

MT FYANS WIND FARM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

APRIL 2021



MT FYANS
WIND FARM



Key Facts

Tip height:
Up to

200m

Site size
13,600
hectares

Landholders
8

Status:
Planning permit
submitted

Location:
5km

north of Mortlake,
on the Mortlake-
Ararat Road

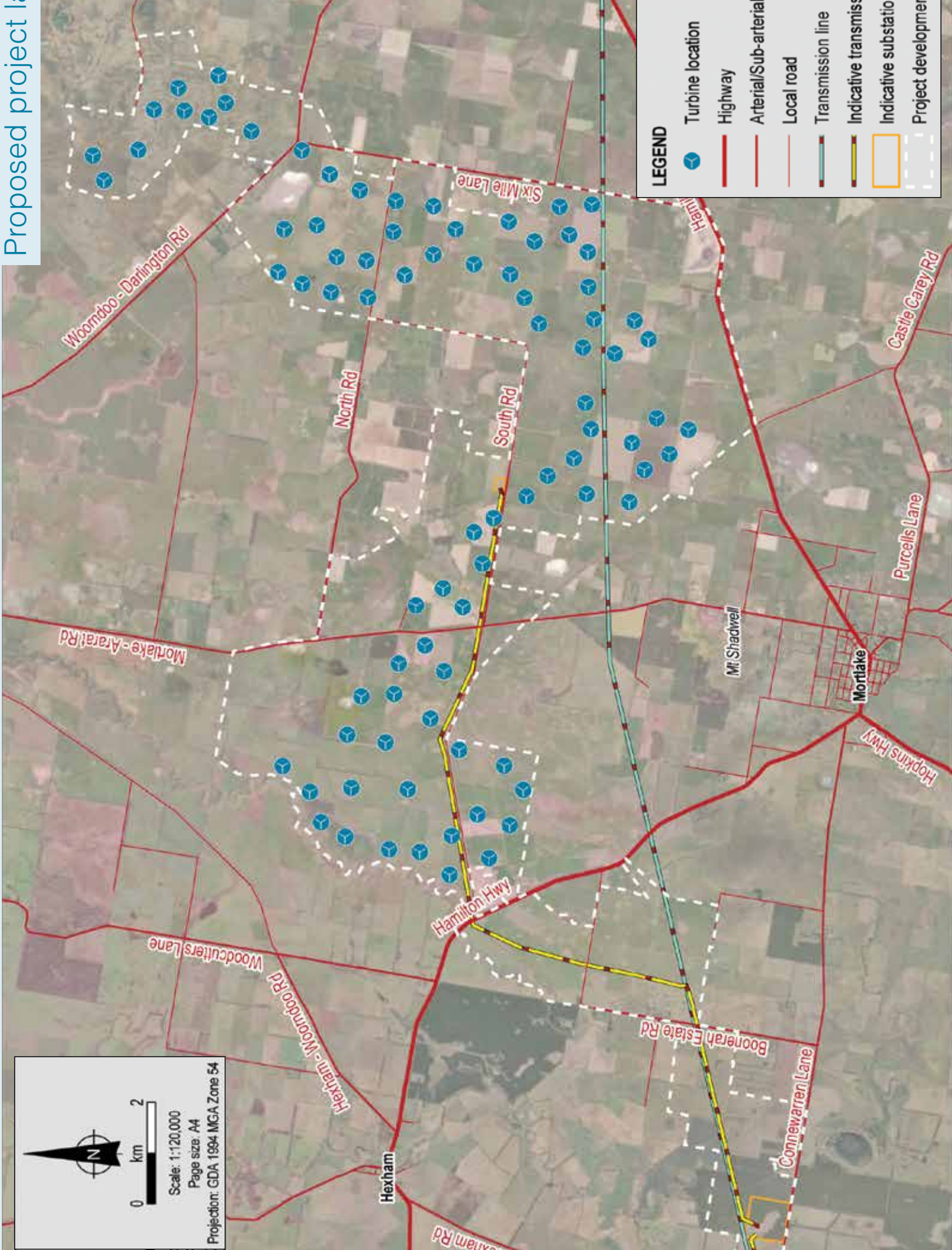
Transmission
line:
18km

of overhead
powerline to
the Mortlake
substation

Capacity:
About
400MW

Up to
85
turbines

Proposed project layout



This information booklet has been produced in response to community questions about the Mt Fyans Wind Farm. We are always available to answer your queries, please don't hesitate to make contact with our project team.

Project design

How many turbines will the project have?

A planning application has been submitted for up to 85 turbines. There will be no more than this number and there could be less than 85.

Will the current design change?

There will be no more than 85 turbines included in the final design, and there could be less. The locations of the turbines may change slightly, but all turbines will remain within the current project development area. Any relocations will adhere to State Government planning regulations.

How high will they be?

The turbines will be no higher than 200 metres when the blades are at their highest point. To put this into a local perspective, the Dundonnell Wind Farm has a blade tip height of 189 metres, the Salt Creek Wind farm has a tip height of 150 metres and Mortlake South Wind Farm a tip height of 186 metres. Mount Shadwell is about 120 metres above the surrounding plain, however, the diagram to the below right shows how Mount Shadwell obscures the view of the turbines from many locations.

Will the turbines be visible from the main street?

Turbines will not be seen from the overwhelming majority of the main street, but there may be some small areas where turbines will be visible in the far distance. If turbines are able to be seen they will not be large or imposing and this will only be from a few locations. To help the community visualise the proposed Mt Fyans Wind Farm we have developed new 3D glasses which model the view of the proposal from several areas in and around Mortlake. Please call into our shopfront to see for yourself!

Planning process

Does the project have planning approval?

No. We are currently working through the planning process.

At what stage of the planning process is the project?

A planning permit application was submitted in late 2018. In April 2020 we received notification from the federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment that the Mt Fyans Wind Farm proposal requires assessment and a decision on whether approval should be given under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. This federal department and the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) are undertaking a bilateral assessment process. The referral identified 21 species and ecological communities that were matters of national environmental significance and required further study. We are still working through this process but have undertaken substantial further studies which have shown the wind farm would have a negligible impact on these species, and we are continuing to work with the relevant state and federal departments.

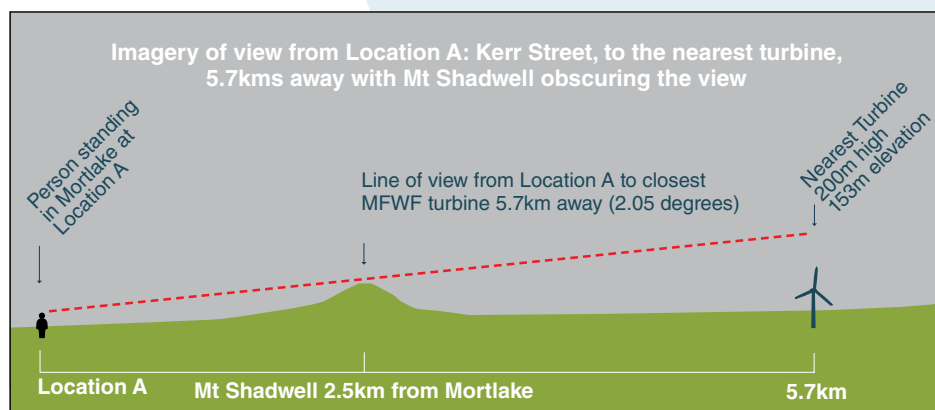
When do you expect to hear an outcome of your application?

We expect a final decision on our planning application within the next 12 months.

What happens now?

We continue working towards completing the studies and reports as required through the EPBC process. Once the ecological matters are resolved, DELWP will advertise the project for public comment before holding a public planning hearing.

The hearing will be conducted by a panel of experts appointed by the Victorian Planning Minister. The panel will review all submissions on the project (including those from the public) and will make a recommendation to the Victorian Planning Minister on whether the project should receive planning approval. The Planning Minister will then make a final decision on whether the project will be given planning approval, and if so, under what conditions. As this process draws nearer, the State Government will be advertising in local newspapers and invite submissions on the project proposal.



Woolnorth Renewables



Who is Woolnorth Renewables?

Woolnorth Wind Farms has been operating since 2011 and owns and operates three wind farms in Tasmania.

We are owned by China Energy and Hydro Tasmania and are based in Tasmania, where we operate the Bluff Point, Studland Bay and Musselroe wind farms. These projects generate almost 10 per cent of Tasmania's electricity needs and directly employ more than 40 people. Many of our staff have been involved in the company's three operating projects since their inception.

We are committed to sustainable practice, protecting the environment and proactively supporting and informing the community.

In Tasmania we host school and other group tours of our projects, as well as supporting community events such as the Rail Trail Run and Ride, Tassie Scallop Fiesta, the Where, Where Wedgie field surveys, Pony Club Tasmania State Trials, Royal Flying Doctor Service Mobile Dental Van and more.

We also invest in a University of Tasmania scholarship program to support young people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds obtain secondary and tertiary educations – contributing more than \$200,000 since 2013. This philosophy of community support will also be part of our approach at Mt Fyans Wind Farm and we look forward to working with you to identify potential areas of support.

I thought Hydro Tasmania owned the Mt Fyans Wind Farm?

Hydro Tasmania began working on the project in 2011. In 2016 Woolnorth Wind Farms combined with Hydro Tasmania to work together on the project. Woolnorth Renewables is now taking the lead and is being supported by project development and planning expertise within Hydro Tasmania.

Environmental

We have lots of brologas in our area. Have you researched the brologa?

Yes, we have undertaken extensive brologa studies between 2009 and 2020.

These have included desktop studies, landowner surveys with 57 landholders in and around the project site, field surveys, aerial surveys and habitat surveys. Brologas are wild animals, free to roam the countryside, and it is the locations where they nest and flock that are of relevance to wind farms.

We have surveyed flocking and breeding sites out to 10 kilometres from the project boundary.

The Southern Bent Wing Bat is part of your designated studies. What is the status of your research in this area?

Extensive bat surveys have been undertaken from 2012 to 2020, with more than 770 nights of data gathered from ground surveys and acoustic detection of Southern Bent-wing Bat calls. This information is with the relevant government departments and we are continuing to work with them through the information as part of the EPBC process.

What other environmental studies are you undertaking?

Wind farm developments are required to undertake extensive environmental studies. Our studies have included targeted surveys and impact assessments on flora and fauna, including native vegetation and species such as the brologa, as well as ecological features of interest.

We have undertaken substantial further studies on no less than 21 species and ecological communities that are matters of national environmental significance. We are continuing to work through this process.

Brologa

What brologa studies have you undertaken?

We have undertaken extensive brologa surveys, as listed to the right, between 2009 and 2020. Studies have included desktop studies, landowner surveys, field, aerial and habitat surveys.

Surveys have been undertaken of flocking and breeding sites out to 10 kilometres from the project boundary. Multiple recent studies incorporated aerial surveys of brologa nesting and fledgling areas to five kilometres from the project boundary. The report is still being completed, but three nesting sites have been identified; one several kilometres to the north of the project which Woolnorth Renewables was already aware of; another on the Mortlake Common and another in the south-east. The latter two are at least five kilometres from the closest turbine, which is sufficient distance for flocking and nesting under both the current and proposed guidelines. Particular attention was paid to the area between North Road, Nine Mile Lane and the Hamilton Highway and the surveys found no evidence of any brologa nesting.

How will the new proposed brologa guidelines impact your project?

DEWLP has not formally advised if or how the new guidelines could be applied to the Mt Fyans project. Woolnorth Renewables will work with the government authority once informed of its decision.

I've seen a brologa – what can I do?

The best way to record brologa sightings, including chick and nest sites, is via the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA). This is managed by DELWP and is a collated atlas of flora and fauna sightings across Victoria. You can find out more at: <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/victorian-biodiversity-atlas>

Level One Assessment

2009
Desktop Study
Field Surveys
Aerial Surveys

Level Two Assessment

2014
Aerial Surveys
Landowner
Surveys

2018
Habitat
Surveys

2019
Extended
Habitat
Surveys

2020
Aerial
Surveys

Level Three Assessment

2020 - 2021
Public Display
Panel Hearing
Permit Conditions

Visual impact

The project's turbines could be 200 metres high – what will they look like?

The turbines proposed for the Mt Fyans Wind Farm have a tip height of up to 200 metres – 11 metres higher than those at Dundonnell Wind Farm and 14 metres higher than the Mortlake South Wind Farm. The naked eye will not be able to discern the difference in size from a distance – the Mt Fyans turbines will have the same height appearance as those at the Dundonnell and Mortlake South projects.

Are the turbines taller than Mt Shadwell?

Mt Shadwell is 283 metres above sea level, but about 120 metres above the surrounding plain. Even when accounting for the natural rise and fall of the land on the project site, the tips of the turbine blades (200 metres at the highest point) will not be visible above Mt Shadwell – the mount will actually obscure the view of the turbines (as per the graphic on page 3 of this document). The closest turbine to Mt Shadwell is more than three kilometres.

Will the turbines be in clusters, or spread out?

The Mt Fyans Wind Farm proposed layout incorporates up to 85 turbines across 13,600 hectares. As the site is quite large the layout is less dense than some other projects. As an example, there will be no more than 24 turbines within a six kilometre radius, or no more than nine turbines within a two kilometre radius.

Will the Mt Fyans Wind Farm surround Mortlake?

No. The Mt Fyans Wind Farm will be located to the north of the Mortlake township. At its closest point the project will be five kilometres from the General Residential Zone. Extensive landscape and visual impact assessments were undertaken as part of our planning application, which took into consideration the distance to the Mortlake township.

Noise

How noisy will the wind farm be?

Wind farms are required to adhere to stricter standards than apply to other types of infrastructure. Wind farm policies in Australia are among the most stringent international standards, and set limits using a combination of a base (or fixed value) limit and allowable margins above the background. For Mt Fyans, the base limit is set at 40dB. As wind speeds increase, so too does the background noise (wind in trees and grass) and when the background noise increases above 35dB then the sound limit of the wind farm is also permitted to increase, however, no more than 5dB above the background noise level. To provide some context to what these noise levels mean, the following list of example noise levels is reproduced from the Victorian Government's Department of Health 2013 publication *Wind Farms, Sound & Health*.

Noise source (dBA)	Sound level
Quiet bedroom	20–25
Rural night-time background	20–40
Typical wind farm (at moderate wind speed 7 m/s)	35–45
Car at 64 km/h at 100m	55
Busy general office	60
Pneumatic drill at 15m	95
Jet aircraft at 50m	105
Threshold of pain	130

Wind farms in Victoria have to adhere to the New Zealand Standard: Acoustics – Wind farm noise (NZS 6808:2010).

Who is responsible for monitoring the noise emitted from the wind farm?

DELWP set the noise limits for a wind farm in the planning permit. The wind farm company is responsible for carrying out the noise monitoring and reporting the results to the compliance authority. The compliance authority for Mt Fyans Wind Farm would be Moyne Shire Council, which would be responsible for noise testing and reporting against the standards set by DELWP in the planning permit.

What will happen if the wind farm exceeds noise limits?

The planning approval for the project will set noise limits at dwellings that must be met and will require noise testing to be carried out after construction to confirm compliance. These limits will be the ones mentioned in the earlier answer.


Procedures for complaints about noise and investigating potential non-compliances will be put in place.

If noise limits are not adhered to the company will have to reduce the sound levels to meet the requirements of the planning approval.

I live two kilometres from the wind farm. Will I hear it?

You may hear the wind farm in certain conditions. This could be on a still night or when the wind is blowing a particular way. The Victorian Government's Department of Health publication *Wind Farms, Sound & Health* states that: 'while it is difficult to generalise, the sound pressure levels from wind farms at the distance of most neighbouring residents (for example, 500–1,000 m from the nearest turbine), are lower than those of many other sources of environmental noise'.¹

¹ Based on sound level measurements taken from multiple resident locations near two Victorian wind farms, at distances 500–1,000 m from the nearest turbine (Victorian Government Department of Health, *Wind Farms, Sound & Health*, (2013), p2.



Transmission line

How long is your transmission line?

The Mt Fyans project requires 18 kilometres of powerline to the Mortlake substation.

Will your transmission line be underground?

No, it will not. It is an option we have explored but it is unfortunately not viable for the project.

Why not?

Heat dissipation underground is always a challenge. Due to the size of the project, the conductors required underground would be substantial – and the cost of installing these is not viable for the project. Also, the transmission corridor is identified as having species of ecological value. To dig trenches and install the transmission line underground would have substantial negative impacts on the flora and fauna in the area.

What will your transmission line look like and where will it be located?

We are very pleased to let you know that while a separate transmission line was included in our planning application, we have an in-principle agreement with transmission line owners Ausnet Services and the Dundonnell Wind Farm to string our line onto 15.5 kilometres of the existing Dundonnell Wind Farm transmission line.

You can see this for yourself on Castle Carey Road, where you will see the outriggers on the roadside of the poles, to cater for stringing of the Mt Fyans Wind Farm transmission line. If this is accepted, the vast majority of our transmission line will use existing infrastructure. The remaining 2.5 kilometres of transmission line will look similar to the existing Dundonnell transmission line, but – based on community feedback – Woolnorth Renewables will specify a matte, non-reflective finish to the poles.

Common questions

Why is the project called Mt Fyans Wind Farm when it involves other properties?

When work began on the proposal in 2011 the project was focused on the Mt Fyans property – in fact it was the then owner of Mt Fyans who instigated the proposal. In the decade since the project has expanded to include other properties.

What will happen at the end of the wind farm's lifespan?

A wind farm generally remains operational for 25-30 years. At the ends of this lifecycle it is the wind farm owner's responsibility to either continue operating the wind farm or decommission the project, which involves removing the above-ground infrastructure and returning the land to its previous state or another appropriate use, if the land owner has a preferred option for the land.

How many jobs will the wind farm create?

The project will create about 10-15 full-time jobs for the 25-30 year lifespan of the project and between 200 and 300 during construction.

The multiplier effect of an economic investment of this size, and the associated job creation, is in fact much greater and would result in millions of dollars being spent locally. This economic investment assists with retaining services and enhancing community confidence.

Who will build the wind farm?

It is too early to determine who will build the wind farm. There are many companies who construct wind farms and we will be undertaking discussions with construction companies once the planning process proceeds.

Do you have a benefit sharing program?

Woolnorth Renewables is currently working on a benefit sharing program which would see annual payments to the local community for the life of the wind farm. We expect to share this proposal with you after we have confirmation of planning approval.

What fire prevention measures will be in place?

Wind farms have to adhere to strict fire mitigation and prevention requirements. There are stringent fire safety measures that must be followed during construction, and once constructed filled fire water tanks will be installed on site. The access track network created as part of the project will provide firebreaks if a fire was to occur and can be used by the CFA if needed.

What about property values – will neighbouring properties decrease in value due to the wind farm?

There have been multiple Australian and international studies undertaken that indicate wind farms do not negatively impact property prices. Please call into our Mortlake shopfront to source copies of reports including a NSW Department of Lands report and Urbis report commissioned by the NSW Department of Environment.

What impacts will construction cause?

Construction of a project the size of the Mt Fyans Wind Farm will cause change within the community. There will be more people around town, which will mean less accommodation is available and demand for grocery supplies and takeaway food in the town will be increased. This has the advantage of improving incomes for businesses and may create employment opportunities. There will also be more traffic on the road and construction vehicles using the existing road network. We are required to develop substantial traffic management and road network plans and adhere to these throughout construction. More information will become available if the project receives planning approval. We are working through development of these plans with Moyne Shire Council.

Have I missed the opportunity to register for visual screening of my property?

No! We would love to hear from you. We have recently written to all neighbours within three kilometres of the project boundary to offer no obligation visual screening. While the Mt Fyans project does not yet have approval, Woolnorth Renewables is commencing this process to allow more time for visual screening measures to grow and develop.

Visual screening will involve the planting of native tree tube stock and associated plant establishment works, as well as advice and support to ensure their successful growth. We have engaged landscape consultants Urbis to assist in developing plans for these landscaping works. Thank you to those who have already registered interest.



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