



Crookwell 2 Wind Farm Modification 3

Additional buildings in substation compound
State Significant Development Modification Assessment
(DA 176-8-2004-i MOD 3)

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Executive Summary

Crookwell Development Pty Ltd received consent in 2005 to develop the Crookwell 2 Wind Farm in the South East and Tablelands region of NSW. The wind farm is operational and contains 28 wind turbines.

The modification application seeks to construct three operational buildings within the existing substation compound.

The Department exhibited the modification application from 2 December 2022 until 15 December 2022. One public submission (an objection) was received. The Department received a submission from Upper Lachlan Shire Council, a submission from Goulburn Mulwaree Council and advice from five government agencies which raised no concerns with the proposed modification, subject to modified conditions of consent.

The Department considers the proposed modification would not result in any significant impacts beyond those that were assessed and approved under the existing consent. Any residual environmental and amenity impacts associated with the proposed modification could be mitigated and managed through the revised conditions of consent. Consequently, it is in the public interest and should be approved.

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1 Introduction

Crookwell Development Pty Ltd (Crookwell Development) received consent in 2005 to develop the Crookwell 2 Wind Farm approximately 15 kilometres (km) south-east of Crookwell in the Upper Lachlan local government area. The wind farm is operational and contains 28 wind turbines.

The project has been modified on two previous occasions. Modification 1 for changes to turbine dimensions was approved on 29 June 2009. Modification 2 for reducing the number of turbines and increasing the height of the remaining turbines was approved on 31 October 2017.

2 Proposed modification

Crookwell Development is seeking to modify the development consent to construct three ancillary operational buildings within the existing wind farm substation compound. The compound measures 1.2 hectares and connects to Woodhouselee Road via an internal road network (see **Figure 1**).

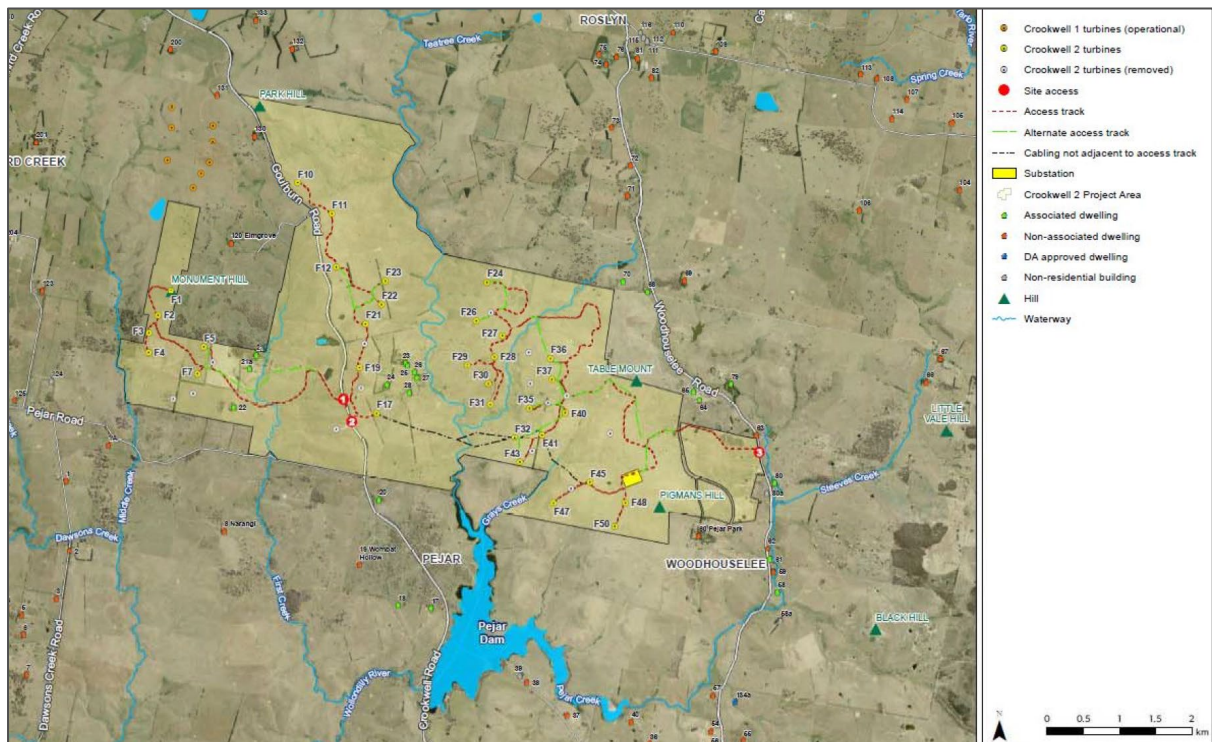


Figure 1 | Substation Compound Location

The proposed buildings comprise:

- an operations/staff and maintenance room, approximately 67 m² with a maximum height of 3.4 m;
- a warehouse building, approximately 90 m² with a maximum height of 6.7 m; and
- a reactive plant building housing capacitor banks, approximately 41 m² with a maximum height of 4.7 m, potentially operating 24/7 and providing the ability to manage voltages and support the electrical performance of the generating system.

The site would be staffed during business hours five days per week. The works would cost \$2.5 million with a four-week construction period.

The modification is described in detail in the Modification Report (**Appendix A**). Key components and features of the proposed modification are shown in **Figure 2**.

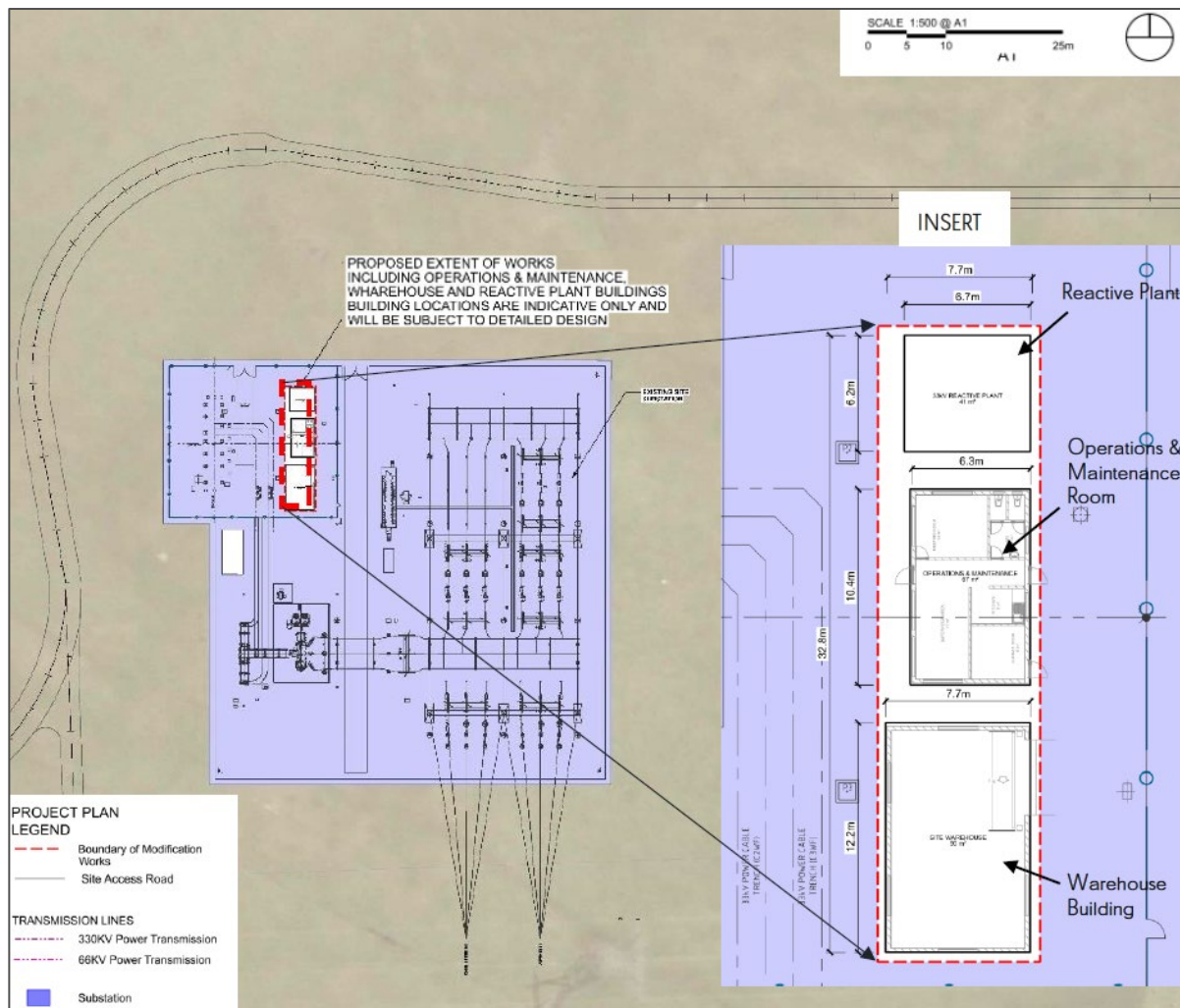


Figure 2 | Proposed Modification

3 Statutory context

The Department considers the application is substantially the same development as originally approved noting the development footprint would not change and the environmental impacts of the modification would be minimal. Consequently, the modification is within the scope of section 4.55(1A) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).

The Minister for Planning is the consent authority for the application, under section 4.5 (a) of the EP&A Act. However, under the Minister’s delegation to determine SSD modifications, signed on 9 March 2022, the Director, Energy Assessments, may determine the application as Upper Lachlan Shire Council did not object to the proposal, Crookwell Development did not make any political donations and there were less than 15 public objections.

The Department has considered all the matters listed under section 4.55 (3) of the EP&A Act in its assessment of the modification, as summarised in **section 5** of this report.

4 Engagement

4.1 Department's engagement

The Department publicly exhibited the modification application from 2 December 2022 until 15 December 2022, advertising the exhibition in the Upper Lachlan Gazette and sought comments from Upper Lachlan Shire Council, Goulburn Mulwaree Council and relevant government agencies. During the exhibition period, one public submission was received which objected to the proposed modification. The key issues raised in the submission related to wind farm impacts in general and associated pollution issues.

Advice was also provided by five government agencies. Upper Lachlan Shire Council and Goulburn Mulwaree Council also provided comments on the modification.

Full copies of the submissions are attached in **Appendix B**. Crookwell Development responded to issues raised in the submission and by the Councils and agencies on the project in its Submissions Report (**Appendix C**). Key issues raised by government agencies are summarised in **Table 1**.

Table 1 | Summary of Advice from Agencies and Councils

Agency	Key Issue
Upper Lachlan Shire Council	Raised no concerns subject to all works being completed in accordance with the <i>National Construction Code 2019</i> .
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	Raised no concerns.
Department's Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate (BCS)	Confirmed that as the proposed buildings will be located within the existing footprint of works, there would be no biodiversity impacts beyond those originally assessed.
Water NSW	Noted the works are located within the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment but raised no concerns.
Heritage NSW	Raised no concerns regarding Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.
TfNSW	Raised no concerns regarding potential traffic impacts.
Transgrid	Confirmed the proposed works are not expected to affect Transgrid facilities.

5 Assessment

5.1 Visual Impact

Three non-associated receivers are located within 2 km of substation, the closest being 1.15 km to the south-east (**Figure 1**). The Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) provided with the modification confirms none of these receivers have a view of the existing substation or the proposed buildings due to intervening topography and vegetation.

The VIA also includes five representative viewpoints from public locations around the site. A view of the development would be available from one of these viewpoints (viewpoint 01), a recreational reserve located 4.2 km south of the site on the southern side of Pejar Dam (**Figure 3**). Although the visual sensitivity of this location is high due to it being a prominent waterbody in the landscape and recreational use of the dam and surrounds, the potential visual impact would be negligible due to the distance from the proposed buildings, their location within the existing project substation, and other infrastructure on the site, including transmission towers and existing project turbines on the ridgeline.

Subject to an additional condition requiring the visual impacts of the buildings to be minimised, including the potential for glare and reflection and using colours that blend as far as possible into the surrounding landscape, the Department considers the visual impact of the modification is acceptable.



Figure 3 | View of development from southern side of Pejar Dam (viewpoint 01)

5.2 Other issues

Other issues are discussed in **Table 2**. The Department has also taken the opportunity to make other administrative updates to the consent described in **Appendix G**.

Table 2 | Other Issues

Findings
Noise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consent restricts the maximum noise level from ancillary buildings to 35 dBA, measured at any non-associated receiver, the closest being located 1.15 km from the substation. • The noise assessment report for the modification has calculated the maximum operational noise level of the modified substation to be 23 dBA measured at the closest non-associated receiver. This is also 7 dBA below the 30 dBA night-time maximum under the <i>NSW Noise Policy for Industry</i> (EPA, 2017).

Findings

- Crookwell Development have confirmed all construction works would be undertaken in accordance with the Environment Protection Authority's *Interim Construction Noise Guidelines* (ICNG) and given the distance to the nearest non-associated receivers, it is not expected the noise levels would be exceeded.
- Subject to an additional condition requiring the noise generated by construction to be minimised in accordance with best practice requirements outlined in the ICNG, the Department concludes the construction and operational noise levels would be unlikely to result in any adverse noise impacts to neighbouring receivers and are acceptable.

Biodiversity

- The proposed buildings, laydown area and parking area are located entirely within the existing gravel covered substation compound which is surrounded by a buffer area comprising exotic grasslands. No vegetation is located within the compound and no vegetation would be impacted by the works.
- BCS and the Department are satisfied the development would not result in any biodiversity impacts subject to compliance with existing conditions of consent regarding construction flora and fauna mitigation measures.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

- There are no Aboriginal heritage items located within 50 metres of the substation lot boundary.
- Noting the proposed buildings are located within the existing substation compound, Heritage NSW and the Department consider the proposed modification would not result in any adverse heritage impacts.

Traffic

- Construction traffic would comprise up to 30 vehicles per day at peak construction over a four-week period. Access would be via the existing access road from Woodhouselee Road, consistent with the original project.
- Parking for construction workers and operational staff would be provided inside the substation compound.
- TfNSW have raised no concerns and the Department is satisfied the relatively minor level of traffic associated with the works for a temporary period would not result in an adverse impact on the local road network.

Health

- A community submission expressed concerns about potential health impacts from wind turbines.
- The Department notes that the project, including wind turbines, was approved in 2005 and the proposed modification does not alter the wind turbines.

6 Evaluation

The Department has assessed the modification application, the public submission and advice received from relevant government agencies and Councils. The Department has also considered the objectives and relevant considerations under sections 4.55(3) and 4.15 of the EP&A Act.

The Department considers the proposed modification would increase the operational capabilities of the existing substation and would result in minimal visual impacts as there are no non-associated receivers within 2 km of the substation that would have a view of the proposed buildings. In addition, the overall visual impact from more distant public and private locations would be negligible due to the distance from the proposed buildings, and context within existing infrastructure on the project site.

The Department's assessment also considered potential impacts on noise, biodiversity, Aboriginal heritage, traffic and health and considers any impacts would be substantially the same as previously assessed and approved.

In summary, the Department considers any impacts would not result in any significant impacts beyond those that were assessed and approved under the existing consent.

The Department has drafted a Notice of Modification (see **Appendix D**) and consolidated version of the development consent (see **Appendix E**). Crookwell Development and Upper Lachlan Shire Council have reviewed the conditions and no objections have been raised.

The Department is satisfied that the proposed modification is in the public interest and should be approved subject to these conditions.

7 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Director, Energy Assessments, as delegate of the Minister for Planning:

- **considers** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- **determines** that the application Crookwell 2 Wind Farm Modification 3 (DA-176-8-2004-i MOD 3) falls within the scope of section 4.55(1A) of the EP&A Act;
- **accepts and adopts** all of the findings and recommendations in this report as the reasons for making the decision to approve the modification;
- **modify** the consent DA-176-8-2004-i; and
- **signs** the attached approval of the modification (**Appendix D**).

Recommended by:



Elisha Dunn
Environmental Assessment Officer
Energy Assessments

Recommended by:



Andy Nixey
Team Leader
Energy Assessments

8 Determination

The recommendation is **Adopted** / ~~Not adopted~~ by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'NB', is written over a faint, light blue rectangular background.

Nicole Brewer
Director
Energy Assessments

as delegate of the Minister for Planning

Appendices

Appendix A – Modification Report

Appendix B – Public Submission and Agency Advice

Appendix C – Submissions Report

Appendix D – Notice of Modification

Appendix E – Consolidated Consent

Appendices A to E available at: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/mod-3-additional-buildings-substation-compound>

Appendix F – Statutory considerations

Under section 4.55(3) of the EP&A Act, the consent authority must consider the matters referred to in section 4.15(1) of relevance to the development. **Table 3** identifies the matters for consideration under section 4.15 of the EP&A Act that apply to the proposed modification. The table represents a summary for which additional information and consideration is provided in other sections of this report, as referenced in the table.

Table 3 | Assessment of Section 4.15(1)

Section 4.15(1) Matters for consideration	The Department's assessment
(a)(i) any environmental planning instrument	The modified proposal complies with the relevant legislation as addressed in Section 3 .
(a)(ii) any proposed instrument	
(a)(iii) any development control plan	
(a)(iiia) any planning agreement	Not applicable.
(a)(iv) the regulations	The application satisfactorily meets the relevant requirements of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021</i> , including the procedures relating to applications (Parts 3-5), the requirements for notification (Part 3, Division 5) and fees (Part 13) (refer to Section 4).

(b) the likely impacts of that development including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality,	The Department considers the proposed changes to be minor and would not result in adverse environmental impacts (refer to Section 5).
(c) the suitability of the site for the development	The site is suitable for the development as addressed in Sections 3 and 5 .
(d) any submissions	The Department has considered the submissions received. Refer to Sections 4 and 5 .
(e) the public interest	The Department considers the modified proposal to be in the public interest as it would increase the operational capabilities of the existing substation resulting in improved functionality of the wind farm and minimising the potential impacts on surrounding land users and the environment.

Appendix G - Summary of Minor and Administrative Changes to Conditions

Condition Number	Minor and Administrative Changes	Reason for Change
Definitions	Update new title for Planning Secretary	To reflect current Departmental titles
Definitions	Update definition of RMS (now TfNSW)	To reflect changes to agency names
Schedule 2, Condition 2	Include the Mod 3 Modification Report and Submissions Report as (r)	To update the scope of development