

Public record pursuant to s. 39 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*

Proposal title: Parron Wind Farm

Proposal description: Development of a wind farm approximately 8 kilometres (km) north-west of Badgingarra, Western Australia. The proposal will involve the construction and operation of up to 79 Wind Turbine Generators (WTG) and associated infrastructure generating up to 489.8 megawatts (MW). The WTGs will be spaced at least 500 metres from each other and will be connected to an onsite substation. The proposal will connect into Western Power's existing 330 kV transmission network, the South West Interconnected System (SWIS), which is located within and runs across the western side of the development envelope (DE). The total indicative disturbance footprint (DF), inclusive of WTGs, transmission lines, cables and substation, is approximately 491.54 hectares (ha).

Proposal location: Shire of Dandaragan, Wheatbelt

CMS number: APP-0027066

Date referral received: 10/01/2025 **Date more information received:** 04/03/2025

Referrer: Zephyr Energy Pty Ltd **Proponent:** Zephyr Energy Pty Ltd

Potential significant effects: There are potential impacts on: flora and vegetation associated with the clearing of native vegetation, terrestrial fauna from the disturbance of fauna habitat and from bird and bat collision with wind turbines, social surroundings including visual amenity, noise pollution and shadow flicker for local sensitive receptors.

Preliminary key environmental factors: flora and vegetation, terrestrial fauna and social surroundings.

Public comment on referral information:

Do not assess:	0
Assess: a) Referral information	0
b) Environmental review - no public review	0
c) Public environmental review	2
<i>Total submissions:</i>	2

Decision: s. 38G(1) – Not Assess

Referral Examined, preliminary investigations and inquiries conducted. Proposal not to be assessed under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) – Advice given.

Summary of reasons pursuant to s.38G(1)(c):

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has decided not to assess the proposal because:

- The EPA considers the likely environmental effects of the proposal are not so significant or unmitigated to warrant formal assessment under Part IV of the EP Act.

- The EPA considers that the likely environmental effects of the proposal can be mitigated by other statutory decision-making processes to achieve consistency with the EPA's factor objectives.
- The EPA's decision has been made on the basis of the proponent implementing the proposal in accordance with the Proposal Content Document, and the Environmental Assessment and Management Plan, which includes mitigation and management measures for construction and operational activities. Changes to expected implementation content and/or management which are likely to result in significant environmental effects have not been considered as part of the decision for this proposal, and may result in a new referral being required for that different proposal.
- The proposal occurs on predominantly cleared agricultural land adjacent to the existing Badgingarra Wind Farm with minimal proposed clearing of 0.04 ha of vegetation in 'good' or better quality. No conservation significant flora listed as Threatened under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* were recorded in the DE, and no Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities occur within the DE. A total of 23 species listed as Priority by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCAs) were recorded in the DE. The proponent will implement a Construction Environmental Management Plan to mitigate and manage impacts to flora and vegetation. These impacts can also be assessed and regulated through a native vegetation clearing permit under Part V Division 2 (Clearing) of the EP Act, to ensure consistency with the EPA's objective.
- The potential direct and indirect impacts on terrestrial fauna from the proposal are not expected to be significant. The clearing of 0.04 ha and trimming of 0.19 ha of primary native foraging habitat for Carnaby's black cockatoo is considered unlikely to reduce habitat quantity or quality to an extent that affects habitat health or diversity in the area, and there will be no impact to potential habitat trees with hollows. The EPA notes that there are several areas of ecological linkage habitat surrounding the DE in the form of conservation reserves and national parks. There is no evidence of black cockatoo breeding or roosting within the DE. The EPA also notes that there are no confirmed records of Carnaby's black cockatoo at the survey site or in the surrounding area flying within the proposed Rotor Swept Area (RSA) height of 70–228 m, with the highest observed flight recorded at 25 m. The proponent will prepare and implement a Fauna Management Plan which will include pre-clearance fauna inspections, fauna trapping/translocation and management of feral/invasive species. These impacts can be assessed and regulated through a native vegetation clearing permit under Part V Division 2 (Clearing) of the EP Act, to ensure consistency with the EPA's objective.

- The EPA considered the ongoing impacts of the operational wind farm on avifauna and bats and acknowledges that while the risks are low, the proponent will design and implement an Avifauna Monitoring Programme to document baseline use of the DE by migratory birds and other avifauna, and identify any regular local movement patterns, with equivalent monitoring and collection of avifauna and bat mortality data post-commissioning of the turbines. The EPA expects these impacts can be managed through the proponent's mitigation and management measures and implementation of the Environmental Assessment and Management Plan, which includes the Avifauna Monitoring Programme. Development Approval was granted under the *Planning and Development Act 2005* by the Shire of Dandaragan in December 2024 subject to several conditions. Condition 16 requires the proponent to implement the Environmental Assessment and Management Plan for the life of the approved development, which can mitigate the proposal's potential impacts on terrestrial fauna to be consistent with the EPA's objective.
- The proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on inland waters and subterranean fauna. Temporary groundwater abstraction will be required for construction and will be managed under the appropriate licences in accordance with the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*. No surface water or groundwater features are expected to be negatively impacted by the proposal. A Surface Water Management Plan is required to be prepared and approved by the Shire of Dandaragan in consultation with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development under conditions of the Development Approval for the construction and operational phases of the project.
- There are no registered Aboriginal cultural heritage sites within the DE. The proponent has consulted with the Yued Aboriginal Corporation, a key stakeholder, and will complete a pre-construction heritage survey. The EPA notes that the proponent has entered into a Heritage Protection Agreement and a Relationship Agreement with the Yued and plans to implement a Cultural Heritage Management Plan based on the survey findings in consultation with the Yued.
- Other potential impacts on social surroundings (landscape and visual amenity, noise, shadow flicker and electromagnetic interference) have been adequately considered by the proponent in the proposal design and in accordance with the *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997* and other relevant guidelines and are not likely to have a significant residual impact. The EPA notes that the Development Approval has several conditions in relation to noise that the proponent must comply with and consult with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Noise Branch, which will ensure the potential impacts to social surroundings can be consistent with the EPA's objectives.

- The EPA considered cumulative impacts of the proposal with other activities, particularly other wind farms, within the region. The cumulative visual impacts of wind turbines in surrounding areas were considered, and it is expected that existing turbines will not always be visible in the same locations where the proposed turbines will be. Minimal vegetation proposed to be cleared within the DE is not considered to cause any additional fragmentation, and ecological linkages to larger patches of vegetation will be left intact. The EPA considers that the impacts from the proposal are unlikely to contribute to additional cumulative impacts which would undermine achievement of EPA's objectives.
- The EPA does not consider that the proposal impacts will combine or interact in a holistic way which requires assessment by the EPA.

Public advice

The EPA publishes the following public advice for the benefit of other decision-making authorities to ensure that their statutory decision-making processes achieve environmental outcomes consistent with the EPA's environmental factor objectives:

- The proponent's Proposal Content Document specifications about the size and purpose of the clearing and the mitigation hierarchy are material to ensuring the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment.
- The assessment and regulation of the native vegetation clearing under Part V Division 2 (Clearing) of the EP Act should ensure the following environmental outcomes are achieved:
 - biological diversity and ecological integrity are maintained.
- The proponent's Environmental Assessment and Management Plan, which includes an Avifauna Monitoring Programme, will ensure that any potential impacts of the proposal on avifauna can be mitigated to meet the EPA's objectives. This plan has been conditioned as part of the Development Approval granted under the *Planning and Development Act 2005* by the Shire of Dandaragan, to ensure the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment over its lifetime.
- The assessment and regulation of impacts on social surroundings under Part V of the EP Act including the *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997* and other related guidelines, should ensure the following environmental outcomes are achieved:
 - protect social surroundings from significant harm.
- In particular, the EPA expects that these processes will:
 - restrict the extent of flora and vegetation and terrestrial fauna habitat impacted by the proposal;

- ensure that measures are implemented to adequately manage potential direct and indirect impacts of clearing on terrestrial fauna; and
- ensure that management of ongoing impacts of wind turbine operations to fauna and social surroundings are managed.

Material information considered by the EPA in this decision

The EPA has considered the following material information in making its decision:

- Parron Windfarm - Referral of a proposal under s.38 of the EP Act
- Parron Windfarm - Proposal Content Document
- Parron Windfarm – Section 38 Referral Supporting Document (January 2025) including Appendices A-K
- Additional information - Parron Windfarm Bird Utilisation Surveys (BUS)
- Additional information - Parron BUS update and Avifauna Impact Risk Assessment
- EP Act s.3, s.4, Part IV, Admin Procedures, EPA factor and technical guidance.

Appeals: There are no rights of appeal under the EP Act in respect of this decision.



Darren Walsh

CHAIR

Delegate of the Environmental Protection Authority

Date: 28 March 2025