

Rye Park Wind Farm

Fact Sheet

1

September
2020

Visual Impact

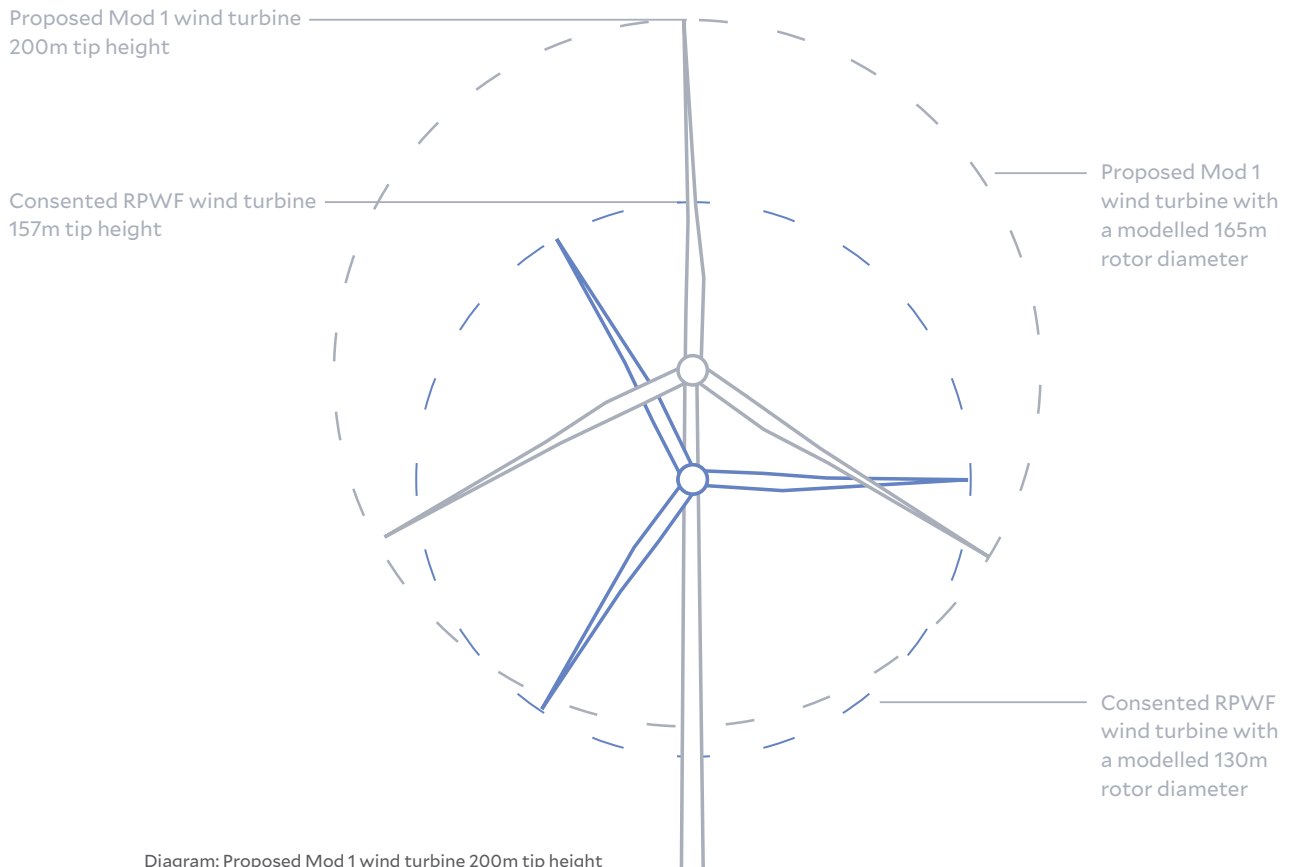


Why was the assessment undertaken?

Wind farms have the potential to affect the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The degree of visual impact depends on the extent of change to the landscape caused by the development.

A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) (contained at Appendix G.1 of the Modification Application Report) was prepared by Green Bean Design due to the increase in tip height, removal of 12 wind turbines and changes to onsite ancillary infrastructure. The VIA assessed the change in potential visual impacts from the Approved Project to the Modified Project.

During the Response to Submissions (RTS) phase of the Project, specific feedback from the Department of Planning, Infrastructure and the Environment (DPIE) and the community on visual impact around Rye Park village has been addressed through the removal of a further three turbines within close proximity to Rye Park village. A Revised VIA (contained at Appendix C of the RTS Report) was prepared to reassess this change in potential visual impacts due to the removal of 15 wind turbines from the approved layout.



What was the methodology used?

The VIA and Revised VIA were prepared considering the relevant conditions of the Development Consent and with regard to the Visual Assessment Bulletin December 2016 (the Bulletin), where considered relevant to the Modified Project.

A range of methodologies were used to generate comparisons of visual impact including (but not limited to):

- Photomontages which provide a visual representation of wind turbines in relation to its proposed location and scale relative to the surrounding landscape;
- Wire-frame diagrams from receivers which illustrate and contrast the approved wind turbines and the proposed modified wind turbines;
- Zone of visual influence modelling which illustrate the theoretical visibility of the approved wind turbines and the proposed modified wind turbines; and
- Turbine visibility maps which identify degree of visual change between the approved and proposed turbines (prepared for the Revised VIA).

To ensure confidence in the assessment, the VIA was peer reviewed with a focus on assessment methodologies and conclusions whilst commenting on the assessment's response to the requirements of the Bulletin.

The peer review was undertaken by Moir Landscape Architecture Pty Ltd who was satisfied with the methodology applied and stated the conclusions were well demonstrated and defended.

What did we find and how does it compare to the approved project?

The VIA determined that the change of the Modified Project would be discernible from some surrounding and proximate view locations. Overall, the number of visible wind turbine hubs and blade tips (as modelled) would be subject to marginal increases and decreases from residences within 4 km of the Approved Project. Some areas, including residences within the Rye Park Village would have an overall reduction in the number of visible wind turbine hubs and blade tips. No wind turbines will be located closer to residences as part of the Modified Project. For many residences, there will be an increased separation distance between the wind turbines due to the removal of wind turbines.

The VIA determined the proposed changes to ancillary infrastructure associated with the Modified Project would not result in any additional visual impacts to those associated with the Approved Project.

Further, the cumulative impact associated with the Modified Project and the Bango Wind Farm would be no greater than cumulative impacts determined for the Approved Project.

As stated in the Revised VIA in relation to the viewpoint from Rye Park village, whilst the wind turbines associated with the proposed modification are visibly taller than the approved wind turbines, there is a clear reduction in overall wind turbine visibility and an increased distance toward the visual wind turbines.

What are the proposed mitigation strategies?

In accordance with the Development Consent, implementation of off-site landscape works are proposed to mitigate visual impact for owners of any non-associated residences within 4km of any wind turbine. Additionally, all wind turbines are to be consistent with the Approved Project regarding their visual form, design, pattern and colour.

Assessment against development consent

Meeting the requirements of the Development Consent relating to visual impact will not change as part of the Modified Project.