

2.4.4 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act

No flora species and no ecological communities listed as threatened under the *EPBC Act* were found during assessment of the development footprint. No *EPBC Act*-listed threatened flora species were found during the surveys nor were they considered to occur due to the absence of suitable habitat. Therefore, it is considered extremely unlikely that there would be any significant impact on any matters of national environmental significance.

2.4.5 DSE Threatened Species Advisory List

Golden Cowslips, listed as Endangered on the *Advisory List of Rare and Threatened Plants in Victoria* (DSE 2005), was recorded as present in the development footprint at two locations: Habitat Zones K and N. Whilst there are no provisions under the *Advisory List of Rare and Threatened Plants in Victoria* (DSE 2005), the Responsible Authority will consider impacts on any species on the list when assessing a planning application. It is worth noting that only two specimens were found and impacts to this species are not considered to be significant. However, consideration should be given to translocating these plants as part of an Environmental Management Plan.

No other DSE-listed flora species are considered likely to occur in the proposed development footprint due to their absence, or the absence of suitable habitat.

2.5 Mitigation Measures

As previously discussed, the wind farm layout was designed to incorporate the avoidance and minimisation principals laid out in the framework. However, the construction and of the wind farm still has the potential to result in impacts on listed threatened flora and vegetation communities, and native vegetation. In response to this, the following mitigation measures have been designed to further reduce potential impacts. In particular, these methods can assist in reducing impacts to native vegetation adjacent to the wind farm boundary.

Mitigation Measures to Minimise Impacts on Vegetation

- Development of a construction and operational environmental management plan which includes a Native Vegetation Management Plan.
- Development of an offset proposal in accordance with the Framework to compensate for the removal of native vegetation. Current planning practice requires an offset plan to be prepared that documents offset measures to meet the offset target, with this being to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority (i.e. subject to secondary consent) before any native vegetation is removed.
- Retention and protection of indigenous trees in appropriately signed 'tree protection zones' incorporating the canopy drip lines in addition to a one metre buffer. All machinery and earthworks will be excluded from the tree protection zones.
- Any tree pruning will be undertaken by an experienced arborist to prevent disease or unnecessary damage to the tree or disturbance to understorey vegetation during tree trimming.
- Stockpiling of soil will occur outside areas of native vegetation, preferably on cropped land or introduced pasture, to minimise disturbance.

- Weed control, by an experienced bush regenerator, will be undertaken along disturbed areas after construction to control any weed outbreaks in bushland or wetland areas.
- All machinery will enter and exit works sites along defined routes that do not impact on native vegetation or cause soil disturbance and weed spread.
- All machinery brought on site will be weed- and pathogen-free. This is important for environmental and agricultural protection. Soil borne pathogens such as Cinnamon Fungus and livestock diseases can be easily transported by machinery.
- All machinery wash down, lay down and personnel rest areas will be defined (fenced) and located in disturbed areas.
- Construction contractors should be inducted into an environmental management program for construction works.
- All environmental controls should be checked for compliance on a regular basis.

Consideration will be given to avoiding the use of roads that support higher quality native vegetation in the northern part of the study area. This would avoid any requirement to widen or alter roads to permit construction vehicle access. Excluding those mentioned in the sections above, no scattered trees will be removed. These measures will avoid significant impacts to listed threatened flora and vegetation communities.

Mitigation Measures to Minimise Impacts on Surface Water

- Implement methods to reduce sediment transportation to creeks including:
 - Swales;
 - Silt-fences; and / or
 - Sediment Ponds
- Minimising crossing and obstructing natural gullied and depressions;
- Locating access tracks along ridges to reduce the need for any side cuts and reduce erosion;
- Design adequate drainage along access tracks;
- Locate temporary earthworks away from flow paths and gullies; and
- No significant river crossings are required however the tracks cross the smaller ephemeral watercourses. These should be avoided where possible. Should avoidance not be possible and new access tracks are required, these should be hardened to prevent erosion caused by heavy machinery.

2.6 Recommendations

- A planning permit is required under the local planning scheme to remove native vegetation, including scattered individuals occurring outside of remnant patch vegetation. Within Habitat Zones X and Y, a permit is likely to be required under the ESO1 to create cuts of greater than 1 metre in depth (e.g. for the construction of wind turbine footings).
- A licence is required from DSE to remove protected flora from: