



# Newsletter | May 2024

As notified in our previous newsletters, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Baldon Wind Farm is currently being compiled for submission.

The detailed studies that inform the EIS are coming to an end, with the preliminary Biodiversity, and Cultural Heritage surveys now finalised. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Soil, Agriculture and Social Impact studies are also coming close to completion.

The outcomes of these surveys, as well as feedback received from the community, has been incorporated into the design of the project.

## NSW Department of Planning restructure

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) is now the consent authority that will be assessing the Baldon Wind Farm EIS. This is due to the NSW government restructuring in January 2024, which dismantled the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) and created the DPHI and the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH).

## EIS submission and next steps

Once the EIS is submitted to DPHI, it will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days. This allows community members and agencies (such as local Councils or other governmental agencies such as the Department of Transport) to comment on the proposed development.

Once the exhibition period has concluded, the submissions are compiled and delivered back to Goldwind. We will then prepare a Response to Submissions Report, which will address all items identified during the public exhibition submission period.

To be notified of when the EIS is available to read and when submissions are open, email us at [info@baldonwindfarm.com.au](mailto:info@baldonwindfarm.com.au).

## Biodiversity surveys

After over 18 months of survey effort, detailed ecology site surveys are now sufficiently completed to submit the EIS. The outcomes of these surveys were fascinating and provided the Goldwind team with the information necessary to preserve areas of high biodiversity importance.

A number of threatened plant species were identified, including:

- *Maireana cheeli* (Chariot Wheels)
- *Brachyscome papillosa* (Mossgiel Daisy)
- *Lepidium monoplacoides* (Winged Peppergrass)

The following animal species were also identified:

- Southern Bell Frog
- Plains Wanderer (bird)
- Blue Winged Parrot
- Pink Cockatoo
- Southern Whiteface (bird)
- White-fronted Chat (bird)
- And other bird and migratory species.



*Maireana cheeli* (Chariot Wheels). Image: NGH



Pink Cockatoo. Image: Ashraf Saleh



Southern Bell Frog. Image: NGH



*Lepidium monoplacoides* (Winged Peppergrass) Image: NSW National Parks and Wildlife

## Cultural Heritage surveys

With the expertise of the local Representative Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), over 200 cultural heritage sites were identified by foot while surveying the infrastructure assessment corridor.

The vast majority of sites have been protected and preserved by amending the location of the proposed wind farm infrastructure to avoid the sites.

Other management measures have been recommended by the RAPs to avoid or minimise potential impacts to identified local heritage sites.

## Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is nearing completion, with the report ready for inclusion within the EIS. A lot of work goes into an LVIA, with many different assessment methods and techniques applied. The LVIA includes wireframes and photomontages, which visually depict what the wind farm would look like from different viewpoints (such as the Sturt Highway and from Moulamein).

As you would imagine with the size and scale of the project and the flat landscape of the plains, the wind farm will be visible from surrounding areas; however, it has been assessed within the LVIA as having an acceptable visual impact. The distance from local townships, the remote rural nature of the plains, and the low density of residents nearby has contributed to this assessment outcome.



Sunset at the site.  
Image: NGH

## Baldon Wind Farm

The proposed Baldon Wind Farm would be located 13km north of Moulamein, 55km east of Balranald, and 75km southwest of Hay. The project would sit within the Murray River and Hay Shire Council areas and is adjacent to the Edward River Council to the east.

The proposed site lies within the South-West Renewable Energy Zone (SWREZ). It would contribute significantly to the NSW Government's net-zero emissions by 2050 target sending clean, carbon-free renewable power into the NSW electricity grid.

The Baldon Wind Farm would include:

- Approximately 180 wind turbines exporting power to the national electricity market (NEM)
- Associated infrastructure such as roads, drainage, cabling and substations
- Battery energy storage systems (BESS)
- Associated construction facilities
- Accommodation camp for construction
- Operations and maintenance facilities.

## Goldwind Australia

Goldwind is a global leader in manufacturing and installing wind turbines and can be found on six of our seven continents. With over 24 years' experience in developing wind turbines, Goldwind has installed over 45,000 wind turbines worldwide - totalling over 100 GW of generation.

Goldwind Australia was established in 2009 with offices located in both Sydney and Melbourne. Goldwind Australia has over 1.8 GW of wind and solar farm projects operating or in development across the country and is responsible for developing the Baldon Wind Farm.

### Learn more and provide feedback

Your ongoing input is important to us. Should you have any questions or feedback about the project, please send an email to [info@baldonwindfarm.com](mailto:info@baldonwindfarm.com) or complete the community feedback form available online at <https://baldonwindfarm.com/>. You can also reach the team by phone by calling [1800 050 209](tel:1800050209).



### 1. Baldon Wind Farm

The Proposal is within the Hay Plains area in the South-West Renewable Energy Zone (SWREZ). The wind farm would be located on freehold land used for sheep grazing in an area over 46,000 hectares in size. The site is located 13km north of Moulamein, 55km east of Balranald and 75km southwest of Hay in NSW. The proposed site sits within the Murray River and Hay Shire Council areas and is adjacent to the Edward River Council area to the east.

### 2. What is the project status?

The project is moving towards the final stages of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) issued the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) in July 2022, which triggered the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) stage.

The EIS stage involves detailed site investigations and technical assessments including biodiversity, Cultural Heritage, noise, traffic, transport, and visual impact assessments. The results of these technical assessments as well as community engagement outcomes has assisted in refining the project infrastructure layout to date.

Once the EIS is submitted to the Department, it will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days. This allows community members and agencies (such as local Councils, Department of Transport or other governmental agencies) to comment on the proposed development.

Once the 28-day period is up, the submissions are compiled and delivered back to Goldwind. We will then prepare a Response to Submissions Report, which will address all items identified during the public exhibition submission period.

Following the review of the Submissions Report, the Department will decide to approve or refuse the application, or the application will be passed through to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC).

### 3. How many wind turbines would the proposed site have?

This project could host approximately 180 wind turbines, as well as the necessary associated infrastructure. The initial Scoping Report applied for approximately 162 wind turbines on the site, however,

this was updated as additional land became available for the project.

### 4. How much electricity would a wind farm of this size generate and how many homes in NSW would this power?

Given the number of turbines highlighted in early assessments, the site could produce over 1000MW of electricity. This is equivalent to powering over 700,000 homes in NSW.

### 5. What is wind energy and how is it created?

Wind energy generates electricity from the power of the wind. Wind power is the cheapest source of large-scale renewable energy and is clean and extremely reliable. When a wind turbine captures the power of the wind it generates electricity which is transferred to the onsite substation where it is connected to the national electricity grid. Once on the national electricity grid, the electricity travels through transmission lines that distribute the power to homes and businesses. Some of the electricity may be stored in the battery system onsite and then be released when it is needed.

### 6. What is the land currently being used for? Is it used for Agricultural purposes?

The land is currently used for sheep grazing. There is an existing 220kV power line that runs through the centre of the site and the new Project Energy Connect 330kV line is being built next to the current line also.

### 7. How long is the lifecycle of a wind farm?

Generally, a wind farm will operate for approximately 25-30 years.

### 8. What will happen to the turbines and the land at the wind farm's end of life?

Once the wind turbines have reached their end of usable life, the wind turbines would be decommissioned and removed (and recycled), or the wind farm may be refurbished and repowered. If the wind farm is to be decommissioned, the land would be rehabilitated and returned to its original use. The decommissioning process is an important part of the development application process, and decommissioning and rehabilitation objectives are required to be met as part of the Development Consent, outlined by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

### 9. Will the wind turbines scar the current natural landscape?

It is important to acknowledge that wind turbines do have a visual impact on the landscape. The EIA process assesses the potential impact and provides the planning authority information to make an informed decision on the application. However, we will work with the local community and surrounding landholders throughout the process to ensure the visual impact is minimised or mitigated where possible.

### 10. Are wind turbines noisy?

Like anything that moves - including farm machinery, vehicles and trucks - wind turbines do generate some sound. Noise varies on the position of the turbine, the shape of the site, where the listener may be situated and the direction the wind may be blowing.

A specialist noise consultant will carry out a formal noise assessment which will be included in the EIS. This will ensure that potential noise impacts to neighbouring properties meet the minimum noise requirements and that potential noise impacts are appropriately mitigated. Once the development is operational, noise levels on the wind turbines would be tested again to ensure compliance.

### 11. Will Cultural Heritage be preserved and protected?

Preserving and protecting Cultural Heritage is a priority for the project and we are committed to adhering to all legislation to achieve this.

An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA), including field surveys, has been prepared and will form part of the EIS. This will include rigorous community engagement with Registered Aboriginal Parties and other community members throughout the community engagement process to ensure due diligence and to maintain strong relationships and respect with First Nations peoples and cultures.

### 12. Do wind turbines impact native flora and fauna?

We have engaged specialist consultants who have undertaken flora and fauna surveys to understand the ecological characteristics of the site. The project is committed to minimising impacts on native flora and fauna by designing the infrastructure to allow species to continue to thrive during the construction and

operation phases. During these phases, management plans will be developed to ensure this compliance is maintained.

### 13. Do wind turbines affect livestock operations?

The site is currently being used for sheep grazing and this farming operation would continue throughout the project lifecycle. There is no evidence to say that wind turbines negatively impact livestock operations.

### 14. Is it possible that the wind turbines make it harder to fight a fire should one start on site?

There is no evidence to suggest that wind farms increase fire risks. Wind turbines are treated like any other piece of infrastructure that needs to be managed adequately. The wind farm roads would make it easier for emergency vehicles to access and drive around the site should a fire start.

### 15. How will Goldwind engage with the community and key stakeholders during the EIS phase?

Goldwind is committed to working with the community and other key stakeholders as part of the EIS process and beyond. Stakeholders will be given an opportunity to have their say at several engagements within the local region. The community will have both face-to-face and virtual opportunities to ask any questions, discuss concerns and community benefit sharing options with Goldwind.

