

## **Media Statement**

**4 May 2020**

### **Environmental approval recommended for large-scale renewable energy hub**

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has recommended environmental approval for a large-scale wind and solar renewable energy project in the Pilbara, subject to conditions including managing and monitoring impacts on migratory birds.

EPA Chair Dr Tom Hatton said the proposed Asian Renewable Energy Hub comprised a series of onshore wind turbines and solar panels situated about 220 kilometres east of Port Hedland, with a transmission cable corridor to the coast and subsea cables to the edge of state waters.

“The EPA has completed its assessment of NW Interconnected Power Pty Ltd’s proposal to construct and operate a large-scale renewable energy project with an expected operational lifespan of 50 years,” Dr Hatton said.

“One of the key environmental issues the EPA considered was the proposed clearing of 11,962 hectares of native vegetation, and its potential impact on fauna habitat, flora and vegetation. The EPA also considered the potential impact from the construction and operation of four subsea cables on benthic communities and habitat, marine environmental quality and marine fauna.

“Fire management was also considered a key issue, with a staged fire management strategy proposed to monitor the potential impacts and benefits of a landscape-scale prescribed burns program.”

The wind turbines are 26 kilometres away from Eighty Mile Beach and 13 kilometres from Mandora Marsh. Given the large distances from these important Ramsar wetlands, the EPA considers any potential impacts to migratory birds are manageable.

The proposal involves the construction of up to 1,743 wind turbines, solar panels, above and below ground transmission cables and four subsea power cables, covering an onshore and offshore development envelope of 662,400 hectares.

The EPA recommended that the proposal be implemented, subject to conditions including consultation on management plans with relevant stakeholders, including traditional land owners.

The EPA’s report on the Asian Renewable Energy Hub to the Minister for Environment is now open for a two-week public appeal period, closing 18 May 2020. Appeals can be made at [www.appealsconvenor.wa.gov.au](http://www.appealsconvenor.wa.gov.au)

The Minister for Environment will make the final decision on the proposal.

EPA Report 1673 on the Asian Renewable Energy Hub proposal is available [here](#).

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