JANUARY 2026

Hexham Wind Farm

FACT SHEET

Socio-economic and Community

The proposed Hexham Wind Farm is located between Hexham, Caramut and Ellerslie in the Moyne Shire in south-west Victoria. The project would incorporate up to 106 wind turbines with a total height of up to 260 metres from ground to blade tip. The project would also include an on-site terminal station and battery energy storage system (BESS) and other associated infrastructure such as access tracks.

As part of the Victorian Government's planning and approvals process for major projects, Wind Prospect has prepared an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the proposed Hexham Wind Farm. An EES is a requirement under the Environment Effects Act 1978 and includes a detailed assessment of a wide range of environmental and social aspect such as biodiversity, ecology, historical heritage, Aboriginal cultural heritage, landscape and visual amenity, traffic and transport, noise, socioeconomic, and surface and groundwater.

Extensive research and community and stakeholder consultation has been carried out to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects on the environment and the social fabric of the community during construction, operation and decommissioning of the project. Wind Prospect recognises the value of the natural and built environment in which the project is based and understands and respects the community's desire to protect both the environmental and social landscape that has existed for many years.

Assessment

As part of the EES, Wind Prospect engaged Umwelt to prepare a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) for the Project. The SEIA has been prepared in accordance with the Victorian Government Planning Minister's scoping requirements for the assessment of environmental effects,and with consideration of best practice social impact assessment approaches, including the International Principles for Social Impact Assessment and the Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for assessing and managing the social impacts of projects. The aim of the SEIA is to identify and mitigate any potential adverse social and economic impacts of the project on the community, and assess these impacts against the environmental and economic benefits.

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How the assessment was carried out

The social and economic impact assessment evaluates the potential socio-economic and cultural impacts of the project to ensure that it will contribute positively to the surrounding community while minimising any potential adverse effects. The assessment has been carried out over several years and has involved a number of stages including:

- Defining the social context of the region in which the project would be located and developing a social baseline profile, including a description of community characteristics and an analysis of existing social conditions and trends.
- Extensive community and stakeholder consultation, including phone interviews, sentiment surveys, gathering feedback during information sessions and near neighbour visits, meetings with businesses, councils, First Nations groups and other stakeholders in the region.
- Preparation of an economic impact assessment, including consideration of high-level agricultural impacts.
- A social impact assessment including an assessment of impact significance.
- Development of mitigation, enhancement and management measures to address social impacts and preparation of a social impact management framework to guide the implementation of the proposed social impact management measures.
- Identification and analysis of social benefits associated with the project.

Findings

Social and economic impacts and opportunities have been identified through the consultation and research activities and include positive impacts such as:

- Intergenerational equity as renewable energy production from the project would contribute to the net zero energy transition and help to mitigate climate change.
- Enough energy to supply up to 515,000 households annually and an annual reduction of up to 1.88 million tonnes of carbon emissions.
- Increased financial sustainability for landholders who are hosting project infrastructure.
- Other financial benefits include near-neighbour annual benefit payments, one off construction payments and annual energy cost offsets.
- Enhanced social outcomes for local and regional communities through targeted community benefit sharing and investment initiatives.
- Current community sponsorship fund of $20,000 annually and co-design of Community Benefit Fund for the operational life of the project up to $106,000 per year, or $1,000 per turbine.
- Enhancement of the local economy due to construction workforce influx and associated increase in local economic activity as well benefits to the local supply chain.
- Increased employment and procurement opportunities associated with the construction and operation of the proposed temporary on-site quarry.
- Local economic development (employment, procurement and skills development) resulting in improved long-term economic and social benefits for the community and the region.

Below are some of the potential negative social and economic impacts of the project. The SEIA notes management strategies proposed by the project will assist in mitigating these impacts.

- Reduced sense of community and cohesion due to differing attitudes to renewable energy development in the social locality.
- Decreased accessibility and increased wait time for local health services and emergency services.
- Reduced safety on local roads along the transport route (non-arterial) due to light and heavy vehicle movements.
- Increased disruption (stress and frustration) associated with increased travel times on nominated transport routes.
- Loss of trust and engagement in decision-making systems and assessment process.
- Disruption to sense of place due to changes in surroundings and visual amenity associated with the attributes and function of the landscape.
- Changes in the visual landscape, impacting resident's sense of place and experience of the local area (quarry related).

For more information about the Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program, scan the QR code or visit hexhamwindfarm.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/HWF-Neighbour-Benefit-Sharing-Program-WEB.pdf to view the fact sheet published on the project website.

Mitigation measures

Since the scoping phase, the project has undergone several design refinements to reduce potential impacts on the surrounding community. Changes to the project footprint and site layout have been made to address concerns raised by the community and in response to the outcomes of some of the EES assessments.

If the project is approved, a framework to guide social impact management for the project would be developed before construction commences and cover the following social and economic enhancement initiatives.

Social Impact Management Framework

Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Specifies the approach to ensure there is adequate accommodation options for the construction workforce, that does not place undue strain on housing options for locals and tourists.

A targeted approach would be taken to identify local employment opportunities, as well as creating a network of local suppliers and partnership opportunities.

Community Benefit Sharing Strategy

A strategy that explains how the community would benefit from the project and how the community could be involved in the planning and outcomes of the project's community benefits program.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

The Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will define how the community and stakeholders would be engaged and involved in the project during construction and operation.

The engagement approach would be tailored to meet the needs of the surrounding community.

Neighbour Benefit Sharing

Roll out of the Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program to near neighbours residing within six kilometres of one or more wind turbines.

Next steps

The Social and Economic Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of the EES documentation. The EES and all technical assessments will be placed on public exhibition for a period of 30 days. You can review the EES and technical reports on the Resources page of the Hexham Wind Farm website at: hexhamwindfarm.com.au/ees.

Formal submissions received from the community during the public exhibition period will be summarised in a Submissions Report and considered as part of the Minister's Assessment of the project.

Have your say

During the public exhibition period, you have the opportunity to provide a formal submission on the proposed Hexham Wind Farm. There will be opportunities to meet the project team and hear from technical experts about the proposed project, the EES and technical studies.

Visit the Community page (hexhamwindfarm.com.au/community) of the website for more information on our upcoming in-region engagement activities and ways to get in touch.

Wind Prospect respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our office and each of our projects are located. We also acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to the land and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Contact

If you need an interpreter, please call 13 14 50. If you are deaf and/or find hearing or speaking with people on the phone difficult, please contact the National Relay Service on voice relay number 1300 555 727, TTY number 133 677 or SMS relay number 0423 677 767.

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