in this report. The location of the proposed substation does not impact the quality and quantity of water of Gnarkeet Chain of Ponds. Surface water impacts are discussed in the surface water assessment included later in this report.

Details of the proposed transmission lines and substation are as follows:

Transmission Lines:

- 220kV
- Transmission poles with height ranges between 36.5m – 49.5m above natural ground level

- Transmission towers with a maximum height of approximately 45m above natural ground level

Substation:

- Approximately 1.0 hectare in size
- Proposed landscape screening

It is also proposed to create a crossover at Lismore Road (Road Zone Category 1) to allow for one access to service each proposed substation. Details of the proposed crossover are shown on the plans found in Attachment A 'Proposed Site Access Design & Swept Path Assessment' of the Traffic Assessment attached in Annex G of this report.

SITE AND SURROUNDS

Berrybank Wind Farm is located in south-west Victoria, approximately 14km to the east of Lismore and 16km to the west of Cressy. The site is approximately 130km west of Melbourne within the Victorian district known as the Western District. Golden Plains Shire and Corangamite Shire bound the site north and south side of Boundary Road respectively. The wind farm site is located generally within a rural area with a small part located in the township of Berrybank.

3.1

SUBJECT SITE

The proposed utility installation would connect Berrybank Wind Farm to the existing Ballarat-Terang 220kV transmission line located approximately 3.5km to the north west of the approved wind farm.

The proposal is to be located on both private property and road reserves as follows:

Pole 1 (adjacent to the on-site substation)

- Lot 1 LP145475

Poles 2 to 7

- Lot 2 PS 723420

Poles 8 to 11

- Allotment 76C Parish of Naringhil

Poles 12 to 26

- Padgetts Lane road reserve.

Poles 27 to 35A and 36B (Option A and B alignments located north of Lismore-Scarsdale Road)

- Lot 1 LP112823
- Lot 2 LP112823
- Lot 1 LP99425

Offsite substation Option A and associated transmission tower (Tower A)

- Allotment 119 Parish of Galla

Offsite substation Option B and associated transmission tower (Tower B)

- Allotment 118 Parish of Galla

The dwellings that are located within the site boundary are H55, H106, H213 as shown in *Figure 1* above. These dwellings relate to lots 'Allotment 76C Parish of Naringhil', 'Lot 1 LP112823' and 'Allotment 118 Parish of Galla' respectively.

Table 1 below details the proximity of the surrounding dwellings to the nearest transmission pole and the nearest off-site substation.

Dwelling	Nearest Pole	Distance (m)	Nearest Substation	Distance (m)
H55	Pole-09	231	Off-Site Substation Proposed A	5553
H57	Pole-08	133	Off-Site Substation Proposed A	5682
H58	Pole-19	124	Off-Site Substation Proposed A	3310
H56	Pole-07	106	Off-Site Substation Proposed A	5866
H21	Pole-26	1302	Off-Site Substation Proposed B	1684
H104	Pole-36-B	2186	Off-Site Substation Proposed B	2161
H106	Pole-36-B	558	Off-Site Substation Proposed B	558
H107	Pole-28-A	1137	Off-Site Substation Proposed A	1591
H120	Pole-33-A	1941	Off-Site Substation Proposed A	1961
H121	Pole-33-A	1903	Off-Site Substation Proposed A	1896
H122	Pole-33-A	1639	Off-Site Substation Proposed A	1624
H213	Pole-34-A	1464	Off-Site Substation Proposed A	1426
H124	Pole-36-A	1838	Off-Site Substation Proposed A	1806
H125	Pole-37-B	999	Off-Site Substation Proposed B	991
H126	Pole-37-B	1463	Off-Site Substation Proposed B	1453

Table 1: Proximity of Surrounding Dwellings to Nearest Transmission Pole and Off-site Substation

3.2 SURROUNDING AREA

The surrounding area is predominantly used for agriculture purposes which include grazing of sheep and cattle and crop growth of cereals whose beds are used locally to improve drainage. The land use is farming under the Planning Scheme of both responsible authorities, Corangamite Shire and Golden Plains Shire. A 'Township Zone' (Berrybank) is located at the southern end of the site in Corangamite Shire.

Refer to Annex B for the location plan of the proposal in relation to the proposed amended Berrybank Wind Farm.

4 PLANNING CONTROLS

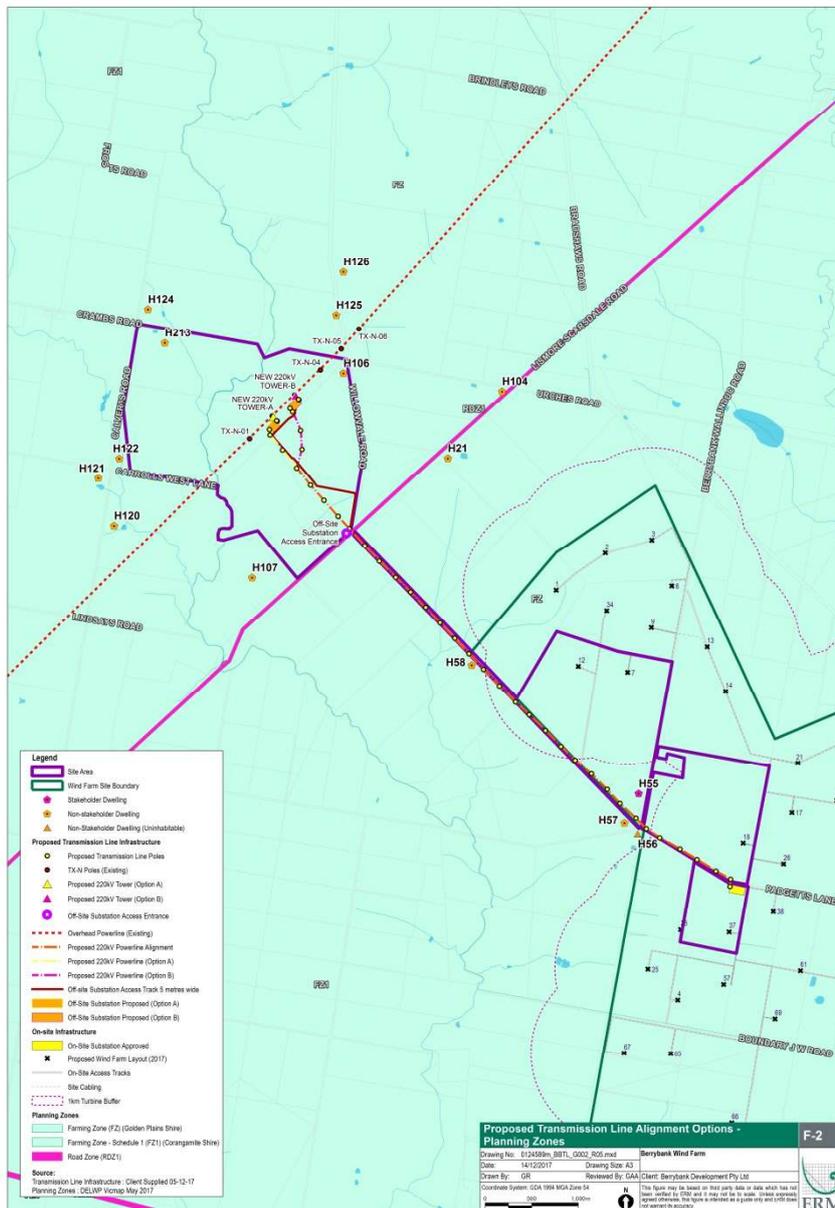
4.1 LAND USE DEFINITION

Pursuant to Clause 74 of the Golden Plains and Corangamite Planning Schemes, a Utility Installation includes 'land used to transmit or distribute power'.

4.2 ZONING CONTROLS

The proposal site is located in the Farming Zone and Road Zone Category 1 pursuant to the Golden Plains Planning Scheme as per Figure 2 below. Further details of each zone are as follows.

Figure 2 Proposed Transmission Line Alignment Options - Planning Zones



4.2.1 *Farming Zone*

The proposed utility installation is to be located in the Farming Zone (FZ) pursuant to Clause 35.07 of the Golden Plains Planning Schemes.

The purpose of this zone is

- *'To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.*
- *To provide for the use of land for agriculture.*
- *To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.*
- *To ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.*
- *To encourage the retention of employment and population to support rural communities.*
- *To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.'*

Under the provisions of **Clause 35.07-1** a planning permit is required to use the land for a Utility Installation (other than Minor Utility Installation and Telecommunications Facility) as it is a Section 2 (permit required) use.

Pursuant to **Clause 35.07-4**, a permit is required for building and works for Section 2 (Permit required) uses.

4.2.2 *Road Zone Category 1*

The proposed utility installation is to be located along Padgetts Lane, north west of the wind farm site up to Willowvale Road. The alignment is to cross Lismore Road which is included in the Road Zone Category 1 (RDZ1) pursuant to **Clause 36.04**.

The purpose of this zone includes:

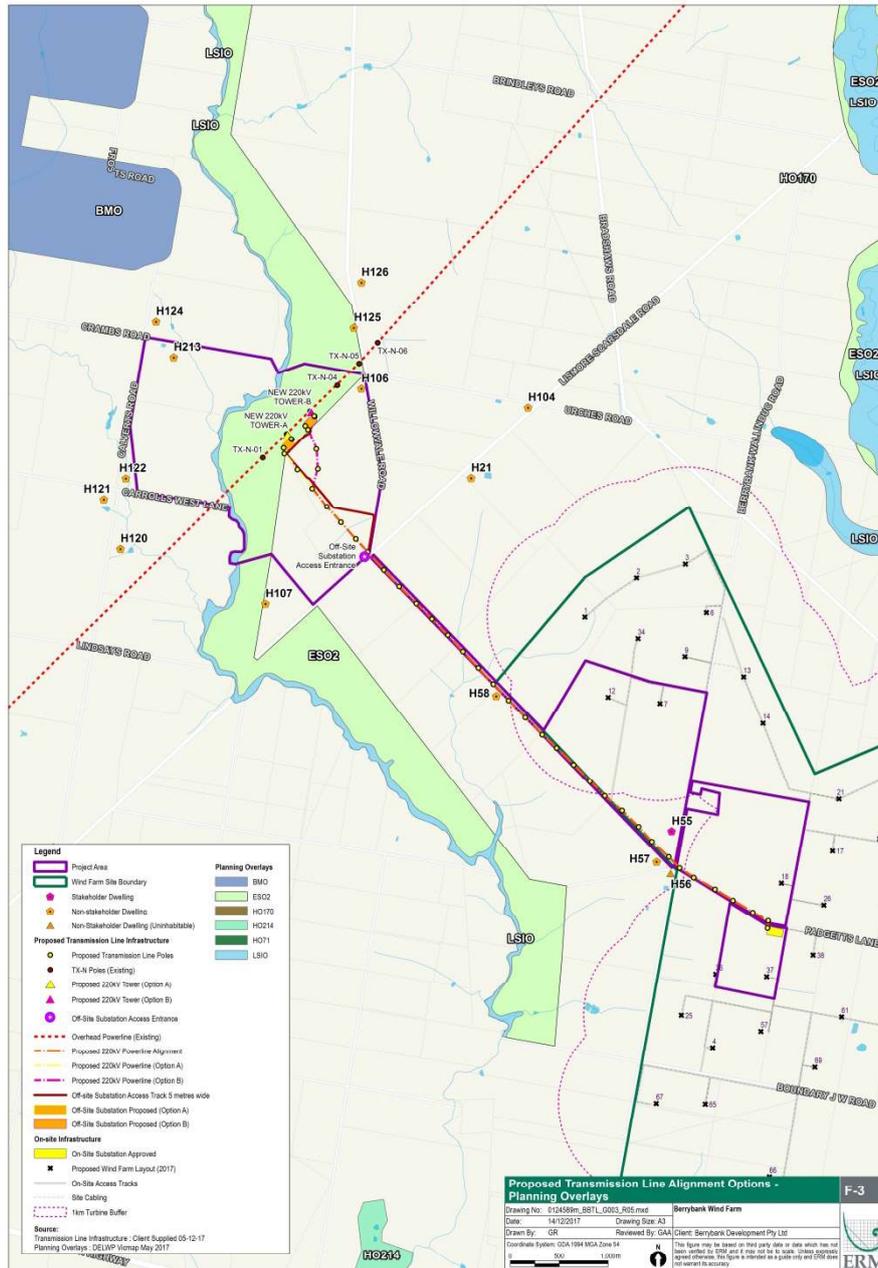
- *'To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.*
- *To identify significant existing roads.*
- *To identify land which has been acquired for a significant proposed road.'*

Under the provisions of **Clause 36.04-1** a planning permit is required for the use and development of a Utility Installation (other than Minor utility installation and Telecommunications facility).

4.3 **OVERLAY CONTROLS**

The proposal is affected by an Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 2 pursuant to the Golden Plains Planning Scheme as per *Figure 3* below.

Figure 3 Proposed Transmission Line Alignment Options - Planning Overlays



4.3.1 Environmental Significance Overlay - Schedule 2 (ESO2)

Both substation sites and the immediate adjoining transmission lines are affected by an Environmental Significance Overlay 2 pursuant to **Clause 42.01** of the Planning Scheme.

In accordance with **Clause 42.01-2**, a permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works.

Schedule 2 to this Overlay relates to 'Watercourse Protection' and includes the following environmental objectives to be achieved:

- *'To maintain the quality and quantity of water within the watercourse.*
- *To maintain the ability of streams and watercourses to carry natural flows.*

- To prevent erosion of banks, streambeds and adjoining land and the siltation of watercourses, drains and other features.
- To protect and encourage the long term future of fauna and flora habitats along watercourses.
- To prevent pollution and increased turbidity of water in natural watercourses. To prevent increased surface runoff or concentration of surface water runoff leading to erosion or siltation of watercourses.
- To conserve existing wildlife habitats close to natural watercourses and, where appropriate, to allow for generation and regeneration of habitats.
- To restrict the intensity of use and development of land and to activities which are environmentally sensitive and which are compatible with potential drainage or flooding hazards.'

In deciding an application the responsible authority must consider the 'possible effect of the development on the quality and quantity of water' (amongst other things).

Annex C of this report includes a surface water assessment which concludes that the proposal will not have significant impact on the quality and quantity of water of the nearby Gnarkeet Chain of Ponds. This matter is further discussed in Section 5 of this report.

4.4 PARTICULAR AND GENERAL PROVISIONS

4.4.1 Clause 52.17 - Native Vegetation

The general purpose of **Clause 52.17** as relevant is as follows:

'To ensure permitted clearing of native vegetation results in no net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity. This is achieved through the following approach:

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

In accordance with this Clause a permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead native vegetation, except if a specified exemption applies as listed in the Clause. Pursuant to **Clause 52.17-6** the biodiversity impacts of the removal of native vegetation are required to be offset in accordance with the Biodiversity Guidelines (DEPI, 2013).

Annex D of this report includes a biodiversity assessment which concludes that 0.069 hectares of native vegetation is proposed to be removed with a strategic biodiversity score of 0.284. This matter is further discussed in Section 5 of this report.

4.4.2 Clause 52.29 - Land Adjacent to a Road Zone Category 1

The purpose of **Clause 52.29** 'Land Adjacent to a Road Zone Category 1' includes (amongst other things):

'to ensure appropriate access to identified roads'

In accordance with this Clause a permit is required to create or alter access to a road in a Road Zone, Category 1. Lismore Road which traverses the proposed transmission line alignment is included in RDZ1. A crossover is proposed to be created at Lismore Road to allow for vehicle access to the proposed substation.

4.4.3 *Clause 52.32 - Wind Energy Facility*

Clause 52.32 seeks *'To facilitate the establishment and expansion of wind energy facilities, in appropriate locations, with minimal impact on the amenity of the area.'*

The utility installation will facilitate the operation of the approved Berrybank Wind Farm, however does not require approval under this clause.

4.4.4 *Clause 61.01 - Administration and Enforcement of this Scheme*

Clause 61.01-1 states that the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for planning permit applications for *'the use or development for a Utility Installation used to transmit or distribute electricity generated by a Wind Energy Facility.'*

4.5 STATE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Clause 10 - Operation of the State Planning Policy Framework

Clause 10.01 outlines the purpose and decision making framework for planning in Victoria and highlights the primary objective *'to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land.'*

Clause 10.04 'Integrated Decision Making' recognises the need to determine issues pursuant to relevant planning policies while balancing conflicting objectives in favour of net community benefit and sustainable development.

Clause 11 - Settlement

Clause 11 'Settlement' aims *'to prevent environmental problems caused by siting incompatible land uses close together'*.

Clause 12 - Environmental and Landscape Values

Clause 12.01-1 seeks to protect and conserve Victoria's biodiversity including strategically valuable biodiversity sites.

Clause 12.01-2 seeks to ensure that no net loss in the native vegetation's contribution to Victoria's biodiversity is resulted.

Clause 15 - Built Environment and Heritage

Clause 15 ' Built Environment and Heritage' states that *'Planning should ensure all new land use and development appropriately responds to its landscape, valued built form and cultural context, and protect places and sites with significant heritage, architectural, aesthetic, scientific and cultural value.'*

Clause 15.02-1 'Energy and resource efficiency' encourages land use and development that assists in the efficient use of energy and minimisation of greenhouse gases.

Clause 15.03 ‘Heritage’ aims to ensure the conservation of places of historic and Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Clause 17 - Economic Development

Clause 17 ‘Economic Development’ states that *‘Planning is to contribute to the economic well-being of communities and the State as a whole by supporting and fostering economic growth and development by providing land, facilitating decisions, and resolving land use conflicts, so that each district may build on its strengths and achieve its economic potential.’*

Clause 19 - Infrastructure

Clause 19.01-1 seeks to encourage the provision of renewable energy while considering siting and design. Relevant strategies include facilitating renewable energy development and developing appropriate infrastructure to meet community demand for energy services.

In accordance with this clause, planning must consider as relevant *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria* (DELWP, 2016).

4.6

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Clause 21.02 – Vision and Strategic Framework

Clause 21.02-1 ‘Vision’ outlines the following in relation to the Shire’s vision:

- *‘We provide an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable future for our citizens.’*
- *We respect the environment, our cultural significance and our heritage.*
- *We support and pursue the orderly and proper planning of land use and development based on strategic considerations as identified in the Municipal Strategic Statement.*
- *We are a municipal district that recognises a prosperous agricultural industry supporting sustainable practices.’*

The Golden Plains Shire Land Use Strategy Plan identifies the following relevant strategies to achieve the above mentioned vision:

- *‘Sustainable management and protection of natural resources of soil, water, flora, fauna, and eco-systems;*
- *Facilitating productive agricultural, forestry and mining activities and protecting rural areas;*
- *Supporting sustainable economic development;*
- *Efficient and environmentally sensitive provision of essential infrastructure.’*

Clause 21.04 – Environment and Natural Resources

Clause 21.04 outlines the following policy objectives (amongst others):

- *'To encourage the protection of significant habitats, remnant vegetation and maintain bio-diversity;*
- *To ensure the protection of floodplains through minimising the impact of development and subdivision;*
- *To protect the quality of naturally saline waterways including wetlands from the impacts of development and subdivision;*
- *To protect soil resources from erosion, contamination, compaction, salinity and other forms of degradation;*
- *To balance the protection of people from wildlife with the conservation of significant vegetation'*

Clause 21.05 – Land Use and Development

Clause 21.05-2 'Agriculture' recognises that agriculture is a significant land use in the Shire and that an important consideration in the planning for this use is to maintain farm size. This clause also highlights the shire's climate, the availability of water, and the fragmentation of land for rural residential development to be key limitations for agricultural diversity.

Key objectives of this clause are:

- *'To ensure agricultural land is protected and used as an economically valuable resource.*
- *To maintain farm size to allow for viable agriculture.'*

Clause 21.06 – Built Form, Heritage and Infrastructure

Clause 21.06-3 'Transport' seeks to *'ensure that the transport network supports economic opportunities'* by maintaining and protecting the efficiency of transport infrastructure within and from the shire, in addition to developing infrastructure which services plantation and agroforestry development.

4.7 OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

There are a number of documents referred to or Incorporated in the Planning Scheme which are relevant to the planning considerations of the proposal. These include:

- *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria* (DELWP, January 2016); and
- *Permitted clearing of native vegetation – Biodiversity assessment guidelines* (DEPI, 2013)

4.7.1 *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Policies in Victoria (Wind Energy Guidelines) (DELWP, 2016)*

The Wind Energy Guidelines are prepared by the Victorian Government to assist in the development and assessment of applications for wind farms. The Wind Energy Guidelines form a reference document at **Clause 52.32** of the Planning Scheme.

The Wind Energy Guidelines refer to electricity grid connections in their definition for a Victorian wind energy facility and associated infrastructure for the purposes of the Victorian Planning Provisions. These guidelines state:

'A wind energy facility requires a transmission or distribution system of power lines including substations and converter installations and other works to connect the wind energy facility to the electricity network. The transmission or distribution system is generally off-site and distant to the wind energy facility. However proponents are often seeking sites with close proximity to the existing distribution system'

The guidelines also confirm that the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for planning permit applications for transmission infrastructure associated with a wind energy facility.

4.7.2 Permitted clearing of native vegetation – Biodiversity assessment guidelines

The proposal is required to take into account the principles of the Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines (DEPI, 2013), which is an Incorporated document at **Clause 81.01** of the Planning Scheme. The purpose of these guidelines is to address the consideration of impacts on biodiversity when assessing an application for a permit to remove, lop or destroy native vegetation. The Guidelines seek to achieve *'No net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity'*.

The proposal will impact on 0.069 hectares of native vegetation. This matter is further discussed in Section 5 of the report.

5.1 PLANNING POLICY

5.1.1 State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks

The proposal seeks to connect the current proposed amended Berrybank Wind Farm to the existing transmission lines to facilitate the operation of the wind farm. As such, the proposal will contribute to enhancing the *'fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land'* in accordance with **Clause 10**. The proposal will introduce a new land use of 'Utility Installation' but will not result in any power infrastructure in closer proximity to sensitive land uses than the approved and current proposed wind farm. Rather, the proposal will complement the wind farm and therefore not result in any additional conflict with existing surrounding uses as sought by **Clause 11**.

The proposal will not significantly impact the agricultural use of the surrounding land and will therefore not impact agricultural economic activity as sought by **Clause 21.05-2**. The proposal comprises of transmission poles each with a base of 4 sqm and a substation of approximately 1 hectare which will not result in a relatively large site coverage thereby allowing for the continued use of the land for agriculture pursuant to local policy and **Clause 11.05-3**.

The proposal will allow for the operation of Berrybank Wind Farm which will generate renewable energy. **Clause 11.05-4** encourages the development of *'regions and settlements which have a strong identity, are prosperous and are environmentally sustainable'*. The layout and locality of the transmission lines and substation have been designed to minimise native vegetation removal and any additional environmental impacts. The connection of Berrybank Wind Farm to the broader electricity network is a vital component to the success of the Berrybank Wind Farm, which will support the economic diversity of the area. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the objectives of **Clause 17** and **Clause 21.02-1**.

The project seeks the removal of 0.69ha of native vegetation. A native vegetation assessment has been undertaken according to the Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines. It has been determined that the proposal will not unreasonably impact on the biodiversity values of the subject site in accordance with **Clause 12** and **Clause 21.04**. The native vegetation which is proposed to be removed will be appropriately offset under current biodiversity guidelines as referred to in the accompanying Biodiversity Assessment.

The proposal during both the construction and operational phase does not impose environmental risks to the nearby waterway (Gnarkeet Chain of Ponds) pursuant to **Clause 21.04** and the **ESO2** (further discussed later in this report). The proposed external transmission line will connect the proposed amended Berrybank Wind Farm to the existing transmission lines which are located some 600 metres from the Gnarkeet Chain of Ponds and closer to the waterway than the proposed works.

The development of the transmission lines and substation have been planned to ensure appropriate access is available to the site, specifically during the construction period. A traffic assessment has been undertaken and is discussed further in Section 5.2.3 of this report. This assessment ensures that the proposal will not have a

significant impact on the road network and will ensure appropriate access is maintained in accordance with **Clause 18.01-2** and **Clause 21.06-3**.

Most importantly, **Clause 19.01-1** promotes the provision of renewable energy in appropriate locations. The site of Berrybank Wind Farm has been previously determined as an appropriate location as demonstrated in the issuing of the planning permits. The proposal wholly complies with the objectives of this clause as it highlights the wind farm's strategic location in proximity to the existing electricity grid.

5.2 *PLANNING ZONES*

5.2.1 *Farming Zone*

Clause 35.07 seeks to provide for and conserve agricultural land and protect and enhance biodiversity. The issuing of the planning permit associated with Berrybank Wind Farm confirms that the site is ideally suited to the use and development of associated infrastructure including transmission lines.

The land is strategically located in close proximity to the electricity grid which enables convenient connection to the network. The site is well separated from surrounding townships and dwellings, thereby minimising conflict with sensitive uses. In addition, given the agricultural nature of the area, the site's landscape has been modified. Considering the existing transmission lines within the area, combined with the approved Wind Farm, it can be illustrated that the additional proposed infrastructure would not impose on the character of the area. The installation of the proposed utility would not alter the predominant use of the subject site and agricultural uses would be able to continue surrounding the utility installation.

5.2.2 *Road Zone Category 1*

The proposed site for the utility installation includes Lismore Road which is contained within the Road Zone Category 1 (RDZ1). No poles of the transmission lines will be located within the RDZ1, however transmission lines would cross above the road. In addition, a crossover is proposed on Lismore Road to provide access to the proposed substation.

Prior to submitting this planning application, VicRoads was contacted to issue a statement on their position in relation to the proposal. The statement is attached in Annex E and highlights that VicRoads does not object to the proposal.

5.3 *ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OVERLAY 2 (ESO2)*

Part of the proposal is within the ESO2 area. The ESO2 seek to maintain the quality and quantity within the watercourse, which forms part of the Corangamite Catchment area. The subject area is at the furthest extent of the ESO2, and is not within close proximity to the waterway.

The Surface water assessment included in Annex C concludes that:

'A high level assessment has indicated that potential risks to surface water receiving environments in the ESO2 area associated with the proposed transmission line alignment and substation options for the Berrybank Wind Farm are negligible. Impacts can be appropriately managed by implementing mitigation measures such as the development and implementation of a CEMP for the project.'

5.4 PARTICULAR PROVISIONS

There are a number of particular provisions which detail specific requirements relevant to the proposal and which have been assessed in this section.

Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation

This clause relates to native vegetation removal and triggers the need for a planning permit to remove native vegetation unless a specific exemption applies. This provision reiterates the objectives of **Clause 12** and **Clause 21.04** and seeks to ensure that native vegetation removal results in no net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity. This planning application seeks approval for the removal of native vegetation on the subject site. Considerations have been made to relevant impacts in the accompanying Biodiversity Assessment, however it is noted that overall the proposal seeks minimal vegetation loss (0.069 ha) and that the proposal demonstrates a clear commitment to avoidance and minimising impacts. Additional assessment has been undertaken within Section 5.6 of this report below.

Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to Road Zone Category 1

This clause relates to land adjacent to a Road Zone Category 1 (i.e. Lismore Road) and seeks to ensure appropriate access is maintained to these roads. Under this provision, a permit is required to create or alter access to Lismore Road. Approval is sought to create a crossover at the corner of Lismore Road and Padgetts lane to facilitate access to the existing transmission lines. The attached traffic report at Annex G supports the access point.

Clause 52.32 Wind Energy Facility

This clause seeks to facilitate the establishment and growth of wind farms in appropriate locations. The development of Berrybank Wind Farm has been permitted, however, it requires the approval for the installation of transmission lines and an external substation to connect the wind farm to the grid and facilitate its operation. In this regard, the strategic support for the Berrybank Wind Farm should be noted in relation to the strategic support for the subject application.

5.5 AMENITY IMPACTS

5.5.1 *Landscape and Visual*

The site is located within a highly modified landscape and the existing rural activities, associated structures and other infrastructure have created a landscape that can readily absorb change. In addition, by way of issuing the permits for Berrybank Wind Farm and endorsed plans, the modification of the overall landscape to accommodate a wind farm and associated infrastructure has already been approved.

Noting the modified landscape, and low intensity use of the land, the proposed transmission poles of a maximum of 49.5 metres and an external substation would not be discernible from a distance.

Further, a landscape plan accompanies this application for endorsement to mitigate potential visual impacts associated with the substation. The landscape plan includes landscaping that is consistent with the landscape character of the surrounding rural area.

5.5.2 **Noise**

A noise assessment has been prepared in relation to the proposed offsite substation to determine potential noise impacts in accordance with *Noise from Industry in Regional Victoria – Recommended maximum noise levels from commerce, industry and trade premises in regional Victoria (NIRV)*.

The noise assessment accompanying this application (Annex F) concludes that:

‘Given the nature of the ancillary equipment to be included in the off-site substation, and the fact that the nearest receiver is over 550 m away, the noise emissions from the off-site substation are likely to be insignificant at the nearest receiver location and therefore compliant with the recommended levels.

Notwithstanding the above, it is recommended that the planning permit for the proposed off-site substation includes a condition establishing compliance with NIRV as a requirement for the project. It is also recommended that compliance with NIRV is reviewed and verified as part of finalising the equipment layout and selections for the substation. ‘

The noise assessment includes NIRV time periods and recommended levels of effective noise. It is noted that since the substation is proposed to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, it will be compliant at all time periods should it operate at the NIRV recommended level of 34 dB L_{eff} . Please refer to the noise assessment for more information.

5.5.3 **Traffic**

Potential traffic impacts as a result of this proposal will occur during the construction period which is expected to occur over the course of 9 months.

Traffic during this stage will consist of personal vehicles (construction workers), trucks delivering materials (concrete and gravel) and equipment.

An average of 50 trucks per month will deliver both concrete and gravel during the first 6 months of the construction period. An average of 17 trucks a month will deliver equipment during the last three months. Miscellaneous deliveries and personal cars (employees) will comprise an average of 50 and 720 vehicles respectively per month during the entire construction period.

With regard to traffic generation, the traffic assessment included in Annex G concludes that:

‘The proposed additional traffic and impact on the surrounding road network is expected to be negligible and could not be expected to compromise the safety and operational efficiency of the surrounding road network.’

As previously outlined, the proposed introduction of a new access point has been referred to VicRoads for consideration, and they are comfortable with the proposal (refer Annex E).

5.6 NATIVE VEGETATION

The Native Vegetation Information Management System (NVIM) indicated that the entire proposal site falls within Location Risk A which requires a low risk assessment pathway to accompany a permit application to remove native vegetation of one hectare or less.

According to the accompanying Biodiversity Assessment included in Annex D of this report, the following ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) were found on site:

- *Heavier-soils Plains Grassland* (EVC 132_61), covering the majority of the study area and extending south from Crumbs Road to the sub-station; and
- *Plains Grassy Woodland* (EVC 55 - derived grassland form), extending North from Crumbs Road.

The results of the assessment show that:

The route of the transmission and associated access track will impact upon:

- *Seven patches of native vegetation for the electricity poles (each pole with a disturbance area of 2 x 2 metres) - Poles 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, and 25;*
- *Area of easement and vegetation removal for powerline between poles 7 and 8; and*
- *Area of grassland associated with access track on Lismore-Scarsdale Road (5 x 5 metres).*

The above removal of native vegetation involves the removal of 0.069 hectares of native vegetation with a strategic biodiversity score of 0.284. The biodiversity impact assessment provides an assessment regarding the removal of this vegetation in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines and the requirements of Clause 52.17 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme. The designated low risk assessment pathway indicates that the extent of the proposed native vegetation clearance controls will readily be achieved through the provision of an offsets.

For the above reasons, the proposed removal of native vegetation is reasonable and able to be appropriately offset to result in a net biodiversity benefit.

5.7 SURFACE WATER

As previously mentioned, the Surface Water Assessment concludes that:

A high level assessment has indicated that potential risks to surface water receiving environments in the ESO2 area associated with the proposed transmission line alignment and substation options for the Berrybank Wind Farm are negligible. Impacts can be appropriately managed by implementing mitigation measures such as the development and implementation of a CEMP for the project.

CONCLUSION

This report has been prepared to accompany a planning application for the use and development of a utility installation, the removal of native vegetation, and to make alterations to a road in a Road Zone Category 1. The utility installation is to comprise 220kV transmission lines and substation and associated works to allow for the connection of the Berrybank Wind Farm to the existing electricity grid. While two options have been proposed, only one substation and subsequent connection route will be constructed as part of the Berrybank Wind Farm.

It is considered that the proposal is entirely appropriate. Key considerations are:

Planning Policy

The proposal is consistent with relevant State and Local Planning Policy, particularly in relation to minimising potential environmental impacts and facilitating the operation of an approved wind energy facility which will be able to power approximately 160,000 households in Victoria whilst eliminating approximately 1,038,000 tons of greenhouse gases per year.

Landscape and Visual Impacts

The proposal has a negligible visual impact on the surrounding environment noting that the already highly modified landscape as a result of the existing transmission lines and approved wind farm. In addition, landscape screening is proposed for the substation to mitigate potential visual impact.

Noise

The proposal has been found to pose a negligible noise impact, and recommendations have been made in the noise assessment to allow for NIRV compliance during the operation of the substation.

Traffic

The traffic assessment has found the construction and operation of the proposal would generate negligible impact on the surrounding road network and would not be considered to compromise the safety and efficiency of surrounding roads.

Native Vegetation

The proposal has been designed to avoid native vegetation removal where possible, resulting in a requirement to remove only 0.069 hectares of native vegetation. This vegetation will be able to be appropriately offset in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines and the requirements of Clause 52.17 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme.

Surface Water

The proposal does not pose significant potential risks to surface water receiving environments in the ESO2 area. Impacts can be appropriately mitigated by implementing a CEMP for the project.

Summary

For the above reasons the potential net impacts as a result of the proposal are not unreasonable and able to be appropriately mitigated where necessary.

We therefore respectfully request that the application is approved.

Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd
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