

For Public Notice via Internet

REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*

Title of Proposal: Moorabool Wind Project

Proponent: WestWind Energy Pty Ltd

Description of Project:

WestWind propose to develop the Moorabool Wind Project located approximately 27 kilometres south east of Ballarat near the township of Ballan, within the Moorabool Shire. The project will comprise 128 wind turbines in two sections, with the northern (Bungeeltap) section having 58 turbines and the southern (Ballark) section having 70 turbines. The turbines will have a maximum height of 150 metres. The project is anticipated to generate 784 gigawatt hours of energy per year.

Decision:

The Minister for Planning has decided that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is not required for the Moorabool Wind Project as generally described in the referral accepted on 6 July 2009.

Reasons for Decision:

- The project is located in an area of largely cleared agricultural land. The turbine layout has been designed to avoid areas of significant native vegetation and known occurrences of listed flora, while there is scope to further adjust the siting of turbines and associated infrastructure to minimise adverse effects on biodiversity.
- Although some bird species of conservation importance may occur in the area (including Powerful Owl, Brolga and Wedge-tailed Eagle), the limited availability of suitable habitat on the two proposed project sections indicates a low likelihood of significant impacts on these species.
- Effects on Aboriginal cultural heritage are likely to be low as project works will avoid areas of high potential sensitivity, such as the Moorabool River.
- While the effects of the proposed wind turbines on the visual and landscape values of the internal landscapes in the two project areas are not likely to be of regional significance. However, potential effects on adjoining areas will need further evaluation; this can be adequately done through the planning permit process.
- The project is unlikely to have significant cumulative effects in combination with approved wind energy projects in the region.
- Potential environmental effects of the project can be adequately assessed through the planning permit application under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, in accordance with the *Policy and Planning Guidelines for the Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria (2002)*.

Date of Decision: 17 SEP 2009