

Spicers Creek Wind Farm

Independent Planning Commission Briefing

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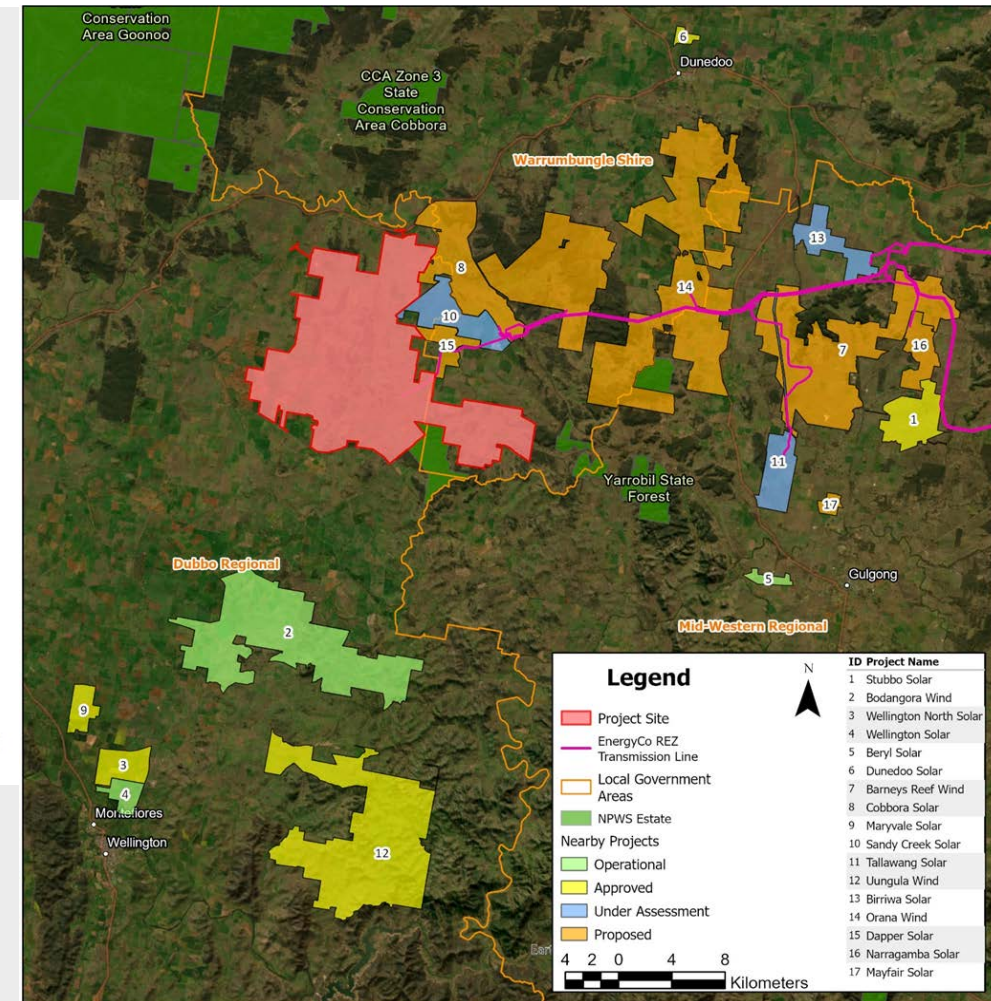
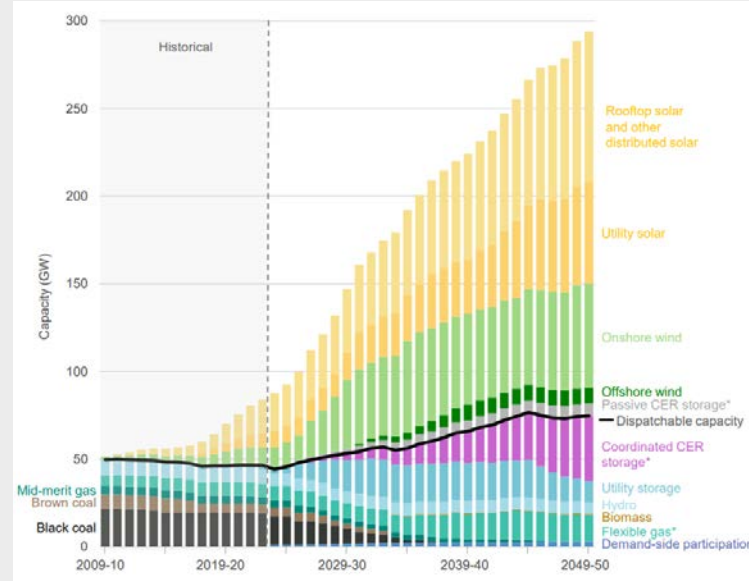


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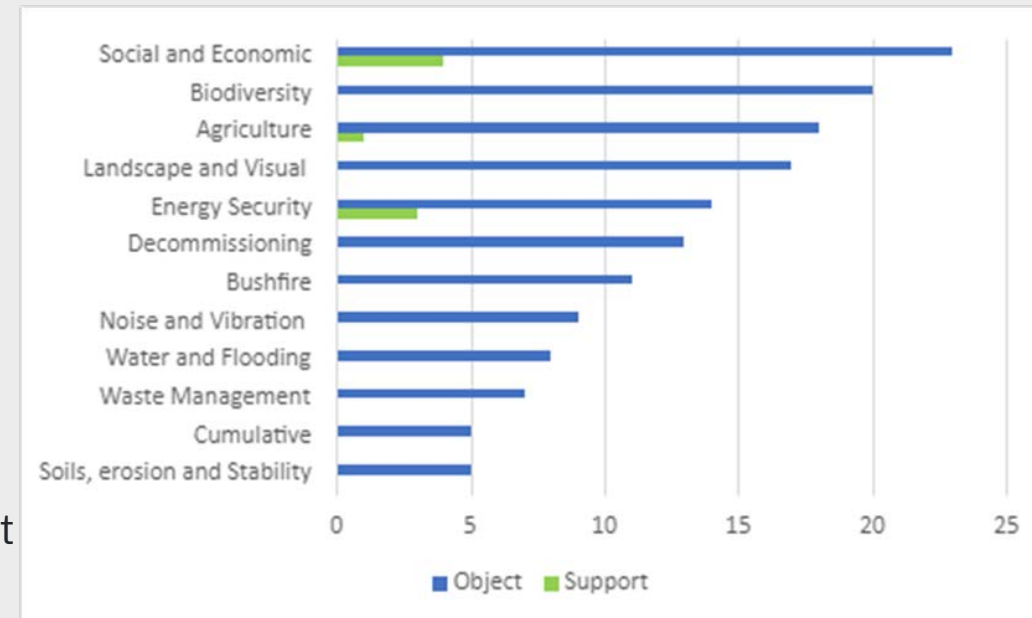
Strategic and Regional Context

- Proposed 117 turbine layout with a generating capacity of about 700 MW
- Approximately 25km north-west of Gulgong within the Dubbo Regional and Warrumbungle Shire LGAs
- Connection to EnergyCo's approved Central-West Orana REZ Transmission Line via direct connection



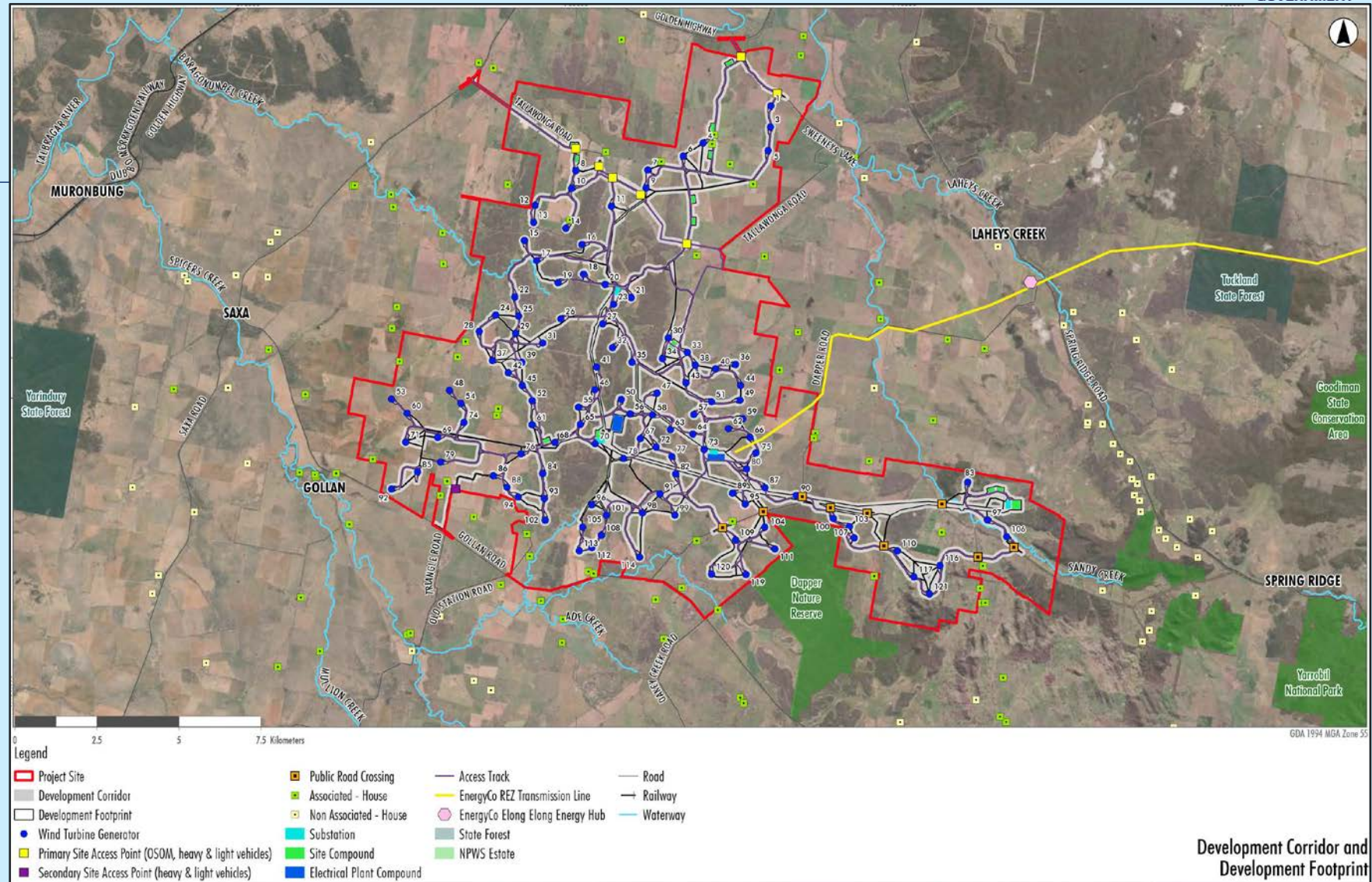
Community Engagement & Public Submissions - EIS

- Public Exhibition of EIS – 28th July 2023 to 24 August 2023
 - 67 unique public submissions (out of 68 total submissions):
 - 57 objecting to the project
 - 7 in support
 - 3 comments
 - Advice from 20 government agencies and two host councils:
 - Warrumbungle Shire Council objected
 - Dubbo Regional Council and Mid-Western Regional Council (not a host council) provided comments
 - **The most common matters raised in public objections were;**
 - socio-economic factors
 - biodiversity
 - impacts to agricultural land



Key Issues

- Energy transition
- Biodiversity
- Visual impacts
- Traffic and Transport



Energy Transition

- 700 MW generating capacity that would power about 370,000 homes
- Consistent with the NSW *Climate Change Policy Framework* of net zero emissions by 2050
- Project would play an important role in:
 - Increasing renewable energy generation and capacity
 - Firming the grid by including 400 MW / 1,800 MWh (4.5hrs) of energy storage
 - Contributing to the transition to a cleaner energy system as coal fired generators retire

Biodiversity



- Project designed to avoid impacts on threatened species and communities within the site.
- 275.3 ha of native vegetation clearance, including 128.1 ha of woodland, 44.4 ha of modified woodland and 102.8 ha of DNG.
- 85 ha of threatened ecological communities (TEC) would be impacted, including:
 - 53.8 ha of Box Gum Woodland (CEEC)
 - 31.2 ha of Inland Grey Box Woodland (EEC)
- SAll not likely - Box Gum Woodland estimated to represent an impact of 0.007% - 0.02% of the total remaining area in NSW
- Squadron committed to conserving 53.8 ha of BGW within a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement

Fauna

- Offsets generated for pink-tailed legless lizard (assumed), glossy black cockatoo (recorded) and barking owl (recorded)
- No breeding habitat recorded for SAll entities: large bent-winged bat and large-eared pied bat

Conditions

- Applicant to carry out detailed monitoring of the bird and bat strike impacts of the project and adaptive management if the impacts are higher than predicted.
- Offset requirements : 7,798 ecosystem credits and 1,677 species credits.

Visual Impacts



Project Design -Reduction of turbines from 138 to 117 and site selection reduced the potential for visual impacts

Public Viewpoints -16 public viewpoints – project unlikely to degrade scenic values of existing landscape

Private Receivers

- 3 non-associated receivers within 3.4 km of turbines (black line) and 32 non-associated receivers within 5 km (blue line)
- Separated in 3 clusters
- Visual performance met at all non-associated receivers

Aviation Hazard Lighting

- CASA recommended obstacle lighting
- The project is within 200 km of Siding Spring Observatory
- The Department has recommended conditions requiring Squadron consult with CASA and Siding Spring Observatory regarding obstacle lighting requirements

Shadow Flicker –recommended condition to limit the impact to 30 hours per year

Ancillary Infrastructure –unlikely to have significant visual impacts with the proposed mitigation measures

Existing vegetation and structures to the south of the dwelling limit majority of the views.

Turbines in excess of 8,000m visible in the background. These, however, are likely to have low visual impacts

Up to two (2) turbines and one (1) blade tip within 5,000 m will be visible at hub height. Majority of turbines screened by existing vegetation



SL002
2.1 km from nearest turbine

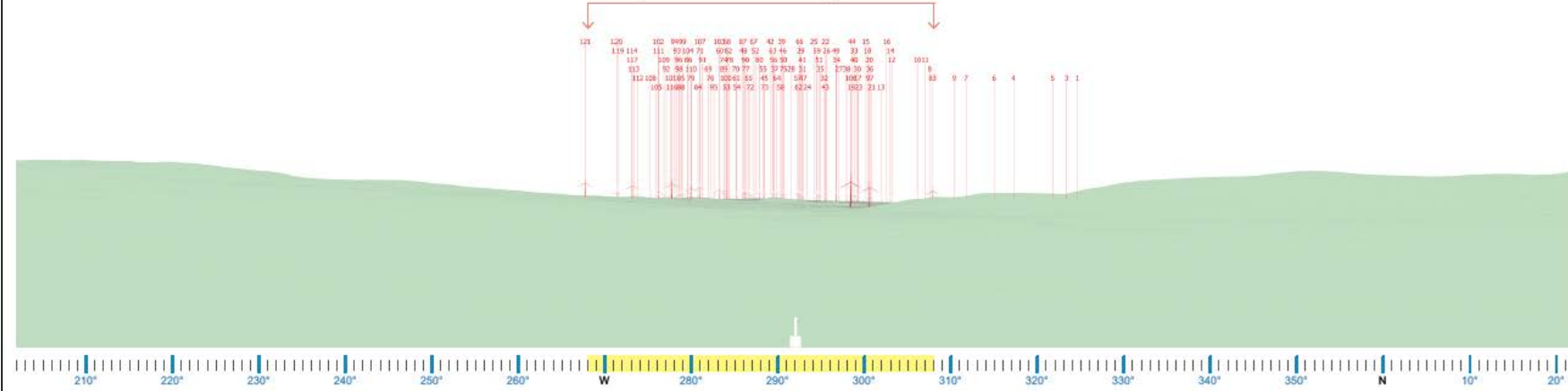
Existing vegetation and farm buildings to the south of the dwelling fragments views to turbines. Approximately 73 turbines will be visible above the vegetation to the south of the dwelling.



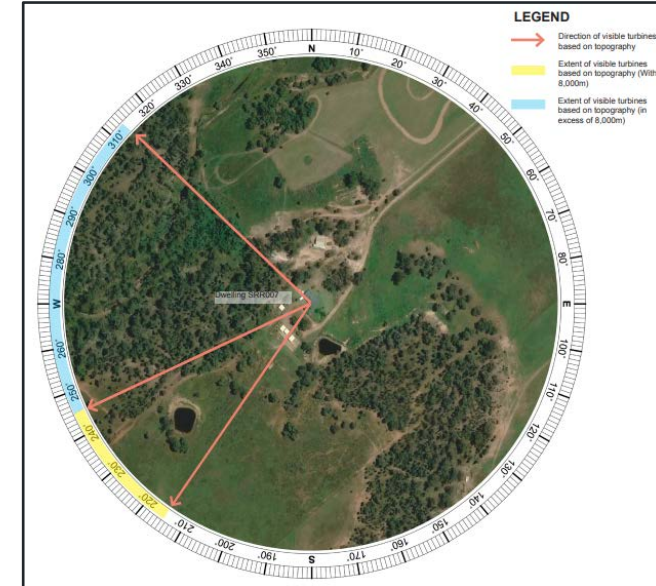
GH001
3.86 km from nearest turbine

Proposed Wire Frame Diagram - 180 degree field of view

Wire Frame Diagram indicates 106 turbines at hub height and 3 blades visible.



Turbines are visible generally in the west. Two (2) turbines located within 5,000m and views to these can be limited through the provision of additional screening. All other turbines located within 8,000m are visible in the background along the ridgeline.



SRR007

SCR010

3.35 km from nearest turbine

Existing vegetation and topography to the northwest of the dwelling screens views to turbines.



LHR009
4.42 km from
nearest turbine

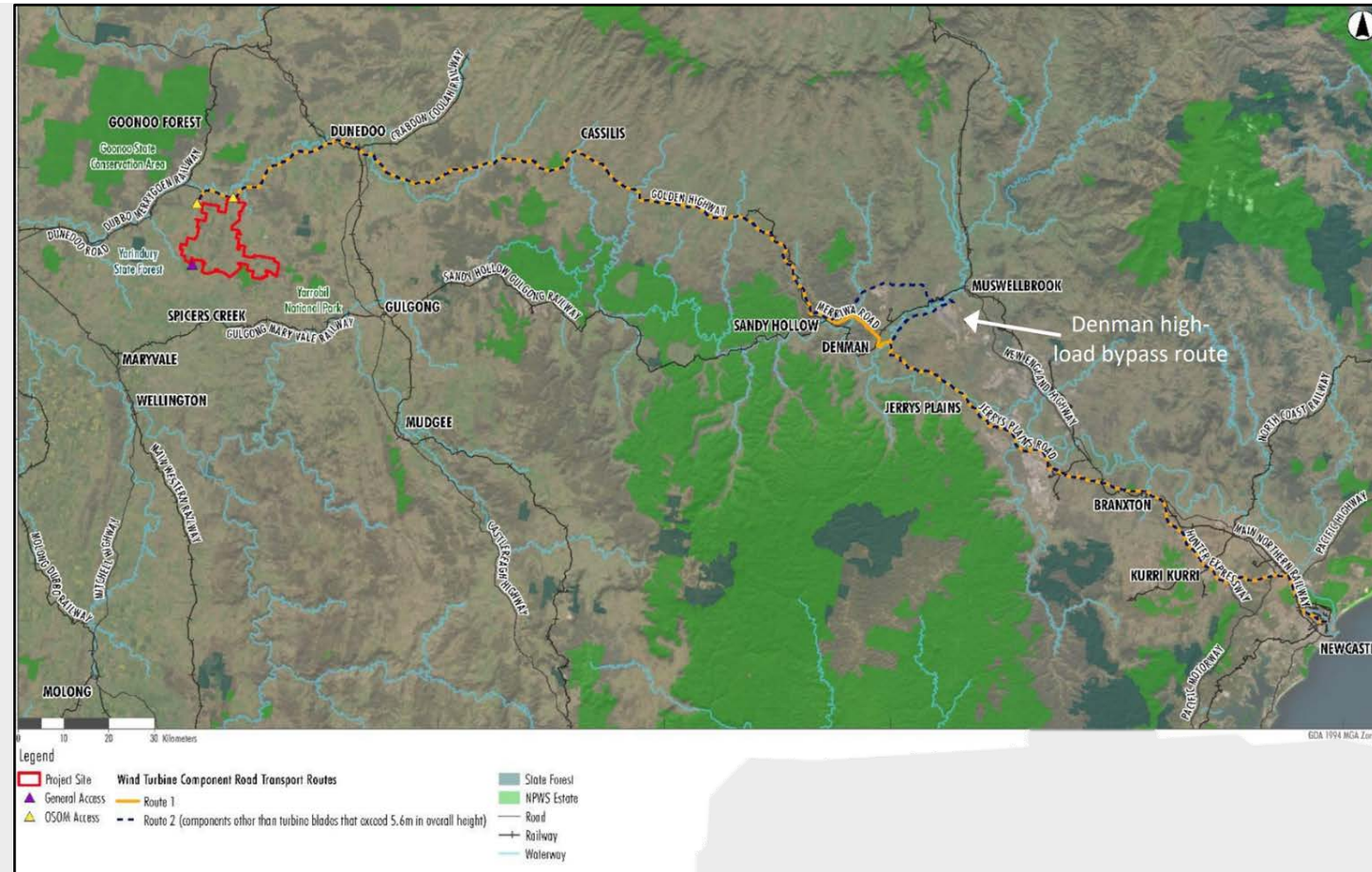
Limited screening provides open views to the turbines. Approximately 117 turbines will be visible to the east of the dwelling.



SR009
4.46 km from
nearest
turbine

Traffic and Transport

- Between Port of Newcastle and Site - 2 routes proposed
- Access from Golden Highway and access points:
 - 2 along Sweeneys Ln for OSOM, HV and LV
 - 5 along Tallawonga Rd for OSOM, HV and LV
 - 1 from Ben Hoden Rd for HV and LV
- Peak volume
 - 236 LV
 - 248 HV (incl 10 OSOM and 80 staff bus trips)
- Operational traffic – 40 LV movements per day
- Condition requiring TMP and repair of damage on public roads at crossing points



Other Matters

- Noise
- Heritage
- Land use compatibility
- Water resources
- Materials sourcing
- Social and economic

Noise and Vibration

- Construction noise levels would exceed the recommended ‘noise affected’ criterion (45 dB(A)) as per the EPA’s *Interim Construction Noise Guideline* at 3 non-associated receivers during the proposed road upgrades which would be completed within a six-month period. Noise levels would be well below the highly noise affected criteria of 75 dB(A).
- Construction traffic noise would comply with the NSW Road Noise Policy at all receivers.
- Operational noise levels would not exceed the Department’s *Wind Energy: Noise Assessment Bulletin* criteria of 35 dB(A) at any non-associated residences.
- Under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997, the project would be subject to an Environmental Protection Licence issued by the EPA, which includes strict noise limits.
- Recommended conditions:
 - restrict works to standard construction hours;
 - require Squadron to minimise noise during construction by implementing mitigation measures as per ICNG; and
 - require Squadron to monitor and minimise construction vibration.

Heritage



- No non-Aboriginal heritage items listed on Commonwealth, National or State Registers are located within or surrounding the project area.
- Five listed local heritage items in the surrounding area. No direct impacts to any of these sites, or associated curtilages.
- 64 Aboriginal heritage items were identified within proximity of the project. All but 13 sites were determined to have low significance.
- Squadron has committed to undertaking management and impact mitigation measures (e.g. avoidance, collection and salvage) for all 13 Aboriginal sites within the development corridor identified as having high, moderate or low/moderate significance as recommended in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment.
- The Department has recommended a condition requiring Squadron to implement all reasonable and feasible measures to avoid and minimise harm to heritage sites and provide a detailed justification where impacts cannot be avoided.

Land Use Compatibility

- Site and surrounds dominated by agricultural land uses, primarily sheep grazing, some cattle grazing and cropping.
- Electricity generating works, including windfarms, are permissible with consent within the project area.
- Wind farms are a passive land use that can co-exist with grazing activities, which can continue concurrently throughout the project lifespan. Upon project decommissioning, the land would be rehabilitated.
- The long-term use of the land for agricultural purposes would not be compromised as a result of the Project.
- Portions of the site are partially overlapping with two exploration licences (ELs).
- Squadron avoided potential impacts to EL 8338 by undertaking consultation with the relevant licence holder and amending the project design prior to exhibition of the EIS.

Water Resources



- The project requires between 80-120 ML of water for construction of the wind farm
- Water will be sourced from multiple sources:
 - Harvested runoff from sediment basins
 - Farm dams under agreement with relevant landowners
 - Groundwater purchased from associated or adjacent landowners or Dubbo Regional Council
 - Purchasing and transporting water to site by tanker
- Water demands from the operational phase will be limited to amenities usage sourced from rainwater captured in water tanks and purchasing and transporting water to site by tanker
- Squadron commits to providing access along Murrawega Road to groundwater bore GW096128 in response to the request of WaterNSW
- Unlikely that the project would intercept an aquifer given the depth to groundwater across much of the site is in excess of 20 m
- Squadron committed to geotechnical investigation to confirm groundwater levels
- Flood modelling indicates low risk

Materials Sourcing

- Squadron has committed to sourcing materials locally and as close to the project site as far as practicable including reusing excavated material
- Squadron has also committed to using topsoil cleared during construction for rehabilitation works where possible.

Social and Economic



- Benefit to the community through 590 construction jobs, expenditure on accommodation and businesses in the local economy by workers, and goods and services
- Injection of \$2 billion in capital investment into the NSW economy.
- The project's construction phase is likely to generate approximately \$310 million in wages
- Squadron would enter into a voluntary planning agreement (VPA) with both Councils - 1.5% of the CIV for the final layout of the project, proportioned based on the number of committed turbines within each council's LGA
- Land and Environment Court has ruled individual property values is not generally a relevant consideration under the EP&A Act unless the project has significant and widespread economic impacts on the locality which is not this case in this instance
- Squadron has reached an in-principle agreement with Dubbo Regional Council to construct a temporary workers accommodation facility on Council-owned land

Site Inspection & EnergyCo Consultation

- Site inspections:
 - 16 to 17 October 2023; and
 - 7 February 2024
- During these site inspections, the Department:
 - Inspected approximately 9 non-associated landowner properties
 - Met with nearby landowners
 - Visited public viewpoints
 - Inspected the site access points at Gollan Road, Golden Highway and Tallawonga Road
- EnergyCo invited to comment on project and draft conditions
 - Supportive of project



Recommended Conditions

Condition Approach

- Outcomes focused
- Role of Compliance and EPA through Environment Protection Licence

Micro-siting

- NSW Telecommunications Authority: T47 and T58 shifted away from telecommunication link
- National Parks and Wildlife Service: turbines to be sited 200m away from Dapper Nature Reserve

Consultation

- National Parks and Wildlife Service is the managing authority of the adjacent Dapper Nature Reserve, the agency has been included for consultation in several matters

Evaluation

- Suitably located in the CWO REZ, with good wind resources and connection to the CWO REZ transmission line
- Changes made to the project through the assessment process have significantly reduced impacts
- Impacts can be readily managed through the recommended conditions of consent
- Assists in transitioning the electricity sector from coal and gas, consistent with NSW policy;
- Could generate over 2,085,000 MWh of clean electricity annually, powering 370,000 homes saving over 2,000,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year
- Achieves an appropriate balance between efficiency of the wind resource development and minimising potential impacts on surrounding land uses and the environment
- Stimulates economic investment, providing flow-on benefits to the local community