

Ryan Corner Wind Farm Community Engagement Committee

Meeting date Monday 5 July 2021
Meeting time and location 5.30pm at the Yambuk Hall

1. Welcome and Introductions

Cr Foster welcomed Haridian Cabrera – GPG Community Stakeholder Engagement & Local Economic Development, and Daniel Cullen – Environment and Safety Officer to the meeting.

2. Present

Cr Karen Foster
John Donohue, Community Representative
Kristi Else, Community Representative
Ruth Magnusson, Community Representative
Camino Cabanillas, GPG Project Manager, Ryan Corner Wind Farm
Debra Dumesny, GPG Community and Stakeholder Engagement Officer, Hawkesdale and Ryan Corner Wind Farms
Haridian Cabrera, GPG Community Stakeholder Engagement and Local Economic Development
Daniel Cullen, Environment and Safety Officer

Vicki Askew-Thornton, CEC Responsible Officer, Moyne Shire

3. Apologies

Jacinta Coffey, Community Representative
Clinton Krause, Community Representative
Cr Jordan Lockett

4. Declarations of Interest

Standing declaration: Cr Foster declared a perceived conflict of interest, that she was previously married to a participating landholder, but no longer has a connection to that family.

5. Confirmation of Minutes of previous meeting

Moved by Kristi Else, seconded by Ruth Magnusson that the minutes of the CEC meeting held on 17 May 2021 be accepted. **CARRIED**

6. Business arising from the previous Minutes

- 6.1 GPG will provide some pictures of some of its decommissioned wind farms in other countries. (Completed – email sent to CEC members on 26 May)
- 6.2 GPG took on notice a request from Ruth Magnusson to provide information at the next meeting about what GPG can do to reduce bird-strikes once the wind farm is operating. (Refer to Project Update section 9.1)

7. Correspondence Incoming

From GPG:

- Updated 5km map. GPG noted that there is an error on the map. RY159(A) is within the Yambuk township, and RY159(B) is outside the Yambuk township.
- Photos of decommissioning of turbines in Spain.
- Further information on the status of amendment application and management plans. **(Attachment 1)**
- Information sheet on bat and avifauna studies and the Bat and Avifauna Management Plan. **(Attachment 2)**

Question via email from Jacinta Coffey: *How the Bat and Bird study could still be considered relevant to the project as it was conducted in 2006/07. I'm not sure any study conducted 15 years ago should still be relevant considering the project hasn't begun.* (Refer to section 9.2)

8. Correspondence Outgoing

9. Reports:

9.1 Global Power Generation (GPG):

Wind Farm Planning Permit:

- Final layout has been updated and submitted with the Pre-Construction Management Plans to DELWP, Council, VicRoads, etc. in June.

Connection application and agreements:

- Connection application has been submitted to AEMO.
- Agreements on-going.
- Traffic Management Plan – feedback has been received and discussions are continuing. A new revision has been submitted to DELWP, Council and VicRoads.
- Public road upgrade detailed design submitted to Council. Feedback has been received and discussions are continuing.
- Onsite quarry waiting on final approval.

Activities on site:

- Finalising project scheduling and access with associated landowners.
- Completed review of all residences within 5km of windfarm site and maps are being updated to reflect this.

- Imminent commencement of geotechnical investigations on the Collector Substation bench area.

Please refer to **Attachment 1** for further information regarding the status of the permit amendment application, and preparation of the management plans for endorsement.

Summary of further discussion:

- Council is currently assessing the onsite quarry permit application.
- GPG has revised its neighbour agreement to make the wording clearer and easier to understand. A neighbour agreement will not take away a person's right to make a complaint about the wind farm.
- The June 2021 newsletter will be released this week. The newsletter is distributed via GPG's database and posted to those on the database who don't use email. Hard copies will also be placed at the Yambuk and Hawkesdale Post Offices. CEC members noted that GPG had taken on board suggestions for improving the distribution methods.
- Bat and Avifauna Management Plan (BAMP):
 - Following the last CEC meeting, GPG met with Ruth and Clinton to discuss bat and avifauna mitigation measures in the BAMP. A recent trial conducted at a wind farm overseas in which one blade on each turbine was painted black in order to be more visible to avifauna was also discussed. GPG noted that such a change would require an amendment to the BAMP.
 - The BAMP that is currently on the project website will be superseded by an updated BAMP, which has been included in the package of documents that GPG has submitted to the Minister for Planning for endorsement.
 - The definition of vulnerable, threatened and non-threatened species is determined by state and federal environment departments.
 - Ruth asked GPG to take a proactive rather than reactive approach to mitigating raptor strikes.
- As required by the Permit, GPG will offer visual landscaping/screening to neighbouring residents within 4km from the site.

9.2 Community Members:

- Question on notice from Jacinta Coffey:
How the Bat and Bird study could still be considered relevant to the project as it was conducted in 2006/07. I'm not sure any study conducted 15 years ago should still be relevant considering the project hasn't begun.
GPG response: This was addressed in the expert witness statement at the Panel hearing in 2017.

- Kristi asked how the public would know when the amendment application is notified. Response: DELWP has required that the applicant send letters to all landholders who own property adjoining the wind farm site, and the notification must also be advertised in local newspaper/s. GPG will also inform the CEC members as soon as the application is notified.

9.3 Council:

- Council's Wind Farm Complaints Handling Procedure will be considered at tomorrow's Council meeting.

10. General business

Nil.

Next meeting – Monday 16 August 2021 at 5.30pm, at Port Fairy (venue to be confirmed)

Confirmed this / /
Chair

Minutes are to be registered in Moyne Shire's electronic document management system by the committee reporting officer immediately following the Minutes' confirmation and signing

Attachment 1

RC WIND FARM

- By way of background, Ryan Corner Wind Farm was approved by the Minister for Planning in 2008 and Planning Permit 20060222 was issued. The planning permit was amended in 2017 to approve amendments to Ryan Corner Wind Farm. Amendments included (but were not limited to) changes to the wind farm layout, increase in turbine height, and changes to planning permit conditions. The Minister for Planning approved those amendments and issued Planning Permit 20060222 – A (the Planning Permit).
- In December 2020, a planning application was submitted to DELWP which included:
 - Amending the layout plan to microsite one turbine and remove four turbines (B35, B39, B41, B47), alter access tracks and cabling.
 - Requesting endorsement of a traffic management plan (TMP), environmental management plans (EMP) and other documents required by the planning permit
 - Nominating the final turbine model which complies with the dimensional envelope required by the Planning Permit
 - Other minor or administrative changes.
- The management plans were submitted for endorsement as part of the December 2020 application to meet the planning permit's pre-construction requirements.
- An amendment to the abovementioned December 2020 application was submitted in June 2021 pursuant to S50 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. This submission was made to DELWP concurrent with a response to DELWP's request for further information. The S50 amendment related to (amongst other things) changes to the wind farm layout to microsite turbines and access tracks, relocate the on-site concrete batching plant, review, and update the address of the land to which the planning permit pertains, and amend construction hours included in the management plans submitted for endorsement. It is understood that there are missing components (such as a noise audit to be prepared pursuant to S53v of the Environment Protection Act and the Radio & TV Preconstruction survey) to this submission that are currently being prepared and will be submitted to DELWP next week.
- It is understood that the abovementioned application submitted in December 2020 (inclusive of its subsequent amendments and responses made to DELWP's requests for further information) is currently being assessed by DELWP and has not yet been placed on public exhibition to provide the public with notice of the application
- Additionally, a separate planning permit amendment application has been made to amend traffic management planning permit conditions and to amend the current endorsed traffic management plan (TMP). The amended TMP has been developed in consultation with Council and will be subject to a Council workshop, the outcome of which may require additional changes to the TMP prior to its endorsement by DELWP.

RYAN CORNER AND HAWKESDALE EXTERNAL TRANSMISSION LINE

- It is proposed to connect Ryan Corner and Hawkesdale Wind Farms to the grid via an external transmission line that will connect each wind farm to Tarrone Terminal Station. While the use and development of the external transmission line does not require a planning permit, it is understood that planning approval is required for native vegetation removal, assessments of which are currently underway. It is also understood that the alignment of the external transmission line is located within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and that a cultural heritage management plan is accordingly being prepared for this project.
- Amendments to approved layout of the Tarrone Terminal Station are being sought for an expansion of this substation to accommodate the external transmission line. The planning application for Tarrone Terminal Station will be lodge with DELWP next week.
- It is understood that a planning permit application has been submitted to DELWP based on the knowledge on native vegetation removal known at that time. It is expected that this application would require an amendment to reflect most recent field surveys undertaken.

CONFIRMED

Attachment 2

Bat and Avifauna Management Plan (BAMP)

Ryan Corner Survey

A Bat and Avifauna Management Plan (BAM Plan) is required in accordance with conditions in the Ryan Corner Wind Farm Permit and Hawkesdale Wind Farm Permit for the construction of both wind farms and is developed in conjunction with DELWP Environment Portfolio and approved by the Minister of Planning before commissioning.

The BAMP includes objectives and strategies for detecting, managing, and mitigating any significant bird and bat mortality arising from the operation of the wind energy facilities consistent with the methods provided in the Australian Wind Energy Association (2005) and updated methods.

The field study involved fixed point censuses of birds. Eight impact site points and two reference site points were surveyed. (Figure 1).



Figure 1

Summary:

Birds: A total of 54 bird species were recorded during the field assessments. Fifty were native and four were exotic. Eight identified species are regarded as rare or threatened within Victoria. Fixed point bird counts were undertaken near wetlands and in remnant vegetation, however the majority of census points were in pasture grass habitats (reflecting the relative amount of habitat types on the site).

Waterbirds primarily foraged in wetlands and rarely moved across the wind farm. Similarly, woodland bird activity was restricted to the woodlands. As such, these species groups were poorly represented during the census and species utilising pasture grass habitat were dominant. In descending order, the five most common sighted species were Australian Raven, Australian Magpie, Common Starling, Willie Wagtail and Skylark.

No birds of prey were recorded during the fixed-point bird counts. The five following birds of prey were recorded incidentally: Swamp Harrier, Black-shouldered Kite, Nankeen Kestrel, Wedge-tailed Eagle and Brown Falcon. Brown Falcon was regularly observed in the wind farm boundary, suggesting high numbers of this species foraging at the site. Wedge-tailed Eagle was recorded only once during the assessments, soaring significantly above turbine height, approximately two kilometres south-west of the wind farm. No waterbird nests were observed in the wind farm boundary.

A Brolga pair was regularly observed moving between the water bodies and surrounding grasslands in the south-eastern portion of the wind farm. Observed flights were low and were below turbine height (i.e. less than 30 metres above the ground).

Tests: Flight height was recorded in three categories: below Rotor Swept Area (RSA) height (120m). Two surveys were undertaken; first in spring 2006 and the second in summer 2007

Spring 2006

TOTAL: 42 SPECIES.

11 species at RSA (that accounts for 3.7% of all bird observations at the impact site): the two most frequent European Skylark (introduced species) and ravens (mostly Little Raven). These were followed by Long-billed Corella and Australian Magpie. 0 species above RSA height.

Summer 2007

TOTAL: 24 SPECIES

9 species at RSA: A. The two most frequent species (totalling more than 75 percent of all observations) at this height were the European Skylark (introduced species) and ravens (mostly Little Raven). These were followed by Straw-necked Ibis and Brown Songlark. 0 species above RSA height

Comparison Spring – Summer: Bird species richness and abundance in the summer survey were almost half those of the spring survey. This difference was due to a lack in summer of common waterbirds, and some of the common farmland birds, such as cockatoos and corellas. The only addition to the bird list in summer is the Brown Songlark, a common summer visitor to most of south-eastern Australia's grasslands.

Brolga Survey (wind farm + 20km radius from the WF)

In summary, during the breeding season survey, three pairs of Brolga (six birds) were recorded within the search area (20 kilometre radius of the Ryan Corner Wind Farm). None of these pairs was breeding.

List of birds sighted at Ryan Corner Wind farm

Birds marked with X are birds seen during formal bird utilisation survey

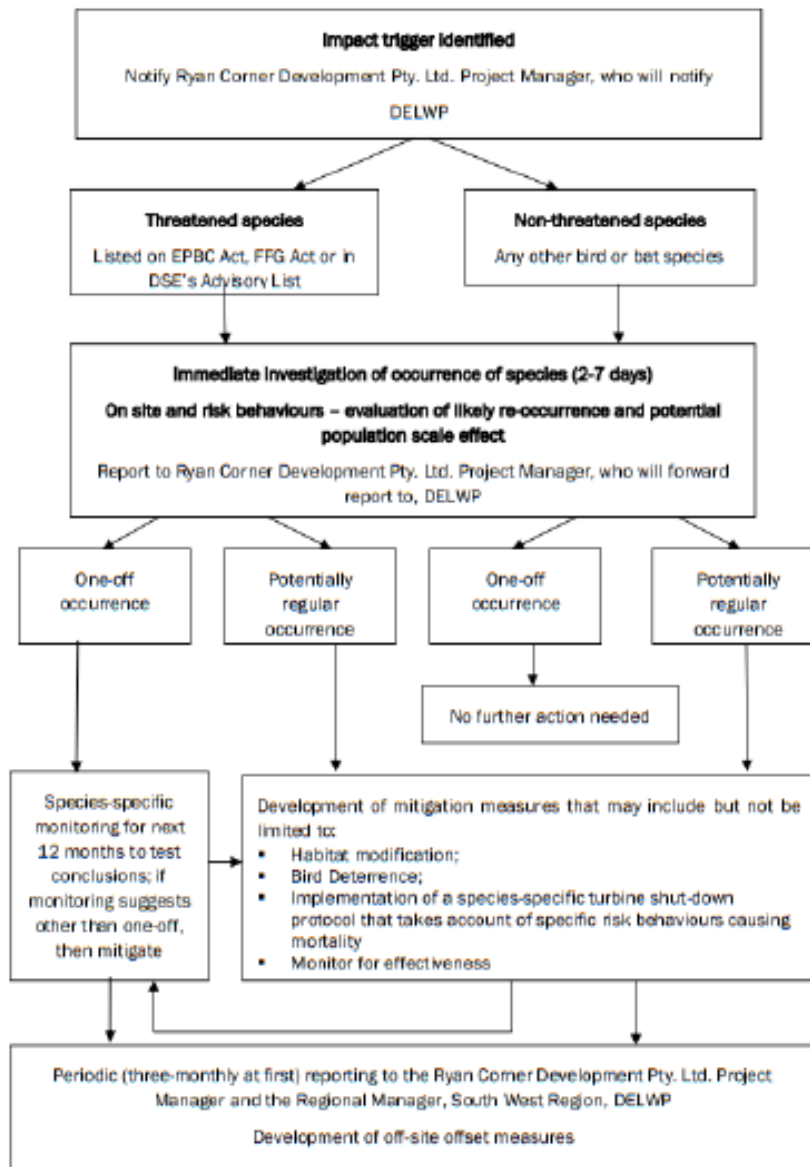
Common Name	Scientific Name	Seen during bird utilisation Survey
Australian Hobby	Falco longipennis	X
Australian Magpie	Gymnorhina tibicen	X
Australian Raven	Corvus coronoides	X
Australian White Ibis	Threskiornis molucca	X
Australian Shelduck	Tadorna tadornoides	X
Black Swan	Cygnus atratus	X
Black-shouldered Kite	Elanus axillaris	X
Brolga	Grus rubicunda	Vulnerable
Brown Goshawk	Accipiter fasciatus	
Brown Falcon	Falco berigora	X
Brown Thornbill	Acanthiza pusilla	X
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	X
Crimson Rosella	Platycercus elegans	X
European Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	X
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Cacomantis flabelliformis	
Flame Robin	Petroica phoenicea	X
Galah	Cacatua roseicapilla	X
Golden-headed Cisticola	Cisticola exilis	X
Hoary-headed Grebe	Poliiocephalus poliocephalus	
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Chrysococcyx basalis	X
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	X
Little Raven	Corvus mellori	X
Long-billed Corella	Cacatua tenuirostris	X
Magpie-lark	Grallina cyanoleuca	X
Masked Lapwing	Vanellus miles	X
Nankeen Kestrel	Falco cenchroides	X
New Holland Honeyeater	Phylidonyris novaehollandiae	
Pacific Black Duck	Anas superciliosa	X
Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus	
Red Wattlebird	Anthochaera carunculata	X
Richard's Pipit	Anthus novaeseelandiae	X
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Chrysococcyx lucidus	X
Skylark	Alauda arvensis	X

Spotted Harrier	<i>Circus assimilis</i>		Near threatened
Striated Fieldwren	<i>Calamanthus fuliginosus</i>	X	
Straw-necked Ibis	<i>Threskiornis spinicollis</i>	X	
Stubble Quail	<i>Coturnix pectoralis</i>	X	
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>		
Superb Fairywren	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	X	
Swamp Harrier	<i>Circus approximans</i>	X	
Tree Martin	<i>Hirundo nigricans</i>		
Wedge-tailed Eagle	<i>Aquila audax</i>		
Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	X	
White-faced Heron	<i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>	X	
White-fronted Chat	<i>Epthianura albifrons</i>	X	
White-necked Heron	<i>Ardea pacifica</i>	X	
White-winged Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	X	Near threatened
Willie Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	X	
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	<i>Platalea flavipes</i>	X	
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus chrysops</i>	X	
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	<i>Acanthiza chrysorrhoa</i>	X	
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	<i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i>	X	



Processes to mitigate bird strike occurrence

Figure 6: Operational procedure for mitigating significant impacts



Processes for removal of any carcass or object that may attract raptors to the site.

- Weekly inspections of the entire wind farm site by onsite personnel will be undertaken to search for any stock, introduced or native mammal and bird carcasses that may attract raptors (e.g. kangaroos, foxes, rabbits) within 250 metres of turbines;
- Any incidental finds of birds and bats will follow the Incidental Carcass Protocol (depending on carcass location);
- Any carcasses and/or remains found will be immediately (within hours) collected and quickly disposed of in a manner that will avoid attracting raptors close to turbines (e.g. burying them in a designated location, burning provided correct permits/laws are met). All disposal efforts will be carried out far from turbines;
- Carcass occurrence and removal will be recorded in a “management log book”

Wind Energy & Birdlife:

Replacing fossil fuels with wind is a key solution. Wind is estimated to be 35 times safer for birdlife than fossil fuels: replacing them with wind would save 70 million birds per year worldwide.

For every 1 bird killed by a wind turbine, nuclear and fossil fuel-powered plants killed 2,118 birds, it was found in this study. Extrapolating from these numbers, replacing all fossil fuel energy with wind power would save 70 million birds per year worldwide. The large amount of fatalities from fossil fuels is mostly from climate change which alters weather patterns and destroys habitats which birds rely on.

The American Bird Conservancy similarly support wind energy over fossil fuels: “Properly sited wind turbines are relatively bird-friendly, especially when compared to fossil fuels.”

Where to find the complete endorsed BAM plans:

globalpower-generation.com.au → Projects → Project documents

Ryan Corner: RCWF – Volume 2 – Endorsed Bat and Avifauna Management Plan – Annex H of EMP

