

Have your say on the Brolga wind farm standards

Fact sheet

We want your feedback on the draft Brolga Assessment and Mitigation Standards for Wind Energy Facilities.

Visit Engage Victoria and have your say by 18 December 2020.

Background

The Victorian Government has set a Renewable Energy Target of 50 per cent by 2030. Achieving it will reduce carbon emissions, create jobs and provide affordable, sustainable energy for Victorians.

As the renewable energy sector grows and more wind farms are built, we need effective rules to protect native animals like birds and bats from any potential risk these facilities may pose. We are currently reviewing and improving these rules.

The Victorian Brolga (*Antigone rubicunda*) is the first species we are reviewing. We are using new information about wind farms' impact on this bird to update the Interim Guidelines for the Assessment, Avoidance, Mitigation and Offsetting of Potential Wind Farm Impacts on the Victorian Brolga Population 2011.

We would like your feedback on the draft Brolga Assessment and Mitigation Standards for Wind Energy Facilities.

About the Victorian Brolga

The Victorian Brolga is a large crane, around 1.8 metres tall. It lives for 30 years on average and bonds for life with its mate.

It is a threatened bird and is currently classified as vulnerable in Victoria. But recent reassessment may see the Brolga's status change to endangered.

The Victorian Brolga is under threat from the Red Fox, which preys on young Brolgas, and the disappearance of breeding wetlands. There are also concerns that more wind farms may further threaten the species.

Why we need new standards

We have developed the draft standards because:

- There is new information available about the impact of wind farms on Brolgas.
- The community is concerned about the potential threat wind farms pose to Brolgas.
- The industry is concerned about the impacts the current approach is having on wind farms, compared to the threat to Brolgas.

Windfarm risks to Brolgas

The risks to Victorian Brolgas from wind farms are:

- Losing flocking and breeding habitat
- Collisions with powerlines
- Disturbance of breeding and flocking behaviour.

The new draft standards aim to reduce these risks.

Key changes in the draft standards

Major changes include:

- Ensuring Victorian Brolgas do not become more threatened due to wind farms
- Prohibiting wind farm turbines, powerlines, quarries, buildings and other structures from places, including wetlands, where the Brolga flocks or breeds
- Protecting all wetlands suitable for Brolga breeding from wind farms, not just known breeding areas
- Implementing a new buffer design around suitable Brolga breeding wetlands, the corridors Brolgas move through and the places they forage around these wetlands
- Cutting costs and increasing certainty for the wind energy sector
- Eliminating the need for compensation plans now we better understand how wind farms potentially impact Brolgas
- Wind farm developers won't need to commission field surveys to find nearby Brolga habitat.

Have your say on the draft standards

You can have your say by completing the questionnaire at [Engage Victoria](#). Please provide supporting

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evidence, such as photos, documents, links to research and spatial data.

You can also upload your own submission if you don't want to use the questionnaire.

More detailed information about the Draft Standards is available at [Engage Victoria](#).

If the information you want isn't available there, please [email us](#).

Please have your say by 18 December 2020.

Next steps

After the public consultation ends on 18 December 2020, we will:

- Publish submissions (unless marked confidential).
- Consider the feedback, find more information if required and potentially amend the draft standards.
- We will publish the final standards along with a summary of the feedback and how it informed them.
- Once the Minister for Planning approves the new standards, they will be incorporated into the *Victoria Planning Provisions* through a planning scheme amendment.

