EPBC Act referral

Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

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Title of proposal	2020/8797 - Guildford Wind Farm

Section 1

Summary of your proposed action

1.1 Project industry type Energy Generation and Supply (renewable)

1.2 Provide a detailed description of the proposed action, including all proposed activities

The Guildford Wind Farm is a wind energy project, designed to involve up to 80 wind turbines, carefully sited across the project area, generating up to 300 megawatts (MW) of power. The project is sited on privately owned land, currently used for commercial forestry operations, in northern Tasmania. The site is dominated by existing plantations, and the majority of proposed infrastructure will be located within these plantation areas, to limit the clearance of native vegetation.

The preferred turbine model is yet to be selected, indeed technological advances in the wind energy space regularly result in new turbine options becoming available as a project progresses through design and approval processes. At this stage the following turbine specifications are proposed, subject to change during the design phase:

- Generating capacity – up to 7 MW
- Hub Height – 160 m
- Blade length – 90 m
- Tip height – 250 m
- Maximum turbine number - 80

The model selected will influence the final number of turbines and layout, all of which will be contained within the nominated project area shown on the attached maps.

Turbine locations across the project area will be dependent on several factors including wind modelling, eagle nesting sites, proximity to existing infrastructure and other site constraints which will become apparent during the detailed site investigation phase. The majority of turbines are expected to be sited within existing plantations, avoiding impact on native vegetation. Preliminary investigations, including early stage wind monitoring since 2019 and eagle nest searches, have been undertaken and are informing the site layout. A minimum 1 km buffer will be applied to all known eagle nest sites.

Each turbine will be connected via underground cables and overhead powerlines to new collector substations, within the project area. At this stage up to three collector substation locations are being considered with one or two to be selected, subject to further design. Two network connection options are currently being investigated.

- South – A new 220kV overhead line to be constructed within the project area from the collector substations to the southern project boundary, where a new connection switchyard would connect to the existing 220kV line (Sheffield to Farrell). This option does not rely on any new transmission infrastructure beyond that proposed within the project area as part of this project.

- North – A new 220kV overhead line to be constructed within the project area from the collector substations to the northern project boundary, where a new connection switchyard would connect to the proposed 220kV line (Staverton to Hampshire Hills). This new transmission line (Staverton to Hampshire Hills) is not part of this proposal but is being separately proposed by TasNetworks.

One of these two connection options will ultimately be selected.

The northern connection route is reliant on new transmission infrastructure being constructed by other parties, and therefore is not a certainty. The southern connection route however is existing and will be utilised if the northern option does not eventuate.

Additionally, the following ancillary elements are proposed (noting additional minor components may be identified during the design phase):

- A permanent Operations and Maintenance Building and storage area;
- Several permanent wind monitoring masts;
- New tracks/roads connecting turbines and transmission infrastructure, design with an all-weather surfacing;
- Possible upgrade or widening of existing roads and tracks within the site;
- Temporary concrete batching plants for road base and foundation construction; and
- Temporary construction compound including site buildings (eg office, toilets etc.), laydown areas and car park.

The construction phase will also require quarried material (e.g. gravel) for foundations, roads, tracks and hardstands. At this early stage in the project it is not possible to confirm the specifications and quantities of such material nor the source. Initial

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investigations have revealed several possible existing quarry sites in the broader region, that will be investigated to determine their suitability (refer Figure 1 for locations). Additionally there may be opportunity to develop quarries within the project area. If new quarries are required, quarry locations will be informed by avoidance of environmental values (eg threatened communities, species, heritage values).

Project construction is expected to run for approximately 24 months.

The project area, preliminary infrastructure layout (subject to change), known eagle nest sites and other relevant landscape features are illustrated in Figure 1.

1.3 What is the extent and location of your proposed action?

See Appendix B

1.5 Provide a brief physical description of the property on which the proposed action will take place and the location of the proposed action (e.g. proximity to major towns, or for off-shore actions, shortest distance to mainland)

The project is to be located at Guildford, in northern Tasmania. The site lies approximately 40km south of Burnie and 50km south west of Devonport. The nearest township is Waratah, approximately 5km west of the site boundary.

The site is largely owned by a single private land owner, with several other small titles (two owned by other private land owners) and a small number of road and rail titles crossing the site. The Murchison Highway runs along the western boundary of the site and the Ridgley Highway intersects the site in the northern portion. There are existing site access points from both of these highways. Talbots Lagoon lies central to the site.

The site is predominantly used for commercial forestry, and is dominated by plantations.

1.6 What is the size of the proposed action area development footprint (or work area) including disturbance footprint and avoidance footprint (if relevant)?

The project area (proposed action boundary), within which the wind farm will be located, is approximately 23,000 hectares (230 square kilometres) in total. This is a large area within which the final wind farm layout will be contained and the disturbance footprint will be a small subset of this area.

The actual disturbance footprint is yet to be confirmed as it depends on final layout, but is expected to be up to 750 ha (7.5 square kilometres) in total, including provision for turbine footings, roads, tracks, power lines, construction impacts and ancillary structures. The remainder of the project area constitutes the avoidance footprint.

1.7 Proposed action location

Address - Guildford Road, Guildford, TAS, 7321, Australia

1.8 Primary jurisdiction	Tasmania

1.9 Has the person proposing to take the action received any Australian Government grant funding to undertake this project?

☐ Yes ☑ No

1.10 Is the proposed action subject to local government planning approval?

☑ Yes ☐ No

1.10.1 Is there a local government area and council contact for the proposal?

☑ Yes ☐ No

1.10.1.0 Council contact officer details

1.10.1.1 Name of relevant council contact officer	Council Town Planner
1.10.1.2 E-mail	townplanner@warwyn.tas.gov.au
1.10.1.3 Telephone Number	(03) 6443 8333

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1.11 Provide an estimated start and estimated end date for the proposed action	Start Date	01/01/2024
	End Date	01/01/2054

1.12 Provide details of the context, planning framework and state and/or local Government requirements

The proposed wind farm is expected to require local and state government approval in Tasmania.

The project is subject to the provisions of the Waratah-Wynyard Interim Planning Scheme 2013 and will be assessed by council as a discretionary planning permit application. This process is yet to commence. It is noted that Tasmania is in the process of modifying the planning schemes with the expectation that the state will move from the existing Interim Planning Schemes towards the Tasmanian Planning Scheme in the near future. It is possible this change will take place prior to lodgement of an application with Waratah-Wynyard Council in which case the application would be assessed against the new Tasmanian Planning Scheme rather than the existing Waratah-Wynyard Interim Planning Scheme 2013.

The project is also subject to the provisions of the Tasmanian Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 and is a Level 2 activity as stipulated under Schedule 2 of that Act (wind energy facility with capacity to generate more than 30 MW of electricity). This process is integrated with the local government assessment process and commences with the lodgement of a Notice of Intent to the Tasmanian EPA. The Notice of Intent will be lodged in September 2020. The Tasmanian EPA and Waratah-Wynyard Council will then undertake a combined planning and environmental assessment process for the project.

If the proposal is deemed a controlled action under the EPBCA, Epuron seeks to have the project assessed pursuant to the Bilateral Agreement under Section 45 of the EPBCA between Tasmanian and Australian governments.

1.13 Describe any public consultation that has been, is being or will be undertaken, including with Indigenous stakeholders

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been prepared for the Project, and all engagement will be carried out in accordance with the plan. The key objectives of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan are:

- to ensure everyone who needs to know about the proposal, and the process it will follow, knows about it;
- to ensure their views and concerns are heard and understood;
- to ensure the team developing the wind farm is aware of all stakeholder issues and concerns, and where possible, addresses these issues and concerns through the design of proposal;
- to communicate where it has or has not been able to change the design in response to consultation; and
- to gather contact details of stakeholders, to enable Epuron to keep stakeholders informed and provide them with opportunities to give feedback and join consultation activities.

The following stakeholder groups have been identified in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan:

- Local government;
- State government and agencies;
- Federal government and agencies;
- Neighboring residents and communities; and
- Community groups and other interest groups and stakeholders.

Six project stages have been identified, and stakeholder specific objectives and engagement methods have been identified for each stage.

- Site selection (completed)
- Project feasibility (currently in phase)
- Planning and approvals
- Pre-Construction and Construction
- Commissioning and Operation
- Decommissioning

To date, Epuron has worked through the first stage and has:

- Introduced Epuron and the project to Waratah Wynyard Council;
- Introduced Epuron and the project to members of the Tasmanian parliament;
- Introduced Epuron and the project to the neighbouring councils, namely Burnie City Council, Kentish and Central Coast Councils;
- Had discussion with TasNetworks regarding connection options;
- Sent a “Project Introduction” newsletter to surrounding communities; and
- Engaged directly (emails) with interested stakeholders who have contacted Epuron.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan is a live document and will be updated as the Project evolves through each phase.

Engagement will continue throughout the remaining project stages including further newsletters, website information, letters and meetings.

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The formal assessment and approval process required by local and state governments also involves public comment periods, which will apply to this project.

1.14 Describe any environmental impact assessments that have been or will be carried out under Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation including relevant impacts of the project

The project will be subject to an environmental impact assessment (in the form of an Environmental Impact Statement) required to seek EPA approval. This EIS is yet to be completed and will be informed by specialist studies as directed by the Tasmanian EPA (with input from the Commonwealth if the bilateral agreement is applied), likely to include:

- Eagle nest search (complete and attached)
- Natural values assessment
- Eagle utilisation survey
- Aboriginal heritage survey
- European heritage survey
- Noise assessment
- Traffic impact assessment
- Visual impact assessment
- Stakeholder mapping and community surveys

It is noted there are some geoconservation sites within the project area, which may also warrant investigation if they cannot be avoided by proposed works. Other studies may be required and will be undertaken as necessary.

1.15 Is this action part of a staged development (or a component of a larger project)?

☐ Yes ☑ No

1.16 Is the proposed action related to other actions or proposals in the region?

☑ Yes ☐ No

1.16.1 Identify the nature/scope and location of the related action (Including under the relevant legislation)

Epuron is also investigating another wind farm site nearby, the Hellyer Wind Farm. That project is being proposed by the same company but is separate and independent of this application. There is no reliance between the two projects and no shared infrastructure (aside from existing public roads to be used for site access). Either project can proceed independently of the other.

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Section 2

Matters of national environmental significance

2.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the values of any World Heritage properties?

☐ Yes ☑ No

2.2 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the values of any National Heritage places?

☐ Yes ☑ No

2.3 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the ecological character of a Ramsar wetland?

☐ Yes ☑ No

2.4 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the members of any listed species or any threatened ecological community, or their habitat?

☑ Yes ☐ No

Species or threatened ecological community

Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle (Aquila audax fleayi)

Impact

The project area is known to provide habitat for the Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle (Aquila audaz fleayi).

Nest searches have been undertaken for the site in May 2020 (report attached). This assessment identified a total of eight nests within the project area (five previously identified and three newly identified). Of the eight nests, three were found to be derelict (unlikely to be active unless drastic local habitat changes), three viable (no signs of use but could be active within five years) and two prime (likely to be active within two years). All nests were determined to likely have been built by wedge-tailed eagles. Ten adult wedge-tailed eagles, and two grey goshawk, were seen throughout the survey day. The report concludes the area is likely to support two to four pairs (territories) of wedge-tailed eagles. Nest detectablility for the survey was deemed high (90 to 95%) and the report determine it to be unlikely that other nests, beyond those identified, exist within the project area.

This data indicates the site is regularly used by the species and further work will be undertaken to characterize the extent of this usage and potential impacts.

The proposal involves installation of wind turbines and overhead transmission lines in an area known to be inhabited by wedge-tailed eagles. This poses a potential risk to eagles through construction phase displacement (or interruption to breeding) and operational phase collision.

Buffers will be applied to all known nest sites (1km) to limit the potential for direct impact to the species. However even with these buffers in place it is recognized that potential for impact remains. Further investigations are required, and will be undertaken, to characterize the use of the site by eagles, understand the potential for impact and determine mitigation measures.

The project is being referred early in the planning and investigation stage, largely in order to commence the assessment process (with State and Commonwealth governments) to inform the subsequent investigations and studies required. It is anticipated this investigation phase could take up to two years of data collection. As the referral is being made early in the process there is insufficient information on the species or the proposal to offer certainty on the level of impact. As such the precautionary principle is being applied, with the assumption that the level of impact could be deemed significant under the

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EPBC Act.

For this reason Epuron is lodging this referral on the basis of potential significant impact to a matter of national environmental significance, namely the listed Tasmanian wedge-tailed Eagle.

Species or threatened ecological community

Listed Threatened Ecological Communities

According to the EPBC Act Protected Matters Report generated for the site, there are two threatened ecological communities known or possibly occurring in the area, namely alpine sphagnum bogs and associated ferns (known to occur) and Tasmanian forests and woodlands dominated by black gum or Brookers gum (Eucalyptus ovata/Eucalyptus brookeriana) (may occur).

Impact

Tasmanian vegetation mapping (TasVeg) is accessed through the Natural Values Atlas and provides desktop information on vegetation communities across the State. The EPBC Act listed communities do not correlate directly with TasVeg mapped units but analogous communities can be identified.

Under the Tasmanian vegetation mapping system the vegetation community most commonly aligned with 'alpine sphagnum bogs and associated fens' is 'sphagnum peatland' (MSP). There are small pockets of this community mapped across the site and it is the intention of the project that these areas will be avoided by wind farm infrastructure (refer attached Figure 3).

Under the Tasmanian vegetation mapping system the vegetation communities most commonly aligned with 'Tasmanian forests and woodlands dominated by black gum or Brookers gum (E ovata/ E brookeriana)' are 'Eucalyptus ovata forest and woodland' (DOV), 'Eucalyptus ovata heathy woodland' (DOW) and 'Eucalyptus brookeriana wet forest' (WBR). There are also several other TasVeg communities that can can align with the EPBC Act listed community to a lesser degree. Of the three main analogous communities the latter (WBR) is mapped in several pockets across the project area (refer attached Figure 4). It is the intention of the project that these areas will be avoided by wind farm infrastructure.

As the majority of the site is dominated by plantation it is expected that all wind turbines and most ancillary infrastructure will be constructed within plantation and avoid impacts to native vegetation, particularly threatened ecological communities.

This information is from desktop data sources and will be verified by detailed ecological survey of the site. The resulting detailed vegetation mapping will be used to inform the final site layout. It is likely that threatened ecological communities can be avoided by careful placement of wind farm infrastructure.

Epuron does not expect this impact to be significant.

Species or threatened ecological community

Listed Threatened Species - Fauna

In addition to the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle (addressed above) the EPBC Act Protect Matters Report identifies several other listed threatened fauna species potentially occurring on site including:

Curlew sandpiper (Calidris ferruginea)
Tasmanian azure kingfisher (Ceyx azureus diemenensis)
Swift parrot (Lathamus discolor)
Eastern curlew (Numenius madagascariensis)
Gould's petrel (Pterodroma leucoptera leucoptera)
Masked owl (Tasmanian) (Tyto novaehollandiae castanops)
Giant freshwater crayfish (Astacopsis gouldi)
Eastern dwarf galaxias (Galaxiella pusilla)
Australian grayling (Prototroctes maraena)
Ptunarra brown butterfly (Oreixenica ptunarra)
Spotted-tailed quoll (Dasyurus maculatus maculatus)
Eastern quoll (Dasyurus viverrinus)
Eastern barred bandicoot (Perameles gunnii gunnii)
Tasmanian devil (Sarcophilus harrisii)

Impact

Tasmanian devil - known to occur within the project area and there is an existing Devil Tumor Research Site within the southern part of the site. This species is likely to forage widely across the landscape, including moving through the areas of plantation, and is likely to den within the remnant forest communities.

Spotted-tailed quoll - has previously been recorded within 500m of the project area according to the Natural Values Atlas and is likely to forage broadly across the site and may den within areas of native vegetation, particularly wet forest and rain forest patches.

Eastern quoll - has previously been recorded within 500m of the project area according to the Natural Values Atlas. The project area does not fall within the core range of the species (as mapped in the Natural Values Atlas) but the species may utlise, particularly in areas of open grassland, tussock grassland, grassy woodland and dry eucalypt forest.

Eastern barred bandicoot - previously been recorded within 500m of the project area according to the Natural Values Atlas. The species is more common in the southern eastern quarter of the state but can occur in the Guildford region. Its preferred habitat is woodland and open forest with a grassy understory, small patches of which occur within the project area.

Ptunarra brown butterfly - previously been recorded within 500m of the project area and parts of the site are within the known range of the species according to the natural values atlas. The species is found above 400m altitude and in areas where there is a significant cover of poa tussocks. Based on available desktop data it is likely that small pockets of such habitat occur within the project area.

Eastern dwarf galaxias - only known from the north of the state and the site is likely outside of core range, however some possibility of occurrence.

Australian grayling - occurs in rivers and streams predominantly in northern and eastern rivers but occasionally in western rivers in the state. The project area is on the margins of the potential range of the species and there are no previous records within the site. This species is unlikely but may may occur on site.

Giant freshwater crayfish - the project area is outside of the known range for this species.The one record of this species within the site on the Natural Values Atlas is very old (dated 1900). This species is unlikely to occur on site.

Tasmanian azure kingfisher - the project area is outside the core range for the species and there are no existing records in close proximity to the project area. Although the species could occur along rivers within the project area it is considered unlikely given the known distribution.

Swift parrot - the site is outside the core, known and potential range of this species (Natural Values Atlas) but may overfly the site on transit to other areas.

Masked owl - parts of the site are within the core range for the species which could forage across the project area and possibly nest within areas of remnant native vegetation.

Curlew sandpiper - occurs predominantly along the coast but can be found inland. In Tasmania the species usually occurs in the east but can be found in the north and west. It is possible but unlikely the species occurs on site.

Eastern curlew - coastal species rarely recorded inland and unlikely to occur on site.

Gould's petrel - Seabird and not expected to occur on site.

Potential for impact to the majority of these species is likely to be limited. Wind turbines will be constructed largely in areas of plantation and other infrastructure (eg transmission lines) will also be kept to existing disturbed areas as much as possible, with only some small areas of impact to native vegetation. Ecological surveys of the site will be completed to map vegetation communities and fauna habitat, with the intention that high priority habitat will be avoided by the final site layout. Although impacts to threatened fauna habitat are possible, through ecological survey and sensitive site planning impacts are expected to be minimal for most species. Aquatic species can be entirely avoided as there are no works proposed within aquatic habitats.

The possible exception is impacts to listed avifauna (additional to the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle as outlined above) through collision with turbines or transmission lines. Although nesting habitat for threatened birds can largely be avoided by site layout, the project does pose a potential collision risk for some species. To determine the extent of this risk and establish mitigation measures an ecological survey and bird utilization surveys will be undertaken for the site.

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At this time there is insufficient site information to determine the potential significance of impacts on listed threatened fauna.

Species or threatened ecological community

Listed Threatened Species - Flora

The EPBC Act Protect Matters Report identified several listed threatened flora species that are known to occur, are likely to occur or may occur within the project area namely
Native wintercress (Barbarea australis),
Curtis' colobanth (Colobanthus curtisiae)
Miena cider gum (Eucalyptus gunnii subsp. divaricata)
Clover glycine (Glycine latrobeana)
Horay sunray (Leucochrysum albicans subsp. tricolor)
Crowded leek-orchid (Prasophyllum crebriflorum)

Impact

One of these species, crowded leek orchid (prasophyllum crebriflorum), has previously been recorded from the site according to the Tasmanian Natural Values Atlas (refer attached Figure 5). This species is mapped as clusters in several parts of the site. All known locations of this species will be avoided by proposed works.

Other EPBC Act listed flora may occur within the remnant areas of native vegetation within the project area, given the diversity of habitat present. These species are unlikely to occur within the plantation areas, where the majority of wind farm infrastructure will be located.

The known locations of listed threatened flora (namely crowded leek orchid) will be avoided by the proposed site layout. Ecological survey will be undertaken to confirm the distribution of this, and other, listed flora species and will be used to inform the site layout. At this stage it is considered highly likely that all identified listed flora can be avoided by careful site layout.

Epuron does not expect significant impacts to listed flora.

2.4.2 Do you consider this impact to be significant?

☑ Yes ☐ No

2.5 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the members of any listed migratory species or their habitat?

☑ Yes ☐ No

Migratory species

Listed Migratory Species

The EPBC Act Protected Matters Search Report indicates several migratory species are known to occur, likely to occur or may occur within the project area including:
Fork tailed swift (Apus pacificus)
Satin flycatcher (Myiagra cyanoleuca)
Common sandpiper (Actitis hypoleucos)
Sharp-tailed sandpiper (Calidris acuminata)
Curlew sandpiper (Calidris ferruginea)
Pectoral sandpiper (Calidris melanotos)
Latham's snipe (Gallinago hardwickii)
Eastern curlew (Numenius madagascariensis)
Common greenshank (Tringa nebularia)

Impact

The majority of these species are either largely coastal, generally known only from the eastern part of the state or have very limited distribution in Tasmania; with the exception of Latham's snipe which has widespread distribution across the state. Further ecological survey will be undertaken to document the possible use of the project area by listed migratory species.

If listed migratory species do utilize the site, direct habitat impacts can likely be entirely avoided by placement of turbines in areas of plantation and avoidance of areas of high habitat value for ancillary infrastructure.

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The turbines may present a collision risk for some migratory avifauna and further ecological investigations are required to quantify this risk. Experience from other similar projects suggests the potential for impact will likely be limited, particularly given the predicted low (if any) density of species at the site.

At this time there is insufficient site information to determine the potential significance of impacts on listed migratory species therefore the precautionary principle is applied and it is assumed the impact could be significant.

2.5.2 Do you consider this impact to be significant?

☑ Yes ☐ No

2.6 Is the proposed action to be undertaken in a marine environment (outside Commonwealth marine areas)?

☐ Yes ☑ No

2.7 Is the proposed action likely to be taken on or near Commonwealth land?

☐ Yes ☑ No

2.8 Is the proposed action taking place in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park?

☐ Yes ☑ No

2.9 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on a water resource from coal seam gas or large coal mining development?

☐ Yes ☑ No

2.10 Is the proposed action a nuclear action?

☐ Yes ☑ No

2.11 Is the proposed action to be taken by a Commonwealth agency?

☐ Yes ☑ No

2.12 Is the proposed action to be undertaken in a Commonwealth Heritage place overseas?

☐ Yes ☑ No

2.13 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct or indirect impact on any part of the environment in the Commonwealth marine area?

☐ Yes ☑ No

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Section 3

Description of the project area

3.1 Describe the flora and fauna relevant to the project area

The Tasmanian digital vegetation mapping (TasVeg) shows the site to be a mosaic of plantations and native vegetation, with plantations as the dominant mapping unit. Several of the native vegetation communities mapped within the site are listed as threatened under the Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002 including Eucalyptus brookeriana wet forest, highland grassy sedgeland, highland poa sedgeland, rainforest fernland, sphagnum peatland, subalpine Diplarrena latifolia rushland and wetlands.

According to the EPBCA Protected Matters Search two EPBCA listed communities also occur, namely alpine sphagnum bogs and associated ferns and Tasmanian forests and woodlands dominated by black gum or Brookers gum (Eucalyptus ovata/Eucalyptus brookeriana).

Although the site is dominated by plantation, the areas of native vegetation as well as the freshwater environments provide potential habitat for threatened and non threatened flora and fauna. A desktop Natural Values Atlas Report generated for the project includes the following threatened flora and fauna previously recorded or predicted to occur within 500m of the site:

- Flora
  - Australopyrum velutinum (velvet wheatgrass)
  - Deyeuxia brachyathera (short bentgrass)
  - Epilobium pallidiflorum (showy willowherb)
  - Hovea montana (mountain purple pea)
  - Prasophyllum crebriflorum (crowded leek-orchid)
  - Rhodanthe anthemoides (chamomile sunray)
  - Stackhousia pulvinaris (alpine candles)
  - Uncinia elegans (handsome hooksedge)
  - Viola cunninghamii (alpine violet)
- Fauna
  - Accipiter novaehollandiae (grey goshawk)
  - Aquila audax subsp. fleayi (Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle)
  - Astacopsis gouldi (giant freshwater crayfish)
  - Dasyurus maculatus subsp. maculatus (spotted-tail quoll)
  - Dasyurus viverrinus (eastern quoll)
  - Haliaeetus leucogaster (white-bellied sea-eagle)
  - Lathamus discolor (swift parrot)
  - Oreixenica ptunarra (ptunarra brown butterfly)
  - Perameles gunnii (eastern barred bandicoot)
  - Prototroctes maraena (Australian grayling)
  - Pseudemoia pagenstecheri (tussock skink)
  - Sarcophilus harrisii (Tasmanian devil)
  - Tyto novaehollandiae subsp. castanops (masked owl Tasmanian)

An EPBCA Protected Matters Report (generated 14 September 2020) identified 21 listed threatened species and 9 listed migratory species predicted to occur within the project area. The threatened fauna and flora predicted to occur included some of those identified in the NVA report (listed above), but also several additional birds, aquatic species and flora. One EPBCA listed flora species, Prasophyllum crebriflorum (leek orchid) has previously been recorded within the project area. Project layout will avoid impacts to these known flora locations.

Whilst it is anticipated the majority of native vegetation can be avoided by careful placement of turbines and ancillary infrastructure, ecological surveys will be undertaken to ascertain the likelihood of these, and other native and threatened species, occurring on site.

Some of this work has already commenced with eagle nest searches undertaken in May 2020 (report attached). This assessment identified a total of eight nests within the project area (five previously identified and three newly identified). Of the eight nests, three were found to be derelict (unlikely to be active unless drastic local habitat changes), three viable (no signs of use but could be active within five years) and two prime (likely to be active within two years). All nests were determined to be likely built by wedge-tailed eagles. Ten adult wedge-tailed eagles, and two grey goshawk, were seen throughout the survey day. The report concludes the area is likely to support two to four pairs (territories) of wedge-tailed eagles. Eagle, and other avifauna, investigations will be ongoing.

3.2 Describe the hydrology relevant to the project area (including water flows)

Several waterways pass through the site including River Leven, Medway River, Hatfield River, Blythe River, Wey River, Hellyer River and Wandle River. Talbots Lagoon lies central to the site and is accessed by the public for fishing, under agreement with the landowner.

3.3 Describe the soil and vegetation characteristics relevant to the project area

According to the Land Information System of Tasmania (the LIST) desktop database, the majority of the project area is basalt, with small areas of more complex geology.

There are several geoconservation sites mapped within the project area including Bells Plain Oligocene Plant Fossil Site, Cenozoic Plant Macrofossils of Tasmania, Cradle Mountain Link Road Early Oligocene Plant Fossil Site, Leven River Oligocene Plant Fossil Site, Western Tasmanian Blanket Bogs and Medway River Mound Spring. These sites are scattered across, not encompassing the entire site and will be avoided by proposed infrastructure where possible.

Vegetation across most of the site is plantation, with some areas of native vegetation which is predominately mapped as rainforest and related scrub; wet eucalypt forest; native grassland; and moorland, sedgeland, rushland and peatland. Turbine locations will favor areas of plantation to limit impacts to native vegetation.

3.4 Describe any outstanding natural features and/or any other important or unique values relevant to the project area

Talbots Lagoon lies central to the project area and is used for recreational fishing.

There is a Tasmanian Devil Tumour Research area in the south of the site as shown in Figure 1, where the University of Tasmania runs a long term field monitoring site investigating the Tasmanian Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD). There are no turbines proposed within this area. Only the proposed new 220kV overhead line to connect to the existing 220kV line (Sheffield to Farrell) for the southern connection option would run through this area.

The site is nearby to local mountain ranges including St Valentines Peak, Mt Beecroft and the Black Bluff Range. Further to the south (approx 9km from the project area and 15km from the nearest proposed turbine) lies the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park and Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area.

3.5 Describe the status of native vegetation relevant to the project area

The majority of the site has been cleared of native vegetation and now supports plantations for commercial forestry operations. These plantations are interspersed by areas of intact native vegetation, which are largely protected in stream side and other forestry reserves as part of the commercial forestry operations.

Two EPBC Act listed threatened ecological communities and seven ecological communities listed on the Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002 are predicted to occur within the project area based on desktop vegetation mapping. This will be verified through on site ecological surveys.

At this stage it is anticipated that all threatened vegetation communities can be avoided by proposed works.

3.6 Describe the gradient (or depth range if action is to be taken in a marine area) relevant to the project area

The site is relatively flat, with some undulation, ranging from approximately 500m to 700m above sea level.

3.7 Describe the current condition of the environment relevant to the project area

The project area is dominated by plantations between which are scattered areas of native vegetation, many of which are within informal forest and stream side reserves. Existing access tracks and roads traverse the site, along with existing high voltage transmission lines. There are rivers and creeks dispersed throughout the site and Talbots Lagoon lies centrally within the site.

Weeds are mapped across the project area, with varying densities reflecting both human access (eg weeds mapped along road lines) and survey effort.

The project area overall is highly modified, dominated by plantations. The areas of plantation, roads and transmission lines are highly modified from their natural state, but other smaller parts of the site such as remnant native vegetation, rivers, creeks and Talbots Lagoon are in a more natural state.

3.8 Describe any Commonwealth Heritage places or other places recognised as having heritage values relevant to the project

There are no Commonwealth Heritage places within the project area.

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (which is a National Heritage Place) lies approximately 9km south of the boundary of the project area. There will be no direct impact to this site however it is possible the wind turbines may be visible from some locations within the World Heritage Area. A visual impact analysis will be undertaken to quantify this potential impact, noting that the proposed wind farm site lies within an already disturbed landscape dominated by commercial forestry.

There are no state listed heritage features, listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register, within or immediately adjacent to the site.

A heritage survey will be undertaken for the site.

3.9 Describe any Indigenous heritage values relevant to the project area

The project is in the early planning stages and as such an Aboriginal Heritage Survey is yet to be undertaken for the site. An Aboriginal Heritage Survey will be undertaken and the results used to inform the site layout.

The site has already been substantially modified from its natural state, through the establishment of plantations for commercial forestry. Avoidance of intact native vegetation (largely contained within existing stream-side and other informal reserves as part of the plantation operation) is likely to assist in avoidance of areas of potential indigenous heritage value.

3.10 Describe the tenure of the action area (e.g. freehold, leasehold) relevant to the project area

The project area is dominated by freehold land, the vast majority of which is in the ownership of a single private land holder and used almost exclusively for forestry operations.

In addition, there are two small parcels in separate private ownership and several small parcels owned by the Crown (Department of State Growth and State Rail Network). These crown land parcels form part of the rail and road network. There will be no turbines within these crown land parcels, however it is possible there may be some ancillary works within these parcels including transmission line crossings and possible intersection upgrades to facilitate movement of trucks onto the state road network.

3.11 Describe any existing or any proposed uses relevant to the project area

The project area is predominantly used for forestry operations and is dominated by plantations. Parts of the site are traversed by roads and tracks, including major roads such as the Ridgley Highway, Murchison Highway and Belvoir Road.

There is one dwelling within the project area, the Guildford Lodge, which is privately owned and used for short term accommodation for forestry staff, fishing groups, researchers and occasionally members of the public.

Although the site (aside from roads and rail) is wholly privately owned, there is some public access to parts of the site (at the agreement of the owner) including recreational fishing access to Talbots Lagoon. The project does not propose any changes to these existing access arrangements.

There is a Tasmanian Devil Tumour Research area in the south of the site, where the University of Tasmania runs a long term field monitoring site investigating the Tasmanian Devil Facial Tumour Disease. There are no turbines proposed within this area. However, the new proposed 220 kV overhead line to connect to the existing 220kV line (Sheffield to Farrell) for the south connection option would run through this area. Epuron will work with the DFTD project team with the aim of understanding and minimising impacts to their work.

The project does not propose any changes to these existing land uses and it is aimed to minimize any potential impacts to existing site uses.

Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Section 4

Measures to avoid or reduce impacts

4.1 Describe the measures you will undertake to avoid or reduce impact from your proposed action

The project area has been selected for the proposed wind farm because it offers a viable wind resource, no existing residential dwellings within or nearby as well as a largely modified site, dominated by plantation, and therefore the opportunity to avoid large scale native vegetation clearance.

The key mitigation strategy for the project will be careful site layout to avoid the clearance of native vegetation wherever possible (avoidance). Ecological surveys will be undertaken across the project area to inform the site layout and any significant areas identified (eg threatened vegetation communities, wetlands, threatened flora or habitat for threatened fauna) will be avoided where possible. Preliminary layout options currently being developed indicate all wind turbines can, and will, be placed within existing plantation. Some ancillary infrastructure (eg transmission) lines may impact native vegetation, but this will be avoided wherever possible.

An eagle nest search has been completed and found a total of eight wedge-tailed eagle nests within the project area (some intact and likely active, others derelict). A 1km buffer will be applied to all these nest sites to limit direct disturbance to wedge-tailed eagles. Further eagle survey work will be undertaken to ascertain the use of the site by eagles and additional mitigation measures put in place in response to these investigations.

Heritage surveys will be undertaken to identify any historic or Aboriginal heritage within the project area, with the intended mitigation strategy to be avoidance wherever possible.

Other potential impacts such as noise and visual amenity will also be subject to specialist investigations, with most amenity impacts limited by the lack of residential dwellings within the project area and the considerable distance to the nearest permanent settlements.

4.2 For matters protected by the EPBC Act that may be affected by the proposed action, describe the proposed environmental outcomes to be achieved

The project seeks to limit impacts to matters protected by the EPBC Act largely through careful siting of the wind farm infrastructure (avoidance). A key objective of the project is to limit impacts to native vegetation and achieve avoidance of known threatened vegetation communities, threatened flora and habitat for threatened fauna to the greatest degree possible.

With the exception of avifauna the potential for impact to EPBC Act listed matters is minimal due to the avoidance of vegetation communities and habitat and placement of infrastructure within existing plantation wherever possible.

There is expected to be some residual risk to avifauna and Epuron seek to reduce this risk as far as practical through the use of turbine layout and operational controls.

Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Section 5

Conclusion on the likelihood of significant impacts

5.1 You indicated the below ticked items to be of significant impact and therefore you consider the action to be a controlled action

- ☐ World Heritage properties
- ☐ National Heritage places
- ☐ Wetlands of international importance (declared Ramsar wetlands)
- ☑ Listed threatened species or any threatened ecological community
- ☑ Listed migratory species
- ☐ Marine environment outside Commonwealth marine areas
- ☐ Protection of the environment from actions involving Commonwealth land
- ☐ Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- ☐ A water resource, in relation to coal seam gas development and large coal mining development
- ☐ Protection of the environment from nuclear actions
- ☐ Protection of the environment from Commonwealth actions
- ☐ Commonwealth Heritage places overseas
- ☐ Commonwealth marine areas

5.2 If no significant matters are identified, provide the key reasons why you think the proposed action is not likely to have a significant impact on a matter protected under the EPBC Act and therefore not a controlled action

The project is being referred early in the planning phase, in order to commence the assessment process and seek guidelines on the surveys and studies required, particularly for avifauna which can involve lengthy survey requirements. As the referral is being undertaken early in the process there is a degree of uncertainty around the ecological values that may occur on site and the potential for significant impact. At this time the proponent considers impacts to listed threatened species and migratory species may be significant and therefore this referral is submitted seeking a controlled action decision.

Although some impact to listed migratory species may also occur (avifauna) this is expected to be limited, largely due to predicted low numbers of listed migratory species that may use the site. This assertion will be investigated through further ecological and bird utilisation surveys during the assessment process.

There are no other known EPBC Act matters within or immediately adjacent to the project area and significant impacts are not expected.

Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Section 6

Environmental record of the person proposing to take the action

6.1 Does the person taking the action have a satisfactory record of responsible environmental management? Explain in further detail

Epuron Projects Pty Ltd (Epuron), part of the Epuron Group, is a leading private Australian renewable energy company with a focus on green-field development of utility-scale wind and solar energy projects. Epuron Group is the pre-eminent wind farm developer in New South Wales and is one of the most experienced renewable energy developers in the Australian market. Four Epuron developed wind farms are in operation and a further two wind farms nearing construction. Epuron also develops, owns and operates solar farms around Australia.

In Tasmania, Epuron is currently proceeding through the statutory approvals process to develop the proposed Western Plains Wind Farm north west of Stanley and the St Patricks Plains Wind Farm in the Central Highlands. Epuron also has two solar farms approved in Tasmania.

Throughout all its renewable energy ventures Epuron has maintained a reputation for responsible environmental management and the promotion of renewable energy across Australia.

6.2 Provide details of any past or present proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against either (a) the person proposing to take the action or, (b) if a permit has been applied for in relation to the action – the person making the application

Epuron has not been subject to any past or present proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

6.3 If it is a corporation undertaking the action will the action be taken in accordance with the corporation's environmental policy and framework?

☐ Yes ☑ No

6.4 Has the person taking the action previously referred an action under the EPBC Act, or been responsible for undertaking an action referred under the EPBC Act?

☑ Yes ☐ No

6.4.1 EPBC Act No and/or Name of Proposal

Epuron have submitted several previous referrals including the following. Note that some of these referrals we submitted under other company names as noted:

Mainland Australia
- Gullen Range Wind Farm (Epuron Pty Ltd) – not controlled
- Silverton Wind Farm (Silverton Wind Farm Pty Ltd Joint Venture) – not controlled
- Eden Wind Farm (Epuron Projects Pty Ltd) – not controlled
- White Rock Wind Farm (Epuron Pty Ltd) – not controlled
- Liverpool Range Wind Farm (Epuron Pty Ltd) – approved with conditions
- Rye Park Wind Farm (Rye Park Wind Farm Pty Ltd) – approved with conditions
- Yass Valley Wind Farm (Yass Valley Wind Farm Pty Ltd) – Coppabella approved with conditions
- Bowmans Creek Wind Farm (Epuron Projects Pty Ltd) - controlled
- Lotus Creek Wind Farm (Epuron Projects Pty Ltd) - withdrawn
- Conroys Gap Wind Farm (Epuron Projects Pty Ltd) – approved with conditions
- Cullerin Range Wind Farm (Taurus Energy) – not controlled

In Tasmania
- Western Plains Wind Farm (Epuron Pty Ltd) – controlled
- St Patricks Plains Wind Farm (Epuron Projects Pty Ltd) - controlled

Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Section 7

Information sources

Reference source

Desktop databases including the EPBC Act Protected Matters Search Tool, Tasmanian Natural Values Atlas and Land Information Services Tasmania (LIST).

Reliability

These desktop database services are considered to be reliable sources of desktop data, which is then subject to field investigation for verification.

Uncertainties

Data from accessed desktop services is often mapped at a broad scale and can contain old records or unverified data. Additionally much of the Natural Values Atlas data is dependent on whether the area has been subject to detailed survey, therefore an absence of data does not indicate an absence of values. This data is used for desktop information only and the limitations are addressed through follow up ecological surveys.

Reference source

Helicopter Eagle Nest Survey - Proposed Guildford Windfarm Site North West Tasmania, Enviro-dynamics (3 June 2020)

Reliability

The eagle nest search was undertaken by suitably qualified ecologists with experience undertaking such work in Tasmania and as such is considered a reliable information source.

Uncertainties

The survey was a one-off event and therefore has some risk of undetected sites. According to the report eagle nest detection was high (90 to 95% detectability of nests).

Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Section 8

Proposed alternatives

Do you have any feasible alternatives to taking the proposed action?

Yes ☑ No

Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Section 9

Person proposing the action

9.1.1 Is the person proposing the action a member of an organisation?

☑ Yes ☐ No

Organisation

Organisation name	Epuron Projects Pty Ltd
Business name	
ABN	84150163143
ACN	
Business address	Level 11, 75 Miller St, North Sydney, 2060, NSW, Australia
Postal address	
Main Phone number	(02) 8456 7407
Fax	
Primary email address	s.weinhold@epuron.com.au
Secondary email address	

9.1.2 I qualify for exemption from fees under section 520(4C)(e)(v) of the EPBC Act because I am:

☐ Small business
☑ Not applicable

9.1.2.2 I would like to apply for a waiver of full or partial fees under Schedule 1, 5.21A of the EPBC Regulations *

☐ Yes ☑ No

9.1.3 Contact

First name	Sandra
Last name	Weinhold
Job title	Project Manager
Phone	(02) 8456 7407
Mobile	
Fax	
Email	s.weinhold@epuron.com.au
Primary address	Level 11, 75 Miller St, North Sydney, 2060, NSW, Australia
Address	

Declaration: Person proposing the action

I, Sandra Weinhold **, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to the EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. I declare that I am not taking the action on behalf or for the benefit of any other person or entity.**

Signature: ..... **Date:** 24 September 2020

I, _____, the person proposing the action, consent to the designation of _____ as the proponent for the purposes of the action described in this EPBC Act Referral.

Signature:.....Date: .....

Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Proposed designated proponent

9.2.1 Is the proposed designated proponent a member of an organisation?

☑ Yes ☐ No

Organisation

Organisation name	Epuron Projects Pty Ltd
Business name	
ABN	84150163143
ACN	
Business address	Level 11, 75 Miller St, North Sydney, 2060, NSW, Australia
Postal address	
Main Phone number	(02) 8456 7407
Fax	
Primary email address	s.weinhold@epuron.com.au
Secondary email address	

9.2.2 Contact

First name	Sandra
Last name	Weinhold
Job title	Project Manager
Phone	(02) 8456 7407
Mobile	
Fax	
Email	s.weinhold@epuron.com.au
Primary address	Level 11, 75 Miller St, North Sydney, 2060, NSW, Australia
Address	

Declaration: Proposed Designated Proponent

I, Sandra Weinhold **,the proposed designated proponent, consent to the designation of myself as the proponent for the purposes of the action described in this EPBC Act Referral.**

Signature: ..... **Date:** 24 September 2020

Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Referring party (person preparing the information)

9.3.1 Is the referring party (person preparing the information) a member of an organisation?

☑ Yes ☐ No

Organisation

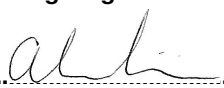
Organisation name	ERA PLANNING PTY LTD
Business name	
ABN	67141991004
ACN	
Business address	7 Commercial Rd, North Hobart, 7000, TAS, Australia
Postal address	
Main Phone number	0361089212
Fax	
Primary email address	anahita@eraplanning.com.au
Secondary email address	

9.3.2 Contact

First name	Anahita
Last name	Jungalwalla
Job title	Principal Environmental Scientist
Phone	0361089212
Mobile	
Fax	
Email	anahita@eraplanning.com.au
Primary address	7 Commercial Rd, North Hobart, 7000, TAS, Australia
Address	

Declaration: Referring party (person preparing the information)

I, __Anahita Ianculovici (nee Jungalwalla)_____, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to this EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence.

Signature: ....  **..... Date: .....** 24 September 2020

Note: PDF may contain fields not relevant to your application. These fields will appear blank or unticked. Please disregard these fields.

Appendix A

Attachment

Document Type	File Name
action_area_images	Figure 1 Guildford Wind Farm Indicative Site Layout.pdf
action_area_images	Figure 2 Guildford Wind Farm_Plantations.pdf
action_area_images	Figure 3 Guildford Wind Farm_Sphagnum.pdf
action_area_images	Figure 4 Guildford Wind Farm_Ovata_Brookeriana.pdf
action_area_images	Figure 5 Guildford Wind Farm_EPBC Listed Flora.pdf
supporting_tech_reports	EagleSurveyReport_Epuron_Guildford_v1.1.pdf
flora_fauna_investigation	Natural Values Atlas Report_8_14-Sep-2020.pdf
flora_fauna_investigation	Protected Matters Report_UVY3ES.pdf

Appendix B

Coordinates

Area 1
-41.356048016194,145.58418102244
-41.356269959396,145.70261896972
-41.397415000139,145.77359797481
-41.470470302003,145.84011997964
-41.552560373009,145.79648968016
-41.551982398784,145.7623789187
-41.48615638828,145.70399047441
-41.425959149966,145.67703774682
-41.402655596126,145.59260705569
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