



Australian Government
Department of the Environment

EPBC Ref: 2016/7746

Peter Marriott
Generation Project Development Manager
Stockyard Hill Wind Farm Pty Ltd
Level 12
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Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Mr Marriott

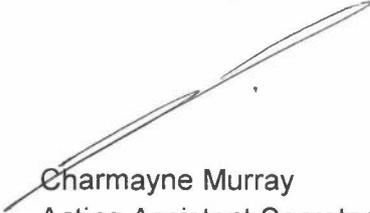
**Additional information required for preliminary documentation
Stockyard Hill Wind Farm – Wind Energy Facility and associated infrastructure,
south-west Victoria (EPBC 2016/7746)**

I am writing in relation to your proposal to develop the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm and associated infrastructure in southwest Victoria, approximately 150 km west northwest of Melbourne and approximately 35 km west of Ballarat.

On 14 September 2016, it was decided that the proposed action is a controlled action and that it will be assessed by preliminary documentation. Further information will be required to enable the Department to assess the relevant impacts of the proposed action. Details outlining the further information required in the preliminary documentation are at **Attachment A**.

If you have any questions about the assessment process or the further information required, please contact Felicity Grabkowski, by email to felicity.grabkowski@environment.gov.au or telephone 03 5966 2349 and quote the EPBC reference number shown at the beginning of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Charmayne Murray
Acting Assistant Secretary
Assessments and Sea Dumping Branch
13 January 2017

Attachment A

Additional information required for assessment by Preliminary Documentation

It has been determined that the proposed action, Stockyard Hill Wind Farm – Wind Energy Facility and associated infrastructure, south-west Victoria (EPBC 2016/7746) is likely to have a significant impact on the following controlling provision which is protected under Part 3 of the EPBC Act:

- Listed threatened species and communities (section 18 & section 18A)

It has also been determined that the proposed action will be assessed by preliminary documentation. Preliminary documentation includes the information about the action and its relevant impacts already outlined in the referral, as well as additional information identified by the Minister as being necessary to adequately assess the acceptability of the proposed action. Details of this additional information are described below.

Once the preliminary documentation is submitted and the Department is satisfied that all matters outlined in this request have been addressed, the Department will provide you with a letter directing you to publish the preliminary documentation for public consultation for a period of time. Any public comments received during this time must be addressed in a final version of the preliminary documentation prior to the Department beginning the assessment of whether or not to approve the proposed action.

Further information on the assessment process is available from the Department's website at <http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/environment-protection/environment-assessments>.

GENERAL CONTENT, FORMAT AND STYLE

The preliminary documentation, which includes the referral information and the additional information described below, should be contained as one document with attachments, and include sufficient information to avoid the need to search for supplementary reports.

The purpose of the preliminary documentation is to enable interested stakeholders and the Minister to understand the environmental consequences of the proposed development on matters of national environmental significance (MNES). The information provided should be objective, clear and succinct and where appropriate, supported by maps, plans, diagrams or other descriptive detail.

The preliminary documentation must be able to be read as a stand-alone document, and must include summaries of all relevant information. Detailed technical information, studies or investigations necessary to support the main text should be attached as appendices to the main document.

If it is necessary to make use of material that is considered to be of a confidential nature, the proponent should consult with the Department of the Environment (the Department) on the preferred presentation of that material, before submitting the documents for approval for publication.

The level of analysis and detail in the documentation should reflect the level of expected impacts on the environment. Any variables or assumptions made in the assessment must be clearly stated and discussed. The extent to which the limitations, if any, of available information may influence the conclusions of the environmental assessment should be discussed.

The documentation should be written so that any conclusions reached can be independently assessed. To this end, all sources must be appropriately referenced using the Harvard standard. The reference list should include the address of any internet pages used as data sources.

The additional information should include a list of persons and agencies consulted and the names of, and work done by, the persons involved in preparing the documentation.

Maps, diagrams and other illustrative material (such as a masterplan displaying all proposed components of the action) should be included where appropriate. The additional information should be produced on A4 size paper capable of being photocopied with maps and diagrams on A4 or A3 size and in colour where possible. The proponent should consider the format and style of the document appropriate for publication on the internet. The capacity of the website to store data and display the material may have some bearing on how the document is constructed.

The additional information must include a copy of these guidelines and a table indicating where the information fulfilling the guidelines is included in the preliminary documentation.

SPECIFIC CONTENT OF THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

Please include a summary of all components of the action, a description of the activities associated with the potential development, and plans or maps to delineate the position of all components of the action. Please clearly state any variables in the design of the action and take this into account in the discussion of impacts under section 2.

Where relevant information was provided at the referral stage, please incorporate or refer to specific parts of the attached referral as necessary.

2. IMPACTS TO MNES

This section must specifically address the following MNES:

- Striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*) – vulnerable;
- Golden sun moth (*Synemon plana*) – critically endangered;
- Natural temperate grassland of the Victorian volcanic plain ecological community - critically endangered.

Please provide a summary of the MNES present in the proposed action area and confirmation of the likely impacts to the MNES, including but not limited to:

- Survey information including results of targeted surveys within five kilometres of the proposed action area. Information may include maps with distribution of MNES and associated habitat. Please provide an assessment of the adequacy of any surveys undertaken (including survey effort and timing), in particular the extent to

which these surveys were appropriate to key MNES and undertaken in accordance with the Department's relevant scientific and policy guidance including:

- *Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened reptiles, EPBC Act survey guidelines 6.6, 2011*
- *Survey guidelines in the Background Paper to EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.12 - Significant Impact Guidelines for the Critically Endangered Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*) (DEWHA 2009p)*
- An assessment of potential impacts for MNES (including direct, indirect, consequential and cumulative impacts) that may occur as a result of all elements and project phases of the proposed action, incorporating relevant conservation advices, recovery plans and threat abatement plans, if applicable. In particular, please provide the following:
 - Confirmation of the magnitude and quantum of natural temperate grassland of the Victorian volcanic plain to be impacted/lost as a result of the action. Please include maps outlining the distribution as this relates to the location of the proposed action. In particular, provide clarity as to any potential indirect impacts to the ecological community identified in the referral documentation.
- Details on whether any impacts are likely to be unknown, unpredictable or irreversible;
- Analysis of the acceptability of the relevant impacts;
- Any technical data and other information used or needed to make a detailed assessment of the relevant impacts; and
- A local and regional scale analysis of the likely impacts. This should include a discussion of connectivity, potential cumulative impacts within the broader regional and information on the long term viability of MNES if the proposed was to proceed.

Where relevant information was provided at the referral stage, please incorporate or refer to specific parts of the attached referral as necessary.

3. PROPOSED AVOIDANCE, MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Please provide information on specific measures proposed to avoid, mitigate and manage impacts to the protected species and ecological community described in section 2.

Specific measures may be presented in the form of a finalised management plan such as a Construction Management Plan. To assist you, the Department's *Environmental Management Plan Guidelines 2014* are available at:

www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/environmental-management-plan-guidelines.

Documentation should clearly set out the following for each environmental issue and MNES likely to be impacted by the proposed action (e.g. in the form of a schedule):

- the environmental and conservation objectives;
- performance criteria, monitoring and reporting;
- corrective actions and rehabilitation;

- responsible party/s;
- long term funding for management measures; and
- timing and staging of each measure.

These measures must include, but not be limited to, the following:

- measures to address and limit impacts at the construction, maintenance and operational stages;
- protection measures for rehabilitation and conservation areas, such as fencing. For example, provide information on the management of retained areas along roadsides which will be clearly demarcated as no-go areas for striped legless lizard protection;
- details of the measures and protocols to be implemented to ensure MNES are not harmed during construction. Clearly set out the processes to be followed, such as the responsibilities of the suitably qualified ecologist. For example, include:
 - details of the proposed salvage and translocation plan for striped legless lizard. Provide an assessment of the degree of certainty that the proposed translocation attempt will demonstrate a high probability of ecologically beneficial and long-term success (i.e. to provide evidence that the the proposed removal of individuals may not result in the loss of those individuals).
 - provide further information regarding alternative avoidance and mitigation measures for striped legless lizard, as appropriate (including any research proposals which may accompany the translocation proposal).
- the documentation must incorporate conservation advices, recovery plans and threat abatement plans, where relevant. In particular, demonstrate how the mitigation measures are consistent with the following documents (and other related policies):
 - *Commonwealth Conservation Advice on Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain, 2008*;
 - *National Recovery Plan for the Striped Legless Lizard (Delma impar), 1999-2003*;
 - Department's *Policy statement for translocation of listed threatened species – assessment under Chapter 4 of the EPBC Act*; and
 - *Commonwealth Conservation Advice for Synemon plana (Golden Sun Moth), 2013*.

4. OFFSETS

The Department considers the proposed action is likely to result in residual significant impacts on the striped legless lizard; the golden sun moth; and natural temperate grassland of the Victorian volcanic plain ecological community.

Please provide details of a proposed offset package to compensate for the residual significant impacts on these species/community (unless further information can conclude that impacts can be ruled out), including the following:

- a description of the offset site(s) including location, size, condition and environmental values present (including maps and relevant survey data consistent with the Department's survey guidelines for MNES);
- information on and justification of how the offset package will deliver a conservation outcome that will maintain or improve the viability of the species and ecological community consistent with the *EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy* (October 2012) (Offsets Policy) available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/epbc-act-environmental-offsets-policy>;
- an assessment (and justification for each input used) of the offset site(s) using the Department's *Offset Assessment Guide* available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/epbc-act-environmental-offsets-policy>; and
- details on how the offset will be secured, managed and monitored, including:
 - management actions, responsibility, timing and performance criteria; and
 - specific environmental outcomes to be achieved from management measures.

The offset package can comprise a combination of direct offsets and other compensatory measures, as long as it meets the requirements of the Department's Offsets Policy and aligns with conservation priorities for the species/community.

Offsets must directly contribute to the ongoing viability of the species and ecological communities and deliver an overall conservation outcome that improves or maintains the viability of the protected matter in the region, as compared to what is likely to have occurred under the status quo, i.e., if neither the action nor the offset had taken place.

Note that offsets do not make an unacceptable impact acceptable and do not reduce the likely impacts of a proposed action. Instead, offsets compensate for any residual significant impact.

5. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

The economic and social impacts of the action, both positive and negative, must be analysed. Matters of interest may include:

- Details of any public consultation activities undertaken, and their outcomes;
- Details of any consultation with Indigenous stakeholders;
- Projected economic costs and benefits of the project, including the basis for their estimation through cost/benefit analysis or similar studies; and
- Employment opportunities expected to be generated by the project (including construction and operational phases).

Economic and social impacts should be considered at the local, regional and national levels.

6. ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Provide a description of the proposed action in relation to the principles of ecologically sustainable development, as defined in the EPBC Act:

- the long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations;
- the precautionary principle which states that a lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage;
- the principle of inter-generational equity which states that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations;
- the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making; and
- improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted.

To assist you, the *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development* (1992) is available on the following web site: <http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/national-strategy-ecologically-sustainable-development>.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD OF PERSON(S) PROPOSING TO TAKE THE ACTION

The information provided must include details of any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against:

- the person proposing to take the action, and
- for an action for which a person has applied for a permit, the person making the application.

If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework must also be included.

8. OTHER APPROVALS AND CONDITIONS

The preliminary documentation must include information on any other requirements for approval or conditions that apply, or that the proponent reasonably believes are likely to apply, to the proposed action. This must include:

- a description of any approval that has been obtained or is required to be obtained from a State, Territory or Commonwealth agency or authority (other than an approval under the EPBC Act), including any conditions that apply (or are reasonably expected to apply) to the action; and
- description of the monitoring, enforcement and review procedures that apply, or are proposed to apply, to the action.

