

Chapter 7

Stakeholder
consultation

7.1 Overview

Community and stakeholder engagement and consultation are critical to inform the development of a wind farm project. Meaningful engagement provides the opportunity to develop a project that considers the full range of local views, interests and aspirations, incorporates local knowledge of the environment, and can minimise potential impacts and improve project and community outcomes.

Community and stakeholder engagement for the project started in 2019 and included the distribution of newsletters to dwellings within 10 kilometres of the project. A neighbour doorknock of properties within six kilometres of potential wind turbines was carried out, and local organisations and businesses were contacted to inform them about the project. A Community Engagement Committee (CEC) comprising local representatives was also established by Moyne Shire Council.

After the referral of the project to the Victorian Government in March 2022, the Minister for Planning determined that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) was the appropriate assessment pathway for the project. At the start of the EES process, the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) (formerly the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)) established a Technical Reference Group (TRG) to advise on the scoping and adequacy of the specialist studies and EES chapters. Consultation and engagement with the TRG have occurred throughout the EES process, up until lodgement for exhibition.

Outside of TRG engagement, key stakeholder engagement has included regular briefings with host landowners and neighbouring property landowners, broader community members, neighbouring council representatives, state and federal members of parliament, interested government organisations, local special interest groups and local businesses. This engagement is detailed further in Attachment I – **Stakeholder Engagement Plan**. Since engagement commenced in 2019, the project team has met regularly with the Moyne Shire Council to discuss matters such as overhead electricity transmission lines, transport routes and associated infrastructure upgrades, cumulative impacts, and project design, development and approval milestones.

Continued engagement with the local community has also occurred during the preparation of the EES, including community information and drop-in sessions in Hexham, Caramut and Ellerslie. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted the ability to carry out in-person engagement activities throughout much of 2020 and 2021. However, during this time, a virtual presence was maintained through the project website, email and phone calls. Updates were provided to the CEC, and project update newsletters were distributed in October 2021, March 2022, May 2022 and December 2022. A leaflet containing frequently asked questions and answers was also distributed in July 2020.

Following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, the project team resumed face-to-face engagement, including the holding of three community drop-in sessions to share information about the EES scoping requirements and gather feedback on the project. Two community update newsletters were subsequently issued to inform residents how feedback had been considered. In 2025, the project team returned to the region to present preliminary findings from specialist studies supporting the EES, provide information about the proposed on-site quarry, and seek further input from the community.

Host landholders and direct neighbours have been engaged regularly by the project team through face-to-face and online meetings, phone calls and email correspondence. These communications have been maintained from the early stages of project development through to the lodgement of the Planning Permit Application and EES. An outline of these activities is provided in Section 7.5.

7.2 Legislative requirements and guidelines

7.2.1 Legislation

Victorian stakeholder engagement-related legislation relevant to the project includes the Victorian *Environment Effects Act 1978* and *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990*:

- Under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*, an EES is required to outline all stakeholder engagement carried out during the development of the EES and present all issues raised by the public, including responses by the proponent.
- Section 39A of the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* is relevant to the proposed quarry, requiring licence holders to consult with the local community during all stages of the quarry's development, including sharing information about any activities that may affect the community and providing the community with reasonable opportunities to express their views.

7.2.2 Guidelines

The project has been developed following the guidance in the Ministerial Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Effects (DTP, 2023b). These guidelines outline the responsibility of the proponent to inform the public and consult with stakeholders, including the need to prepare a consultation plan.

Engagement has also been shaped by Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development: A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers (Lane and Hicks, 2017) and the updated guideline published by DELWP in late July 2021 (DELWP, 2021c). Both documents guide renewable energy developers about how to carry out best practice community engagement and develop a benefit sharing program.

Other guidance documents considered included:

- Planning Guidelines for the development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria (DTP, 2023a)
- Best practice charter for Renewable Energy Developments (Clean Energy Council, 2021)
- Environment Effects Act 1978: EES Consultation Plan Advisory Note (DELWP, 2018)
- A Guide to Benefit Sharing Options for Renewable Energy Projects (Clean Energy Council, 2018a)
- IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation (Engagement Institute)

Wind Prospect is a signatory to the Clean Energy Council's (2021) Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Developments. This charter is a voluntary set of commitments designed to communicate the standards to be upheld in the development of clean energy projects.

In April 2024, the Victorian Government announced a series of reforms to streamline environmental assessments and approvals for renewable energy projects, while supporting biodiversity outcomes. These reforms included the development of new tools and guidelines to assist proponents in designing projects that minimise environmental impacts. In May 2025, the Handbook for the Development of Renewable Energy in Victoria (DEECA, 2025a) was released. The Handbook contains transitional arrangements for projects that commenced assessment under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* prior to its release, and these transitional arrangements apply to the project.

7.2.3 Scoping requirements

The EES scoping requirements include the following activities for stakeholder engagement and consultation:

"Through its EES consultation plan the proponent is to undertake effective engagement that enables the public and stakeholders to understand where there are opportunities for engagement. The proponent needs to provide appropriate opportunities for input and feedback from different stakeholders on the project and EES investigations.

The proponent is responsible for preparing and implementing an EES consultation plan that sets out the approach to engagement. This plan is reviewed and amended in consultation with DTP and the TRG before it is published on the Planning website.¹¹ The consultation plan will:

- identify stakeholders;
- characterise public and stakeholders' interests, concerns and consultation needs, local knowledge and inputs;
- describe consultation methods and schedule; and
- outline how public and stakeholder inputs will be recorded, considered and/or addressed in the preparation of the EES.

Traditional Owner engagement

The EES should be developed with acknowledgement of and respect for Traditional Owners' care for and connection to Country. Through the EES, the proponent should seek to understand the direct and indirect ways in which the project could affect these interests. To this end, the EES should be informed by engagement with Traditional Owners.

The proponent should support and enable culturally appropriate, informed and meaningful engagement with Traditional Owners, including by asking Traditional Owner groups about the engagement processes that would be suitable; endeavouring to develop good working relationships; taking into account and respecting the cultural and communication needs and protocols of communities; engaging early and providing appropriate timeframes to consider and respond to information; and genuinely seeking input and expertise."

In response to the EES scoping requirements, the proponent developed and implemented a Consultation Plan outlining the approach to stakeholder engagement throughout the EES process. This plan was prepared in consultation with DTP and the TRG and published on the DTP website¹.

The plan includes specific measures to support meaningful engagement with the formally recognised Traditional Owner group, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation. Input from the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation has informed both the cultural heritage assessment and broader project planning. The plan also outlines how culturally appropriate engagement was undertaken and how feedback has been considered in the EES.

7.3 Engagement approach

Throughout project development, there has been a commitment to:

- respectful and ongoing engagement with local communities and key stakeholders
- ensuring respectful and timely engagement across a range of mediums and throughout the project's progression from planning through to determination
- designing and delivering effective stakeholder engagement to ensure community members and other stakeholders are informed, consulted and understand how they can be involved and influence project outcomes
- facilitating community participation in the EES process so local knowledge, priorities and expertise could inform the various specialist studies.

These commitments align with the aims of the stakeholder engagement process in Table 7.1.

¹

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/hexham-wind-farm>

Table 7.1 Aims of the stakeholder engagement process

Openness	Awareness	Inclusion
To demonstrate openness , we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proactively provide opportunities to meet with the project team meet with neighbours and stakeholders when requested be open and honest in all communications. 	To demonstrate awareness , we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use a range of communication methods such as community information and drop-in sessions, doorknocks and newsletters target engagement with near neighbours* and the wider community for face-to-face discussions to share information. 	To demonstrate inclusion , we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seek to understand the full range of local opinions consult on specific technical issues with relevant groups attend community engagement committee meetings to discuss the project and respond to issues raised provide a variety of opportunities to source and discuss information (community information and drop-in sessions, doorknocks and newsletters).
Responsiveness	Transparency and integrity	Accountability
To demonstrate responsiveness , we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> acknowledge and respond to all queries and any issues raised provide updates and feedback on project design, assessment results and consultation responses. 	To demonstrate transparency and integrity , we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> request feedback on the project design, including any issues or concerns and suggested mitigation measures provide information with enough time for people to review and provide feedback. 	To demonstrate accountability , we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide contact details (freephone, email, postal address) to facilitate contact from the local community provide information on the potential impacts from the project that could arise and affect residents.

* 'Near neighbours' are defined in Section 7.4, Table 7.2

7.4 Stakeholder identification

Typically, across the wind energy industry, there are two primary categories of project stakeholders; those who would, or are likely to be, affected (positively or negatively) (i.e., affected parties), and those who are unaffected but may have an interest in, or may influence, the project (i.e., interested parties).

Affected parties: Those directly affected by the project, typically (but not always) within (nominally) six kilometres of a wind turbine.

Interested parties: Those interested in the project and/or could affect the project in some way.

A stakeholder consultation database was created for the project and is a live document that evolves with the development of the project. The database includes all stakeholders identified throughout project development and a record of recipients who have been provided with project information.

Communities, groups and individuals within six kilometres of proposed wind turbine locations were identified as 'near neighbours' for more focused engagement. These near neighbours have been kept informed and provided with the opportunity to get involved via newsletters and formal project correspondence, phone calls, emails, door knocks, in-person meetings, attendance at community information sessions and other forms of engagement (see Section 7.5).

Further afield, the 'local community' was defined as being within 10 kilometres of proposed wind turbine locations. Potential impacts such as those relating to the community or amenity are expected to decrease in likelihood and severity with increasing distance. The local community includes the townships of Hexham, Ellerslie and Caramut. Distribution of newsletters to the local community was achieved with the assistance of Moyne Shire Council. Both absentee owners of land and residents received newsletters about the project. Project newsletters were also directly distributed to other stakeholders in a more targeted manner via mail and email (e.g., community groups, the Country Fire Authority, and members of parliament). The local community was encouraged to attend community information sessions and provide input on the project directly through in-region engagement activities.

A dedicated website was established to provide easy access to project information and allow the community to provide anonymous feedback (via 'Have Your Say'), as well as the ability to complete a public opinion survey and contact the project team for more information. The project website can be found at: www.hexhamwindfarm.com.au.

A summary of key project stakeholders is provided in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2 Stakeholder identification

Stakeholder type	Stakeholder description
Affected parties	
Host landowners	There are fourteen landowner families involved in hosting the project and the associated renewable infrastructure.
Neighbouring landowners (within 6 kilometres)	This includes neighbours who share a boundary with the project site, and neighbours with dwellings within six kilometres of proposed wind turbine locations. There are approximately 218 neighbour dwellings within 6 kilometres of a proposed wind turbine.
Local community	The surrounding communities, landowners and residents within 10 kilometres, including residents of Hexham, Caramut and Ellerslie.
Broader community members	The broader regional community within the entire Moyne Shire.
Aboriginal communities and organisations	The relevant Registered Aboriginal Party (Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation).

Stakeholder type	Stakeholder description
Special interest groups	<p>Special interest groups including recreational aviation clubs, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, local schools, Landcare groups, societies, associations and 'friends of' groups, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerial Agricultural Association of Australia • Basalt to Bay Landcare Group • Birdlife Australia • Brolga Recovery Group • Caramut and District Garden Club • Caramut Football Netball Club INC • Caramut Riding Club • Caramut War Memorial Hall Committee Inc. • Cemetery Trusts (Hexham and Ellerslie) • Country Fire Association South West Region – District 5 CFA • Country Women's Association Mortlake Day Branch • Committee for Portland • Ellerslie Landcare and Tree Group • Ellerslie War Memorial Committee • Eumeralla Landcare Group • Gazette Landcare Action Group • Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority • Great South Coast Eventing Association • Hamilton Aero Club • Hexham Community Association • Hexham Environmental Action Group • Hexham Equestrian Centre • Hexham Polo Club • Mortlake College P-12 • Mortlake Lions Club • Mortlake Rotary Club • Portland Aero Club • St Coleman's School • Warrnambool Aero Club • Warrnambool Airport • Warrnambool College • Western District Pony Club • Western Plains Spinners, Weavers and Craft Group • Western Victoria Branch of the Australian Stock Horse Association.

Stakeholder type	Stakeholder description
Business	<p>Local businesses and businesses operating in the local area including agricultural businesses, quarry operators, local aviation operators, and the owners of distribution and transmission infrastructure, and communications infrastructure (communications masts and operators of communications links in the local area around the project) including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGL Energy • AKD Softwood Plantation • AusNet Services • Australian Bluegum Plantations • Australian Communications and Media Authority • BAI Communications • Holcim Australia • NBN Co • Optus Networks • Origin Energy • Powercor • State Emergency Services (South West Region) • Telstra • Caramut Post Office • Caramut Western Hotel and Café • Caramut Store • Caramut Transfer Station • Mortlake Businesses.

Stakeholder type	Stakeholder description
Interested parties	<p>Government organisations</p> <p>Numerous government organisations were identified as interested parties and have been consulted as part of the development of the project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Services Australia • Australian Energy Market Operator • Civil Aviation Safety Authority • Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water • Country Fire Authority • DEECA Forest, Fire and Regions • Department of Defence • DEECA – Earth Resources (formerly Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions – Earth Resources Regulation) • DTP – Heritage Victoria • DTP – Impact Assessment • DTP – Planning Group • DTP – Renewables Planning Team • DTP – Transport Group • Environment Protection Authority Victoria • First Peoples – State Relations (formerly Aboriginal Victoria) • Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority • Land Use Victoria • Parks Victoria • Regional Development Victoria • Royal Australian Air Force • Southern Rural Water • Sustainability Victoria • VicGrid • Wannon Water
Federal, state and local governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local government officers and councillors from Moyne Shire Council • Local government officers and councillors from adjoining shires (Warrnambool City Council and Glenelg Shire Council) • Local government officers and councillors from Southern Grampians Shire Council in relation to proposed transport routes. • Local members of State and Commonwealth government parliaments • State government ministers.

7.5 Stakeholder engagement methods – affected parties

Throughout the project development and EES process a variety of methods, materials and tools were used to engage with potentially affected parties (see Table 7.3). Community or stakeholder concerns, issues and feedback raised were recorded, along with the responses to the matters raised. A summary of responses to key issues and concerns raised by stakeholders during the engagement activities outlined in Table 7.3 is provided in Table 7.6 and in detail under Section 7.8.2. Figure 7.8 provides a timeline of the stakeholder engagement activities that have been adopted and undertaken.

If the project is approved, issues or concerns raised during construction and operation of the wind farm will continue to be recorded and responded to.

Table 7.3 Summary of project communications

Communication methods, materials and tools	Summary
Doorknock of neighbouring dwellings (within 6 kilometres)	A doorknock of neighbouring properties within six kilometres of a proposed wind turbine location was carried out in March 2019 and repeated in August 2019. A total of 216 properties were visited. Each doorknock was followed up by further face-to-face meetings and phone calls as required over the following weeks.
Face-to-face meetings with members of the community	The project team sought to understand and respond to community members who requested further information or expressed concerns about the project. Wherever possible, this involved face-to-face meetings with those people.
Host landowner meetings	Periodic meetings were held with host landowners to provide updates and discuss the project design. Contracts were negotiated with the owners of all land on which the project would be developed. These contracts detail the terms and conditions by which access to land is allowed and parts of these properties that can be used to plan, construct, operate and maintain project infrastructure.
Community engagement committee	<p>Moyne Shire Council established a community engagement committee in June 2019 to provide a forum for direct engagement between the project team, representatives from the local community, and Moyne Shire Council (including councillors and staff).</p> <p>The purpose of the community engagement committee is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop strategies to create an effective flow of information to and from the community about the project• act as a conduit for information flow between the Council, Wind Prospect, the community, and other stakeholders about the progress of the project• help in the resolution of issues that may arise during the pre-application, application, and if necessary, during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the project. <p>Following the 2024 local government elections, existing CEC membership was dissolved in line with Council governance procedures. In November 2024, Cr. Karen Foster was appointed as Council's representative on the Hexham Wind Farm CEC. In early 2025, nominations were called for community membership of the CEC, and in March 2025, Moyne Shire Council appointed five community members to the committee for the new term.</p> <p>Since its formation, at the time of preparing this chapter, 18 meetings with the community engagement committee have been held to date, with meetings expected to continue.</p>

Communication methods, materials and tools	Summary
Community information sessions	<p>The project team hosted initial community information sessions on 9 and 10 May 2019 at Caramut Hall and Ellerslie Hall (see Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2), 110 people attended these sessions.</p> <p>A pause on face-to-face engagement occurred during May 2019 and June 2022 to account for COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>A further three drop-in information sessions were held in June 2022 over two days at Hexham, Caramut and Ellerslie to outline the EES process and explain how residents could be involved.</p> <p>All community information sessions were promoted via a newsletter to residents within 10 kilometres of the project two weeks before the events and via the project website.</p> <p>Specialist consultants attended the initial information sessions and discussed project matters relating to their area of expertise with attendees. The specialist consultants included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a noise expert who provided a demonstration so that attendees could experience noise levels at different distances from a wind farm • an aviation expert available to discuss aerial spraying and aerial firefighting • two flora and fauna experts who were also able to collect information about the local area from attendees. <p>Display information included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key facts about the project, including the proposed number of wind turbines and the wind turbine tip height • information about Wind Prospect • the wind farm project development lifecycle • a summary of available research about wind farms and health • a summary of the environmental and economic benefits of the project • information about fire prevention and mitigation • a summary of available research about wind farms and property values • a summary of the various impact assessments that would be undertaken • information about the proposed Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program. <p>Six members of the project team were also available to greet attendees, discuss the project and respond to queries. Surveys were available to gather information about attendees' views of the project, note any issues or concerns, seek local information about flora and fauna, and provide feedback on the proposed Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program.</p> <p>In July 2023, the project team hosted additional drop-in sessions at Caramut, Ellerslie and Hexham to coincide with the release of the draft EES scoping requirements for the EES. A total of eight community members attended these sessions. The purpose of the sessions was to provide information about the EES process, encourage community input during the public comment period (10 July – 28 July 2023), and share updates on the project.</p>

Communication methods, materials and tools	Summary
	<p>These sessions were promoted via a project newsletter delivered to residents within 10 kilometres of the project site, and via the project website. Display materials included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a fact sheet outlining the EES process • copies of the draft EES scoping requirements • an overview of the proposed Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program • hard copy surveys to inform the Social Impact Assessment being conducted by Umwelt • project newsletter #8 • an updated layout of the proposed project. <p>In May 2025, the project team recommenced engagement ahead of the public exhibition of the EES. Engagement activities included attending the Mortlake Markets and hosting three drop-in sessions in Hexham, Caramut and Ellerslie. A total of 23 people engaged with the project team across the drop-in sessions and the Mortlake Markets. These sessions aimed to update the community on the status of the project, expected exhibition timelines for the EES, and to provide information about the completed impact assessments and proposed mitigation measures. The sessions were promoted through a project newsletter (distributed to residents within 10 kilometres of the project), the project website, an advertisement in the <i>Mortlake Dispatch</i> and promotion on social media through local community group Facebook pages. Display materials included fact sheets summarising the key findings of the impact assessments across a range of topics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal cultural heritage • Brolgas • Flora and fauna • Historic heritage • Landscape and visual • Noise and vibration • Socio-economic and community • Traffic and transport. <p>A summary sheet outlining the proposed on-site quarry was also provided. Members of the project team were present at all events to engage directly with attendees and respond to questions.</p>
Public opinion surveys	<p>Public opinion surveys were provided to all neighbouring landowners within 10 kilometres of the project when the project was launched. These surveys were supplied via a combination of door knocking activities, information sessions, mailouts, and face-to-face meetings.</p> <p>A total of 121 opinion surveys were received, which contributed to an understanding of the key issues and concerns of local stakeholders (see Section 7.8.1 for a summary of the results).</p>
Project newsletters (Figure 7.6)	<p>Between 2019 and the finalisation of the EES, 13 newsletters were posted to landowners within 10 kilometres of the project site. These newsletters provided updates on work being done, the latest project design, and invitations to information sessions and to attend the drop-in sessions. Copies of all newsletters and other material are posted on the project website.</p>
Project fact sheets (Figure 7.7)	<p>A series of fact sheets were developed to provide accessible, easy to understand information about key aspects of the project. Topics included the EES process, impact assessment findings (including Aboriginal cultural heritage, flora and fauna, noise and vibration, landscape and visual, traffic and transport and socio-economic impacts), as well as the proposed Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program. Fact sheets were made available at community drop-in sessions, market stalls and via the project website to support informed community participation during the EES preparation.</p>
Project website (Figure 7.5)	<p>A project website (www.hexhamwindfarm.com.au) has been maintained throughout the project development, providing updates and access to key information to the general public. Digital copies of the EES, associated impact assessments and summary fact sheets have been made available on the website to support public access and review.</p>

Communication methods, materials and tools	Summary
Telephone, email and post	<p>A toll-free phone number has been maintained, providing a line of communication for the public to contact the project team. A project email address and postal address have also been available to the public via the project website and newsletters. These avenues of contacting the project team will continue throughout the EES exhibition and beyond, although people will be encouraged to make formal submissions regarding the project's EES and development applications via the proper processes (see Chapter 1 – <i>Introduction</i>).</p>
Letters/emails	<p>Letters and emails have been used throughout the project development phase as a key method of keeping stakeholders informed and offering opportunities for direct engagement. Early in the project, introductory letters were sent to key interest groups in the local community, including Aboriginal groups and local businesses.</p> <p>In March 2025, the project team also wrote to residents living within 3 kilometres of the proposed on-site quarry to provide information about the quarry component of the project and invite participation in upcoming engagement activities. This communication was intended to ensure that potentially affected residents were aware of the proposal and had the opportunity to ask questions or raise any concerns directly with the project team.</p> <p>In April 2025, the project team wrote to key stakeholders to provide an update on the status of the project ahead of the planned community drop-in sessions. These letters also invited stakeholders to participate in a face-to-face briefing with the project team. Recipients included the Chief Executive Officers and Mayors of the three local councils bordering the project site—Moyné Shire Council, Warrnambool City Council, Glenelg Shire Council, —as well as state and federal elected representatives, including Roma Britnell MP (Member for South-West Coast), Emma Kealy MP (Member for Lowan), and Dan Tehan MP (Federal Member for Wannon). A letter was also provided to the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.</p>
Excursion to an operating wind farm	<p>Two public excursions were made to the operational Murra Warra Wind Farm, held on Saturday 9 November and Wednesday 13 November 2019, to enable community members to experience wind turbines up close and at specific distances from wind turbine locations. This excursion was arranged in response to feedback about the proposed tip height of the project turbines. Wind turbines at the Murra Warra Wind Farm have a tip height of 220 metres (40 metres lower than the potential maximum tip height of the project wind turbines).</p> <p>Subsequent site visits to neighbour operational wind farms have been requested by two near neighbours concerned about potential noise impacts. At the time of preparing this report, the team was planning for these site tours to take place.</p>
Referral documents	<p>Project referrals were submitted, advising relevant authorities of the intention to develop the project, and containing an assessment of the potential impacts of the project relevant to that authority. These referrals were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EES referral, submitted to the Minister for Planning under the <i>Environment Effects Act 1978</i> in March 2022 • EPBC Act referral, submitted to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> in June 2022. <p>The referral documents were made public on the respective government department's websites, allowing members of the public to find out more about the project and provide feedback.</p>
Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program flyer	<p>A four-page flyer detailing the proposed Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program was posted to all residences within six kilometres of the project in December 2020 and was made available on the project website.</p>

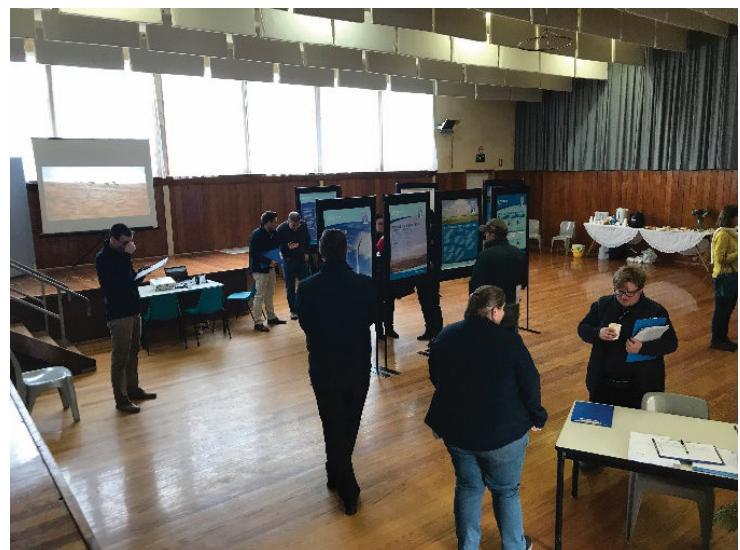


Figure 7.1
Community information session at
Caramut Hall in May 2019



Figure 7.2
Community information session at
Ellerslie Hall in May 2019



Figure 7.3
Community information session at
Hexham in May 2025



Figure 7.4 Community information session at Ellerslie in May 2025

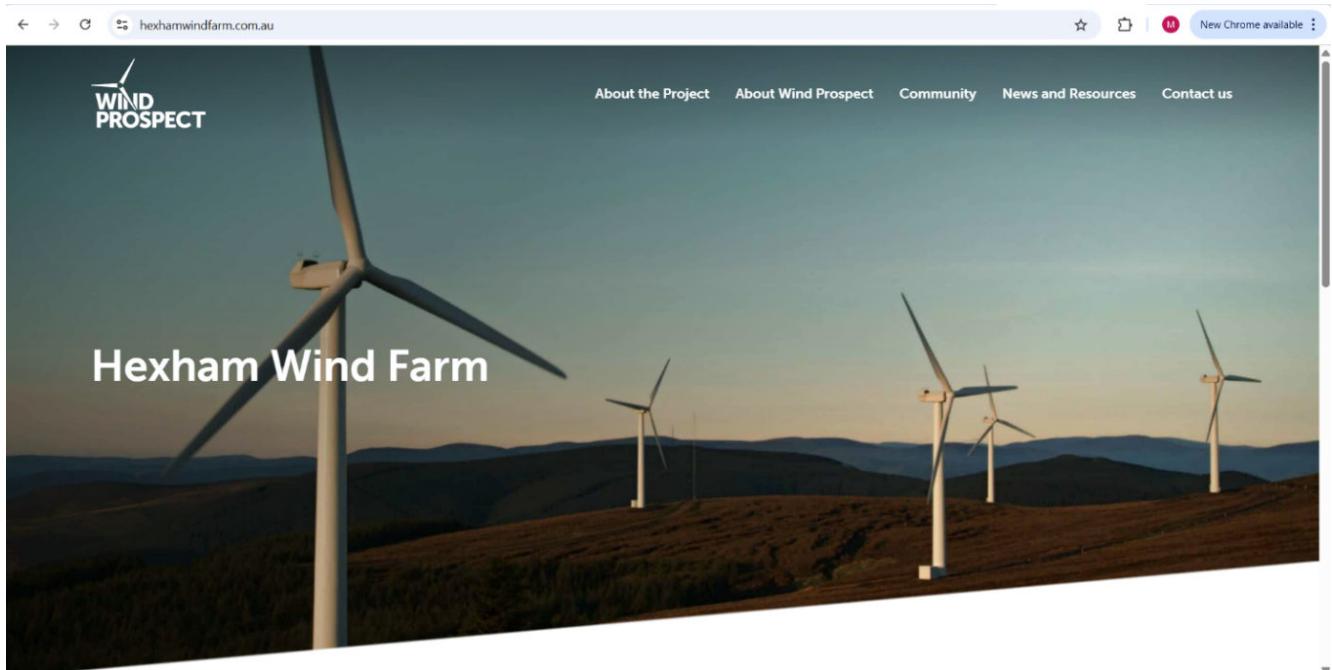


Figure 7.5 Project website



Figure 7.6 Project newsletters



Figure 7.7 Project fact sheets



Hexham Wind Farm Community Engagement Activities*



*These activities represent the formal community engagement activities for the project only. Ongoing engagement with neighbours and other key stakeholders was conducted in addition to these activities. Activities were complemented with ongoing communications including emails, newsletters, fact sheets, website updates and more as described in this chapter.

Figure 7.8 Timeline of Community Engagement Activities

7.6 Stakeholder engagement methods – interested parties

Many of the methods, materials and tools designed for communicating with affected parties were also used to communicate with interested parties. For example, interested parties were sent newsletters and generally also invited to attend information sessions and the Murra Warra Wind Farm tour. A site visit was hosted for the TRG members at the first TRG meeting on 1 December 2022 to visit key points of interest and provide an opportunity for group members to view the project site and surroundings. Figure 7.8 provides a timeline of the stakeholder engagement activities that have been adopted and undertaken.

7.6.1 Elected representatives

Project briefings were provided periodically to Moyne Shire councillors and local state and Commonwealth members of parliament to introduce them to the project, seek their feedback and provide updates. In June 2025, the project team provided a face-to-face briefing to Emma Kealy MP, Member for Lowan, to update her on the status of the project and key themes emerging from recent community engagement. Two councillors and a technical officer from Moyne Shire Council are also members of the project's community engagement committee.

7.6.2 Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner

The office of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, formerly the National Wind Farm Commissioner, plays a role in facilitating the referral and resolution of complaints from residents regarding proposed or operational wind farms and other large energy infrastructure projects. In 2024, a new commissioner, Mr Tony Mahar, was appointed. Wind Prospect has provided periodic briefings to the Commissioner's office, and in May 2025, wrote to the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (AEIC) to provide an update on all projects currently under development, including the Hexham Wind Farm. In October, Wind Prospect met with advisers from Mr Mahar's office to provide a briefing on all projects in development, including the Hexham Wind Farm. At the time of writing, the Commissioner's office has not advised Wind Prospect of any complaints received in relation to the Hexham Wind Farm project.

7.6.3 Technical Reference Group

In accordance with the EES scoping requirements, DTP (formerly DELWP) convened a TRG to advise the project team and the Department on the scoping and adequacy of the specialist studies, supporting the EES, and the co-ordination of statutory approval processes. The TRG provided input and advice on:

- applicable policies, strategies and statutory provisions
- EES scoping requirements
- the design and adequacy of specialist studies supporting the EES
- the proponent's public information and stakeholder consultation program for the EES process
- responses to issues arising from the EES investigations
- the technical adequacy and completeness of draft EES documentation
- coordination of statutory processes.

Members of the TRG represent government agencies and regional authorities that have a statutory or policy interest in the project, as well as Moyne Shire Council. Representatives of the TRG are:

- DTP – Heritage Victoria (formerly Heritage Victoria)
- DTP – Impact Assessment Unit
- DTP – Energy Assessments
- DTP – Transport Group (formerly Department of Transport)
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action – Forest, Fire and Regions
- Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (formerly Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment)
- First Peoples – State Relations
- Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation
- Environment Protection Authority (Victoria)
- Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
- Moyne Shire Council
- Southern Rural Water.

TRG meetings have provided a forum for the project team to present key findings from the various specialist studies, respond to questions from government and agency stakeholders and ensure early coordination around technical and regulatory matters. Draft specialist studies and EES chapters were provided to TRG members for review and comment prior to finalisation. While group members were consulted during EES preparation, there have also been many other discussions held with TRG member organisations since 2022.

Between December 2022 and August 2025, eleven TRG meetings were convened by DTP. As part of the initial engagement, a site tour was held in December 2022 to familiarise TRG members with the project site and its local context. In addition to these formal meetings, the project team held ongoing discussions with individual TRG member organisations to address project specific issues and respond to information requests throughout the preparation of the EES.

7.6.4 Government organisations

Numerous government organisations, as listed in Table 7.2, were engaged about the project. Some, but not all, of these government organisations were represented on the TRG. Those that were not represented in the TRG were engaged about relevant impact assessments as indicated in Table 7.5 in Section 7.7.

7.6.5 Moyne Shire Council motions

Moyne Shire Council is a key project stakeholder that represents the population of the wider Moyne Shire. With several wind farm projects having previously been developed in the shire, and more in development, Moyne Shire Council has sought to ensure the interests of the community are reflected in the development of the projects, and that the community benefits in a meaningful way from the proposed development. Wind Prospect has monitored the resolutions passed by Moyne Shire Council in recent years and has sought to work with Council to address the concerns they and their constituents have raised.

On 6 September 2022, following an extensive consultation process, Moyne Shire Council adopted a revised position on wind farm development within the Shire (Moyne Shire Council, 2022). This position strongly recommends that the Victorian Government pause the issuing of new wind farm planning permits until strategic land use planning within the proposed South West Renewable Energy Zone (SWREZ) is completed in consultation with affected councils and communities. The position included a range of planning considerations, such as expanded buffer distances, cumulative impact assessment, caps on development, stronger expectations around community benefits, undergrounding of shared use of transmission infrastructure, protection of agricultural land and biodiversity, and formalised decommissioning requirements.

Wind Prospect has reviewed and considered Council's position in the development of the Hexham Wind Farm, including through project design, neighbour engagement and the design of the Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program. Table 7.4 outlines relevant Council resolutions and Table 7.6 in Section 7.8.2 summaries the project's responses to key themes raised.

A review of Moyne Shire Council's published meeting minutes was undertaken in December 2025. For the period between 30 April 2024 and 16 December 2025, no new motions relating specifically to the Hexham Wind Farm were recorded. Council retains formal minutes for the previous 12 months on its public website.

Table 7.4 Moyne Shire Council resolutions relating to wind farms

Theme	Key issues	Meeting date
Transmission Lines	Council resolved to advocate on behalf of Moyne Shire residents to the Victorian Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate and the Minister of Planning to implement the recommendations from the 2017 National Wind Farm Commissioners Annual Report to ensure transmission lines, substations and other related electrical infrastructure be subject to appropriate and detailed planning permit requirements, as part of the overall planning permit of wind farm projects. Council then requested that works be halted on any new and proposed transmission lines until planning permit requirements were implemented.	24 April 2018
	Council resolved to request the Minister for Planning to ensure the State Government makes immediate planning reforms to safeguard future planning and development of wind farm transmission lines, specifically the Victorian Regulatory and Planning Framework. After a workshop with key representatives, key concerns raised involved the lack of a planning framework for wind farm transmission lines that may negatively impact local communities.	26 June 2018
	Council adopted the position to write to the Minister for Planning to consider their request that, given the significant number of wind farms that may be constructed in Moyne Shire in the future, underground transmission lines be mandatory for all future wind farm projects in the Shire.	23 April 2019
	Council revised its position statement on wind farm development, stating that planning should consider undergrounding of high-voltage power lines, where feasible, or sharing of power line infrastructure between wind farm developments where not feasible.	6 September 2022

Theme	Key issues	Meeting date
The cumulative impact of wind farms	<p>Council resolved to oppose any further developments of wind farms in the Shire until recommendations from the 2017 National Wind Farm Commissioner's Annual Report to Parliament are implemented.</p> <p>Council also wrote to local members requesting an urgent meeting with the Minister for Planning and concerned residents from Mortlake/Hawkesdale to discuss the cumulative impact of wind farms in the Shire and issues with transmission lines.</p>	27 November 2018
	<p>Council resolved to reaffirm its existing position (from the 27 November 2018 Council Meeting) regarding new wind farms in Moyne Shire and to seek further discussion with State Government to implement the recommendations of the National Wind Farm Commissioner's report.</p>	5 August 2020
	<p>Council revised its position statement on wind farm development, stating that planning should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cumulative impacts of wind farm development, including impacts to flora and fauna, amenity (visual and noise) and traffic • a cap on wind farm development within Moyne Shire, including consideration of the number, location and density of turbines, and cumulative environmental and social impacts. 	6 September 2022
	<p>Council resolved to request that the Minister for Planning consider amending Clause 52.32 of the Planning Scheme in support of setback distances detailed in the 2018 Annual Report by the Office of the National Wind Farm Commissioner. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a minimum setback of 1.5 kilometres from residents to the nearest turbine to support a consistent noise limit • for turbines with a tip height greater than 200 metres, to have a 2-kilometre setback to reduce visual and amenity impacts • a 5-kilometre setback between wind farms and townships/city boundary to preserve amenity and provide flexibility for future planning growth. <p>Council also resolved to write to the Minister for Planning asking for consideration of amending the setback distances to a wind turbine and the host property's boundary.</p>	24 September 2019
Setbacks	<p>Council resolved to request that the Minister for Planning consider a 5-kilometre setback from the Hawkesdale town boundary as part of the planning permit for the Hawkesdale Wind Farm. The Hawkesdale and District Development Action Committee was concerned about the proximity of the turbines to the Hawkesdale township and requested that Moyne Shire oppose the Hawkesdale Wind Farm, especially in its current form.</p>	28 July 2020
	<p>Council revised its position statement on wind farm development, stating that planning should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wind farm buffers of 5 kilometres from towns and settlements, 2 kilometres from houses and 1 kilometre from neighbouring property boundaries • buffers around airstrips and airports, and heights of turbines in relation to Minimum Safe Altitude levels and Obstacle Limitation Surfaces. 	6 September 2022

Theme	Key issues	Meeting date
Community Benefits	Council facilitated combined discussions between Global Power Generation, Woolnorth Wind Farms, and Wind Prospect to develop a more holistic approach to community funding and benefits from wind farms in the Moyne Shire.	23 July 2019
	Council revised its position statement on wind farm development, stating that planning should consider long-term economic and social benefits, including the use of local businesses and employment opportunities during wind farm construction and operation.	6 September 2022
	Council passed a motion that the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government for the implementation and communication of a standard approach to a Community Benefits Plan that will inform part of the proposed Renewable Energy Zones and that the Community Benefits Plan be mandated to include legacy infrastructure provision for local communities.	
Renewable Planning Permits	Council revised its position statement on wind farm development, to strongly recommend that the Victorian Government pause the issuing of new wind farm planning permits until strategic land use planning within the South West Renewable Energy Zone (SWREZ) had been carried out. The position included considerations regarding expanded buffer distances, cumulative impact assessments, caps on development, stronger expectations around community benefits, undergrounding of shared use of transmission infrastructure, protection of agricultural land and biodiversity and formalised decommissioning requirements.	6 September 2022

7.6.6 Registered Aboriginal Parties

The Eastern Maar Peoples are the traditional owners and hold native title over the proposed project site. The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) manages native title rights for the Eastern Maar Peoples and is a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP). Wind Prospect has been engaging with the RAP and the state government department, First Peoples- State Relations (FP-SR) since 2019 on the project and development of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan. The proponent has also engaged the support of indigenous heritage advisors to continue consultation with EMAC in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage and biocultural heritage values as part of the EES process.

7.7 Engagement in relation to specialist studies

Each of the specialist studies carried out for this EES has included engagement with key stakeholders. The TRG reviewed the draft reports prepared by technical specialists which included the consultation performed and advised on the adequacy of the studies in terms of consistency with industry practice standards of methodology and analysis. Table 7.5 summarises the engagement carried out to help inform the specialist studies.

Table 7.5 Engagement in relation to specialist studies

Specialist study	Stakeholders	Form of engagement
Flora and fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birdlife Australia • Brolga Recovery Group • Landowners and neighbouring landowners/managers • Local community • DEECA • DTP • TRG • Australian Bluegum Plantation • AKD Softwood Plantation • Victorian Speleological Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 8 – <i>Biodiversity and habitat</i>. • All landowners and near neighbours (including absentee landowners) and the local community, which includes the owners of land within 10 kilometres of a proposed wind turbine, were invited to share local knowledge (particularly about Brolga) through an interview and survey carried out by ecologists. • Flora and fauna consultation interviews and surveys took place at the Ellerslie and Caramut Halls from 12-16 August 2019 and were attended by 30 local community members. Follow-up calls were made to capture information from three local community members unable to attend. An additional meeting with a neighbouring landowner was held on 15 December 2021. AKD Softwood Plantation and the Australian Bluegum Plantation also took part in this interview process. • DEECA Forest, Fire and Regions (were engaged intensively throughout the development of the project, particularly between 2020 and 2022). • Birdlife Australia were consulted as part of the specialist assessment for the project. • The Brolga Recovery Group is a key interest group and has been provided with project updates. • A summary fact sheet outlining the findings of the specialist study was prepared and shared with the community at the May 2025 drop-in sessions to support understanding and invite feedback.
Soil and Landform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geological Society of Australia • EPA (Victoria) • Bureau of Meteorology • Landowners • TRG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 13 – <i>Landforms and soils</i>. • Background review (desktop assessment) of historical information including published geomorphological and geology information for the area including EPA databases, and Geological Surveys of Victoria mapping was undertaken. • Background review informed field surveys for the assessment. • Wind Prospect have engaged with relevant landowners and stakeholders on the findings of this impact assessment.

Specialist study	Stakeholders	Form of engagement
Landscape and visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEECA • DTP • Moyne Shire Council • Near neighbours • TRG • Local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 14 – Landscape and visual. • A summary fact sheet and visual montages taken from public viewpoints near the project outlining the findings of the specialist study was prepared and shared with the community at the May 2025 drop-in sessions to support understanding and invite feedback. • Neighbouring landowners identified as potentially having visual impacts from their dwellings were offered an in-person visual impact and mitigation options assessment • In August 2025, in-person meetings were held with participating near neighbours to share visual montages taken from private properties (where applicable) and the findings from the visual impact assessment. At these meetings, the team shared whether their property was predicted in the assessment have high, medium or low visual impact, and whether potential mitigation measures could be considered if the project were to proceed.
Noise and vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA (Victoria) • Near neighbours • Moyne Shire Council • TRG • Local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 17 – Noise and vibration. • Background noise monitoring locations were arranged in consultation with neighbouring residents with preference being given to locations with the highest predicted noise levels. Noise logging data has been used as part of the Noise assessment and specialist study. • A summary fact sheet outlining the findings of the specialist study was prepared and shared with the community at the May 2025 drop-in sessions to support understanding and invite feedback. • Consultation with near neighbours and local community attendees was carried out during information sessions in July 2023 and, in May 2025 the preliminary findings of the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment was shared with the community through in person conversations and a fact sheet on the topic. • In August 2025, the noise specialist and Wind Prospect held face to face meetings with participating near neighbours to discuss the findings of the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, the readings from the background noise loggers and how these are considered in the preparation of the assessment, and any potential noise mitigation measures.

Specialist study	Stakeholders	Form of engagement
Aboriginal cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Peoples – State Relations (formerly Aboriginal Victoria) Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation Registered Aboriginal Party TRG Local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 18 – <i>Aboriginal cultural heritage</i>. Background review (desktop assessment), field surveys (standard assessment) and subsurface excavations (complex assessment) were undertaken. A summary fact sheet outlining the findings of the specialist study was prepared and shared with the community at the May 2025 drop-in sessions to support understanding and invite feedback. Ongoing stakeholder engagement has been conducted with the EMAC RAP and the FP-SR in regards to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Biocultural Heritage Values impact assessments.
Historic heritage (non-Aboriginal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage Victoria Moyne Shire Council Landowners TRG Local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 19 – <i>Historical cultural heritage</i>. A summary fact sheet outlining the findings of the specialist study was prepared and shared with the community at the May 2025 drop-in sessions to support understanding and invite feedback.
Traffic and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host landowners and near neighbours Moyne Shire Council Southern Grampians Shire Council Regional Roads Victoria DTP – Transport Group TRG Local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 25 – <i>Traffic and transport</i>. A summary fact sheet and poster board outlining the findings of the specialist study was prepared and shared with the community at the May 2025 drop-in sessions to support understanding and invite feedback. As part of their representation on the TRG, Moyne Shire Council, Southern Grampians Shire Council and DTP were engaged with regards to traffic and transport on the project.
Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aerial Agricultural Association of Australia Air Services Australia Department of Defence Country Fire Authority Civil Aviation Safety Authority DTP Landowners and near neighbours with air strips (3) Royal Australian Air Force Warrnambool Airport and Warrnambool Regional Airport Reference Group TRG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 22 – <i>Aviation</i>. Wind Prospect has met with the operator of Warrnambool Airport (Warrnambool City Council) and the Warrnambool Airport Reference Group to discuss the potential aviation impacts of the project and suggested mitigation measures. There are two neighbouring landowners with airstrips on their properties. In November 2025 the project team consulted these landowners on the project and the results of the Impact Assessment.

Specialist study	Stakeholders	Form of engagement
Surface water and groundwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host Landowners • Moyne Shire Council • DEECA • DTP • EPA (Victoria) • Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority • Southern Rural Water • TRG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 11 – Groundwater and Chapter 12 – Surface water. • Southern Rural Water were engaged on several occasions to discuss potential impacts of the project on groundwater with specific reference to the proposed on-site quarry which is likely to encounter groundwater.
Socio-economic and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host Landowners • Near neighbours • Businesses • Moyne Shire Council • DTP • TRG • Local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 21 – Socio-economic. • The Social and Economic Impact Assessment (provided in Appendix I) outlines the engagement that was carried out to inform this assessment. This consultation is separate from the community and stakeholder engagement approach and methodology outlined in this report. • Further detail, including the proposed Social Impact Management Framework is outlined in Chapter 21 – Socio-economic. • A summary fact sheet outlining the findings of the specialist study was prepared and shared with the community at the May 2025 drop-in sessions to support understanding and invite feedback.
Electromagnetic interference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AusNet Services • Australian Communications and Media Authority • BAI Communications • Emergency Services • Optus Networks • NBN Co • Powercor • Telstra • TRG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialist study was undertaken to inform the EES. The results of the assessment are summarised in Chapter 24 – Electromagnetic interference. • Communications providers were engaged seeking feedback about potential electromagnetic interference impacts from the project.

Specialist study	Stakeholders	Form of engagement
On-site quarry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near neighbours • Host landowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A <i>Preliminary draft Quarry Work Plan</i> is provided as an attachment to the EES (Attachment II). • Engagement was undertaken with near neighbours and a host landowner of the proposed on-site quarry. • Engagement request for meetings with near neighbours and the host landholder was sent via formal correspondence in 2025. • A summary fact sheet on the on-site quarry was prepared and shared with the community at the May 2025 drop-in sessions to support understanding and invite feedback. • Engagement activities to inform an addendum report for the social and economic impact assessment including in-person engagement with nine landholders within three kilometres of the site was carried out in mid-June 2025. • The feedback from this engagement is captured under an addendum <i>Social and Economic Impact Assessment</i> provided in Appendix I. • A quarry community engagement plan as per the MRSD Act would be required as part of the final Quarry Workplan. This Workplan will be developed after the Minister's Assessment of the EES.

7.8 Engagement outcomes

7.8.1 Neighbour opinion poll

As part of the public launch of the proposed project, a door knock at all dwellings within six kilometres of a project wind turbine was undertaken, and neighbours were asked for their opinions about the proposed project. The door knocks took place in April and August of 2019 and recorded 178 opinions of owners of habitable dwellings within this area. Of the respondents, 111 were supportive or neutral toward the project, 10 were undecided and 57 objected to the project. Forty landowners could not be contacted during the door knocks, so their opinions are unknown.

Public opinion surveys were also provided to all neighbouring landowners within 10 kilometres of the project site and was available to access to provide feedback through the project website from 2019 to early 2025. This survey recorded 121 opinions of the owners within this area, with 76 respondents supportive of the project, 20 neutral, undecided or required further information regarding the project, and 25 objected to the project.

Not all respondents provided reasons for their opinion about the proposed project. However, where they did respond, their comments were noted and the results of the survey identifying the key concerns of neighbouring landowners are presented in Table 7.6. The most reported concerns included noise, visual, cumulative, and traffic impacts, as well as impacts on property values.

7.8.2 Issue identification

Responses to the key issues and concerns raised by stakeholders during the engagement activities (outlined in Table 7.3) are summarised in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6 Summary of responses to key issues and concerns raised by stakeholders

Key issues raised	Response
Noise Concerns about noise associated with the operation of the project, including cumulative impacts from the nearby proposed and existing wind farms	<p>In line with the Victoria Planning Provisions, noise impacts of wind farm proposals are to be assessed in accordance with the New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics – Wind Farm Noise. The project complies with the New Zealand Standard, which specifies that sound levels associated with wind farms should not exceed a 40 dB(A) ($LA_{90(10min)}$) noise limit at noise sensitive locations (outdoors).</p> <p>An <i>Environmental Noise and Vibration Assessment</i> (Appendix E1) has been prepared by acoustic specialists Marshall Day Acoustics as part of the EES process to assess potential construction and operational noise and vibration impacts, including cumulative effects, and to identify measures to manage potential impacts at sensitive receptors. The results of these assessments are summarised in Chapter 17 – <i>Noise and vibration</i>.</p> <p>An independent peer review of the noise and vibration impact assessment has been conducted by an independent acoustic specialist Appendix E3 – <i>Environmental Noise and Vibration Assessment Peer Review</i> to assess whether the methodology and assessment conducted in the acoustic impact assessment was a complete assessment of the potential impacts of the project.</p> <p>If the project is approved, a detailed Operational Noise and Vibration Management Plan would be prepared for the project in addition to the pre- and post-construction noise assessments. This Plan, which would be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority, would detail procedures to be followed if any noise complaints are received (as required by the Environment Protection Regulations 2021).</p>

Key issues raised	Response
<p>Visual and landscape impacts</p> <p>Some local residents raised concerns that with existing and proposed neighbouring wind farms, there will be too many wind turbines and overhead powerlines visible in the local area which could change the character of the area, making it more of an industrial landscape</p>	<p>The project is restricting new overhead powerlines to be contained within the project site in response to concerns raised by local residents and Moyne Shire that overhead powerlines would cause significant visual impacts and potential safety risks.</p> <p>A four-kilometre wind turbine exclusion buffer of the Caramut Township Zone and three-kilometre wind turbine exclusion buffers of both the Hexham and Ellerslie Township Zones have been applied. These are areas where a large proportion of dwellings (86 out of 218) are located within six kilometres of the project site.</p> <p>A 1.5-kilometre turbine-free buffer of neighbouring landowner dwellings is part of the design, which is in excess of the one-kilometre buffer required under the Victoria Planning requirements. A two-kilometre turbine-free buffer has been put in place at some non-involved landowner dwellings in direct response to feedback from those neighbouring residents.</p> <p>Photomontages depicting what the project would look like once constructed were prepared for near neighbours and at public viewing points to aid consideration of potential visual impacts and inform further discussion with local residents.</p> <p>A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Appendix F1) was conducted by specialists as a part of the EES process to assess potential landscape and visual impacts (including via new photomontages), and to identify measures to manage potential impacts at sensitive receptors. The findings of this assessment are presented in Chapter 14 – Landscape and visual.</p>
<p>Damage to roads</p> <p>Some local residents and Moyne Shire Council raised concerns that construction of the project could damage roads and create safety risks</p>	<p>A temporary on-site quarry is proposed to internalise traffic and reduce the number of vehicles travelling between external quarries and the project site, should the project be approved.</p> <p>A Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment (Appendix G) was carried out conducted by specialists as a part of the EES process to assess potential impacts on the local road network, including an assessment of the existing road conditions. The results of this assessment are summarised in Chapter 25 – Traffic and transport. The assessment identifies roads requiring upgrading to allow for the construction of the project and develop management measures to ensure the project leaves the local road network in an equivalent or improved state than before construction starts.</p> <p>A condition assessment of the road network would be done before construction starts and again after construction is completed to ensure the road network is remediated as agreed with Regional Roads Victoria and Moyne Shire Council.</p> <p>A detailed Traffic Management Plan would be developed in consultation with, and endorsed by, the responsible authority before the start of construction.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with the community and Moyne Shire Council would be carried out, well before the commencement of any road upgrades and traffic changes.</p>

Key issues raised	Response
<p>Property values</p> <p>Some local residents are concerned the project will devalue their properties and consider their properties to be 'their super'. That is, the sale of their properties would fund their retirement</p>	<p>Wind Prospect offered to provide available research about the potential impact of wind farms on property values to local residents and offered to discuss options for benefit sharing. A summary of the research available was displayed at the information sessions in May 2019 and drop-in sessions June 2022.</p> <p>Anecdotally, numerous sales have occurred of landowner and near neighbour properties in recent years, including properties adjoining or very close to the project site as well as many properties within the project site. There has been no indication the project has impacted the contract price or level of interest in any of those properties. While the project has not yet received planning approval, it has been publicly known since 2019 when community and stakeholder engagement commenced. Sales have occurred during times when there has been active communication about the project. A Social and Economic Impact Assessment (Appendix I) was carried out to assess potential social and economic impacts and identify management measures to reduce potential negative impacts and capture positive effects. The results of this assessment are summarised in Chapter 21 – Socio-economic. A substantial Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program has been developed that aligns with DELWP's Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development: A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers (2021c).</p> <p>An initial draft of the Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program was refined in response to feedback from the local community and other stakeholders.</p> <p>If the project is permitted to proceed, the Project investor would be responsible for carrying out the commitments already made with community with regards to benefit sharing in the region, and would work with the community, Moyne Shire Council and other stakeholders to determine appropriate governance around how the fund is managed.</p>
<p>Cumulative impacts</p> <p>Some members of the local community are concerned about potential cumulative impacts from the development of the project and existing and approved wind farm projects in Moyne Shire</p>	<p>The potential cumulative impacts of the project and nearby existing and approved wind farm projects were addressed by specialists in their impact assessments, where appropriate. Potential cumulative impact assessments related to noise, biodiversity, landscape and visual, and traffic (from other operating or proposed wind farms) were considered.</p> <p>The project design complies with regulated noise limits taking into account other existing and proposed wind farms as well as other planned developments in the region.</p> <p>Potential cumulative landscape and visual impacts, considering other existing and proposed wind farms in the area, were assessed based on sequential views (e.g., views of wind farms driving along a road, seen one after another) and simultaneous views (i.e., two or more wind farms visible at the same time, from one location).</p>

Key issues raised	Response
Aviation	<p>Some local residents are concerned about the potential impact of the project on their ability to apply fertiliser and weed and pest control via aerial application, and also the potential impact on aerial firefighting</p> <p>Engagement with local residents who raised these concerns has sought to assess potential impacts on their aerial operations and the options available to address these impacts in their specific circumstances.</p> <p>An Aviation Impact Assessment (Appendix O) has been conducted by specialists as a part of the EES to assess potential impacts on aviation activities and to identify measures to manage potential impacts. The assessment findings are summarised in Chapter 22 – Aviation.</p> <p>Meteorological monitoring masts are more difficult to see than wind turbines. To address this risk, it is proposed that all meteorological monitoring masts will be marked in accordance with the National Airports Safeguarding Framework (National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group, 2012) Guideline D: Managing the risk to aviation safety of wind turbine installations (wind farms)/wind monitoring towers, except for the strobe light, and the base around the outer guy wires will be marked in a contrasting colour to the ground.</p> <p>The Country Fire Authority's Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (2025) state that as long as wind turbines are no less than 300 metres apart there is adequate distance for aircraft to operate around a wind energy facility given the appropriate weather and terrain conditions. Fire suppression aircraft operate under visual flight rules and as such, fire suppression aircraft would only operate in areas where there is no smoke and can operate during the day or night. Wind turbines at the project would be at least 300 metres apart.</p> <p>The findings from the Aviation Impact Assessment do not predict any potential impacts or barriers for three neighbouring landowners with airstrips, to their normal aviation operations.</p>
Other matters raised by stakeholders	
Noise and disruption during construction	<p>Temporary construction noise is to be expected for a wind farm project with large plant and equipment needed to construct the project and potentially to operate the temporary quarry. To minimise the impact of construction noise on the local community, construction activities would generally occur during normal working hours of Monday to Friday, 7 am to 6 pm and Saturday, 7 am to 1 pm.</p> <p>Works outside of these normal hours could be required throughout construction and these occurrences would be communicated in advance with local residents.</p>
Impact on TV reception and telecommunications links	<p>An Electromagnetic Interference Impact Assessment (Appendix N) has been conducted by specialists as a part of the EES process to assess the potential for impacts to TV reception and other telecommunication services, and to identify management measures to address any potential impacts. The assessment findings are summarised in Chapter 24 – Electromagnetic interference.</p>
Impacts on avifauna (including Brolga)	<p>A buffer has been designed to largely avoid impacts on nesting and foraging Brolga. No wind turbines are proposed within the buffer and the only infrastructure proposed within the buffer is one new access track facilitating access to the project area from the Hamilton Highway (Chapter 10 – Brolga).</p>
Impacts on flora and fauna	<p>An Flora and Fauna Assessment (Appendix D) has been conducted by specialists as part of the EES process to assess potential biodiversity impacts, and to identify management measures to avoid and minimise any potential impacts. The assessment findings are summarised in Chapter 8 – Biodiversity and habitat.</p>

Key issues raised	Response
Impacts on Hopkins River	<p>A Surface Water and Groundwater Impact Assessment (Appendix B) has been conducted by specialists to assess impacts on waterways and to identify management measures to avoid and minimise any potential impacts. The assessment findings are summarised in Chapter 12 – Surface water.</p>
Impacts on health	<p>Several health and medical organisations have carried out studies and investigations to assess whether wind farms can directly cause health issues. These organisations include the Australian Medical Association (2014), the National Health and Medical Research Council (2015) and the Victorian Department of Health (2013), none of whom have found a direct causal link between wind farms and human health. The Commonwealth government Independent Scientific Committee on Wind Turbines reached a similar conclusion (Davy et al., 2020). For more information, refer to the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner's observations and recommendations: https://www.aeic.gov.au/observations-and-recommendations/health-matters. Also refer to the Clean Energy Council Factsheet on Wind Turbines and Health: https://cleanenergycouncil.org.au/for-consumers/fact-sheets/impacts-and-benefits-to-consumers-get-the-facts/wind-turbines-and-health</p>
Increased fire risk (including electrical faults from overhead powerlines)	<p>The Country Fire Authority was notified proposed project and provided an opportunity for the local Country Fire Authority branch to provide comment on any risks associated with their operations.</p> <p>The Country Fire Authority's Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (2025) provide details about standard measures and processes in relation to fire safety, risk and emergency management that should be considered when designing, constructing, operating and upgrading renewable energy facilities in Victoria. The project has been designed and would continue to be developed in accordance with the requirements in these guidelines should a permit to proceed be granted.</p> <p>The Country Fire Authority's Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (2025) state that wind turbines must be located no less than 300 metres apart to support safe and effective aerial firefighting operations. Fire suppression aircraft operate under Visual Flight Rules. Most fire suppression aircraft operate during the day, but only specialised aircraft have the ability for fire suppression at night, under strict protocols.</p> <p>The project includes the development of around 147.5 kilometres of access tracks (new and upgrades to existing) in accordance with the Country Fire Authority guidelines that would provide increased firefighting access through the stony rises country across the project site, should this be needed. The project design includes water tanks in strategic positions around the project site that are designed to meet the requirements of the Country Fire Authority.</p> <p>Wind turbines are fitted with comprehensive lightning protection systems that safely transfer any high voltages or currents directly to the earth in the event of a lightning strike. They are also fitted with automatic shutdown systems enabling shutdown if temperatures reach a set level.</p> <p>In the event of a fire the wind farm would be shut down, and this can be done remotely in a matter of minutes.</p>

Key issues raised	Response
<p>The project could be divisive in the local community</p>	<p>Wind Prospect has sought to avoid any conflict between neighbouring landowners and within the local community generally and has addressed concerns about the project. Best endeavours have been and would continue to be used to manage potential conflict by putting in place best practice stakeholder engagement practices, developing the project in an open and transparent manner, involving all stakeholders in the development of the project across the life cycle of the development and proactively seeking resolution of any issues or concerns raised.</p> <p>In response to concerns about the equity of financial benefits in the community (i.e., not just landowners receiving financial benefits), the project team consulted widely with the local community through doorknocks, information sessions, and mail outs to understand the community's preferences for the design of the Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program.</p> <p>The community feedback was used to shape the proposed Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program, which was then provided to the community in December 2020.</p> <p>Should the project proceed, the community would be involved in the decision making for the distribution of the community fund, in line with feedback from all stakeholders, governance arrangements, and the wider community vision and values.</p>

7.9 Community and neighbour benefit sharing

Wind Prospect has committed to developing a Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program and a Community Benefit Fund to ensure that proximal residents can share in the economic benefits of the project. Wind Prospect has incorporated community feedback into the development of the benefit sharing initiatives.

The Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program includes annual benefit payments commencing at the commissioning of the wind farm, with the benefit received dependent on proximity and involving a one-off construction payment (\$1,000) and an Energy Cost Offset Plan (up to \$2,000 of annual value). The Program is offered to eligible dwellings and/or operating retail premises (non-host) within six kilometres of the project (specifically six kilometres from a constructed turbine).

Under the program, individual property owners can only receive a maximum of \$30,000 per year, regardless of the number of turbines located within six kilometres of their property.

Neighbourhood Benefit Scheme

Table 7.7 Details of Neighbour Benefit Scheme

Distance from the constructed turbine	Payment (annual) per constructed turbine
Within 2 kilometres of an eligible dwelling or retail premises	\$3,500
2–3 kilometres of eligible dwelling or retail premises	\$1,000
3–6 kilometres of eligible dwelling or retail premises	\$100
More than 6 kilometres of eligible dwelling or retail premises	Nil.

Wind Prospect has also committed to establishing a Community Benefit Fund if the project is approved (see Table 7.7). This fund would come into effect at the start of commercial operations for the project and would deliver financial benefits to the local community. The fund would allocate \$1,000 per turbine per year to local communities within the Moyne Shire local government area. A funding committee comprising community members, local business owners, and other stakeholders would be established to assess eligibility and acceptance of funding applications. The Moyne Shire Council may also participate as a non-voting representative.

Additional information on the Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program and the Community Benefit Fund is provided in Chapter 2- ***Project rationale and benefits*** and Chapter 28 – ***Environmental management framework***.

7.10 Engagement during EES exhibition

The EES is made available to the public for review to allow informed submissions to be made. These submissions are then considered by the Minister and the independent Inquiry and Advisory Committee during their assessments. The EES is expected to be on exhibition for a minimum of 30 business days in early 2026.

The public is informed about the availability of the EES documents and given support on how to make a submission in the lead up to, and during, the exhibition period via:

- notification letters and community updates to all landowners within 10 kilometres of a proposed wind turbine location
- up-to-date information on the project website including access to the EES documents, fact sheets and the project map
- print advertising in local newspapers informing the community of where they can access the EES documents and make written submissions
- provision of the EES on USB, or other suitable formats, upon request
- public information days in nominated locations local to the project.

7.11 Planned engagement post-EES exhibition

The final stage of the EES process is the Minister's assessment, which considers the EES documents, public submissions and the proponent's response to those submissions. The assessment also considers the inquiry report to determine whether the potential environmental effects of the project are acceptable, or whether the project needs major changes and/or further assessment to establish whether acceptable environmental outcomes would be achieved.

The Minister's assessment would be placed on both the DTP's website and the project website for public review. The outcome of the decision will also be included in a newsletter sent to the local community and key stakeholders.

If the project proceeds, it would be developed while maintaining the open approach to stakeholder engagement that has been followed throughout its development to date. The **Stakeholder Engagement Plan** (Attachment I) would be updated to guide the project's ongoing community and stakeholder engagement throughout the development and operation of the project. This would be a live document and be updated before construction started in consultation with Moyne Shire Council and state agencies.

Ongoing stakeholder engagement would involve:

- maintaining the project website, providing up-to-date information on the status of the project during construction and operation, as well as providing a means for the community to contact the project team
- periodic meetings of the community engagement committee (or similar agreed group) would continue throughout construction and operation to provide an ongoing pathway for Moyne Shire Council and the local community to receive the latest project information and communicate any issues identified in the community
- maintaining a direct avenue for stakeholders (including members of the local community) to submit complaints, raise issues and ask questions to the project team through a free dial phone number and email
- maintaining a communication database throughout the life of the project to help in identifying and resolving any project issues experienced by stakeholders
- notifying affected landowners about any specific issues with direct impacts on properties (e.g., access changes, out-of-hours work) during construction.

Eligibility for the Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program would be confirmed with community members after project approvals and once the project's design is completed. The details of who is eligible and how the program would operate would be confirmed before construction is completed.

The environmental management framework also establishes a framework for the proponent to engage with the community and other stakeholders in relation to the environmental performance of the project. To this end, the environmental management framework (contained in Chapter 28 – **Environmental management framework**) requires procedures for:

- recording complaints and their resolution
- auditing and reporting of performance, including compliance with relevant statutory conditions and standards
- reviewing the effectiveness of the environmental management framework for continuous improvement.

These procedures would cover the requirements of all laws and regulations, including (for example) the Environment Protection Regulations 2021.