

Rye Park Wind Farm

Fact Sheet

4

May
2020

Biodiversity (Vegetation)



Why was the assessment undertaken?

Native vegetation and habitat can be impacted as a result of the siting of wind turbines and associated infrastructure.

A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) (contained at Appendix G.4 of the Modification Application Report) was prepared by Umwelt to assess the modification of the wind farm development footprint and addition of the external road upgrades development footprint. The BDAR assessed the change in potential impacts on biodiversity from the Approved Project to the Modified Project.

What was the approach?

The BDAR was prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) assessment under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) as the Project seeks to modify a major project approval. The BDAR also had regard to applicable guidelines including:

- Threatened Biodiversity Survey and Assessment: Guidelines for Developments and Activities – Working Draft
- NSW Guide to Surveying Threatened Plants
- Draft Koala Habitat Protection Guidelines and Koala Habitat Protection SEPP

In addition to general ecosystem surveys, targeted surveys were undertaken over a 12-month period for both threatened flora and fauna species.



Photo: Brittle Gum - Broad-leaved Peppermint - Red Stringybark open forest

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

A total of 542.1 ha and 32.62 ha of vegetation (inclusive of non-native vegetation) is proposed to be removed associated with the wind farm development footprint and the external road upgrades development footprint respectively. For the wind farm, this is 285.3 ha more than the Approved Project.

Compared with the Approved Project, the Modified Project has a reduced impact on:

- White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland EEC under the BC Act. Impact on Box Gum Woodland that will be reduced by 10.71ha compared to the Approved Project, and
- Habitat for striped legless lizard, superb parrot, and golden sun moth listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)

However, the Modified Project has an increased impact on matters listed within the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Approval (EPBC Approval) including:

- White Box, Yellow Box, Blakely's Red Gum Woodland and Derived Native Grassland Critically Endangered Ecological Community (CEEC) under the EPBC Act. Impacts on CEEC is 27.77 ha more than the impact threshold of 9.5 ha as identified in Condition 3 of the EPBC Approval, and
- Hollow bearing trees suitable for the superb parrot. Compared to the 170 hollow bearing trees authorised in the EPBC Approval, the Modified Project will impact on an additional 61 hollow bearing trees.

Although the development footprints have increased in size compared with the Approved Project, numerous measures such as modifying ancillary infrastructure were employed to avoid significant biodiversity values.

Discussions with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) are in progress in order that the EPBC approval can be brought in line with the NSW approval. The Project is being re-referred under the EPBC Act on the basis of Box Gum Woodland CEEC and hollow bearing tree impacts. The EPBC approval process will be undertaken independently of the State process.

What are the proposed mitigation strategies?

To ensure biodiversity impacts are managed and further minimized, a Biodiversity Management Plan will be prepared in accordance with the existing conditions of the Development Consent. A specific Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP) will also be prepared in accordance with the conditions of the EPBC Approval.

Tilt Renewables is concurrently preparing a strategy on how the project will secure the required biodiversity credits to compensate for the loss of biodiversity values.

Assessment against development consent

The Modified Project can comply with the existing conditions of the Development Consent relating to biodiversity.