

For Public Notice via Internet

REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978* (REFERRAL NUMBER 2022-R09)

Proponent

Global Power Generation Pty Ltd

Project

Darlington Wind Farm

Description

The proposed Darlington Wind Farm project is a development of a wind energy facility near Darlington in south-west Victoria. The project area is predominantly on agricultural land within the land of the Eastern Maar first nations people and has several small settlement areas nearby (including Darlington, Mortlake, Dundonnell, Kolora, and Glenormiston).

The project will incorporate up to 61 wind turbine generators (WTGs) with a maximum blade tip height of 240m, covering an area of approximately 7,600 ha. The project has an anticipated operational life of minimum 30 years with a construction period of approximately 2 years and is anticipated to generate around 1,400,000 megawatt hours (MWh) of energy per annum.

Project components, other than the WTGs, would include an onsite substation and compound (including site office and warehouse), power transformers, power connection to the electricity grid via the existing Haunted Gully Terminal Station - Tarrone Terminal Station 500kV transmission line, wind monitoring towers (anemometers), vehicle access tracks, hardstands and turbines foundations, electricity and communications cables.

Decision

The Minister for Planning has decided that an environment effects statement (EES) is required for the Darlington Wind Farm, as described in the referral accepted on 24 October 2022.

Reasons

- The project has the potential for a range of significant and complex effects that require rigorous assessment. In particular, the project as proposed could have significant effects on:
 - i. significant biodiversity values, including threatened species and communities listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*;
 - ii. native vegetation and ecology of the area's terrestrial environments and freshwater environments, including wetlands and creeks;
 - iii. Aboriginal cultural heritage; and
 - iv. landscape and visual amenity.
- There is uncertainty about the extent and magnitude of potential effects related to historic heritage, traffic, shadow flicker, soils, groundwater, electromagnetic interference, amenity and socioeconomic values and geoheritage and geoscience values that also require further assessment.

- The project has potential for cumulative adverse effects on local and regional environmental values in the context of other existing and publicly known proposed projects within the region.
- An EES enables an integrated assessment of the environmental effects of the project and associated uncertainties, to inform decision-making for required approvals. The EES will evaluate feasible, relevant alternatives, the effectiveness of proposed mitigation and offsetting measures, including opportunities to avoid or minimise significant adverse effects through alternative layouts, designs and other mitigation measures.

Date: 31/1/2023

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