

For Public Notice via Internet

REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978* (REFERRAL NUMBER 2024-R03)

Proponent

MHWF Nominees Pty Ltd

Project

Moreton Hill Windfarm

Description

The project is located near Pittong in south-west Victoria, on the lands of the Wadawarrung, and will incorporate up to 62 wind turbine generators with a maximum blade tip height of 252m, covering an area of approximately 6000ha. The project will generate around 1600 GWh/pa of energy per annum with an anticipated operational life of 30 years.

Other associated infrastructure includes a battery energy storage system with a storage capacity of approximately 150 MW, water tanks, an onsite substation and compound (including site office and warehouse), power connection to the electricity grid via the existing Berrybank Terminal Station, wind monitoring towers (anemometers), vehicle access tracks, hardstands and turbine foundations, electricity and communication cables.

Decision

The Minister for Planning has decided that an environment effects statement is not required for the Moreton Hill windfarm, as described in the referral accepted on 4 April 2024, subject to the following conditions:

- a) An **environment report** needs to be prepared in consultation with the Department of Transport and Planning and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and completed to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. The report needs to assess and document the following:
 - i. Description of the proposed project.
 - ii. The existing conditions and predicted impacts (direct and indirect) on avifauna including Brolga, Grey-headed Flying-fox, Southern Bent-wing Bat, Eastern (common) Bent-wing Bat, White-throated Needletail, Yellow-bellied Sheath-tailed Bat, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Blue-winged Parrot, Black Falcon, Brown Treecreeper, Spotted Harrier and White-striped Freetail Bat.
 - iii. Alternative development configurations/layouts, designs and siting of infrastructure, as well as mitigation measures, to further avoid and minimise adverse environmental effects on threatened species of birds and bats (including relevant mapping).
 - iv. Potential cumulative impacts on threatened species of birds and bats of the proposal together with nearby existing and known proposed windfarms and other infrastructure.
 - v. An **environmental management framework** that sets out the proposed environmental management commitments and how the environmental commitments would be addressed through relevant approvals and consents required for the project.

- b) Once completed to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning, the environment report and relevant supporting documentation is to be exhibited for public comments for at least 14 calendar days, following which the proponent is to consider and respond to comments within updated documentation, to be submitted to the Minister for Planning.
- c) The environment report process is to be completed to inform the form of the project that is examined through planning and approval processes, in particular under the *Planning and Environment Act 1978*, and the development of relevant environmental management plans.

Reasons

- There is potential for significant adverse effects to biodiversity values, including associated with wind turbine strike and cumulative impacts for some listed threatened species including Brolga, Grey-headed Flying-fox, Southern Bent-wing Bat, Eastern (common) Bent-wing Bat and White-throated Needletail.
- The conditions set out through this decision provide the most appropriate means for examining the uncertainties and potential impacts for the limited scope of potentially significant effects at a regional or state scale that may occur as a result of the delivery of the project.
- Other potential adverse effects of the project are more understood and will be readily addressed separately, through other existing statutory requirements under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, *Heritage Act 2017*, *Water Act 1989* and *Environment Protection Act 2017*.

Date

SIC
24/9/2029