

Chalumbin Wind Farm

Major design changes focused on nature-positive outcomes

In October 2022 Ark Energy finalised significant design changes for the proposed Chalumbin Wind Farm ahead of submitting the project's draft Public Environment Report (PER) for the Commonwealth's assessment.

The changes came after major concerns about the development's potential environmental impacts were voiced by the local community and conservation stakeholders, given the host properties' proximity to national parks that form part of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area.

Eight wind turbines have been removed resulting in a reduction of access roads by 27 km and a sub-station relocated to reduce the internal overhead transmission line by 4 km. The changes reduce impacts on wet sclerophyll forest areas adjacent to the national parks by 52.6 hectares, or almost one third, and reduce the overall construction footprint by 61 hectares to 1,071 hectares.

Aspect	Previous	Revised
Wind turbines	94	86 (↓ 8)
Access tracks	149 km	122 km (↓ 27 km)
Internal overhead transmission line	17 km	13 km (↓ 4km)
Wind monitoring met masts	8	5 (↓ 3)
Wet sclerophyll clearing	170.1 ha	117.5 ha (↓ 52.6 ha / 31%)
Construction footprint	1132 ha	1071 ha (↓ 61 ha) - 80% common remnant, 'least concern'
Operational footprint	121 ha	107 ha (↓ 14 ha) (0.3% of total project area)

Over the course of the project's planning and assessment phase a total of 114 wind turbines from an initial layout of 200 have been removed to address concerns and reduce impacts. The project is now less than half its original size. It completely avoids all rainforest and the nearest disturbance to the boundary of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area is 600 m in only one location and otherwise almost 1 km or more.

The final proposal also commits to an industry-first to rehabilitate at least 70% of the construction disturbance and strategic land-based offsets within the project area totalling seven times the construction footprint. Offsets would provide new protected habitat within private landholdings of between six to 11 times the size of habitat impacted, and effectively extend the conservation area of Tully Falls National Park and improve habitat connectivity between Koombaloo National Park and Yourka Reserve Nature Refuge.

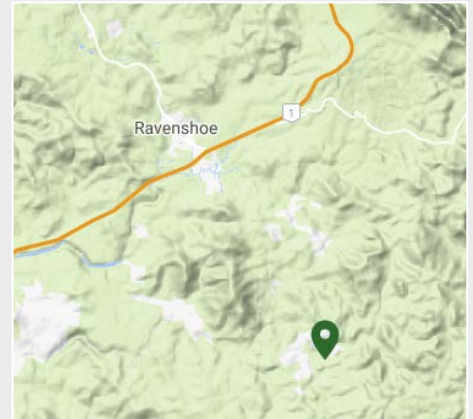
The rehabilitation program, intended to facilitate capacity building and Indigenous training and employment, would be implemented in collaboration with local land care groups. It would leave an operational footprint of 107 hectares for an output capacity of 602 megawatts.

According to Anthony Russo, Ark Energy's General Manager Development for Queensland, the final proposal is the result of two years of ecological assessment work and intensive consultation between the project team, investor, engineers, ecologists, Traditional Owners, stakeholders and the local community, with a shared focus on achieving nature-positive outcomes.

"Increasing renewable energy supply is urgent to reduce carbon emissions, replace fossil fuel energy sources and meet growing electricity demand. Conserving the natural environment and Australia's unique biodiversity is equally important. Achieving these priorities together through sustainable development that delivers nature-positive outcomes requires robust science, an interdisciplinary approach, and careful planning and management." said Mr Russo.

"The project area for Chalumbin Wind Farm has an excellent wind resource and high voltage transmission lines with capacity, enabling comparatively faster connection to the grid.

Location

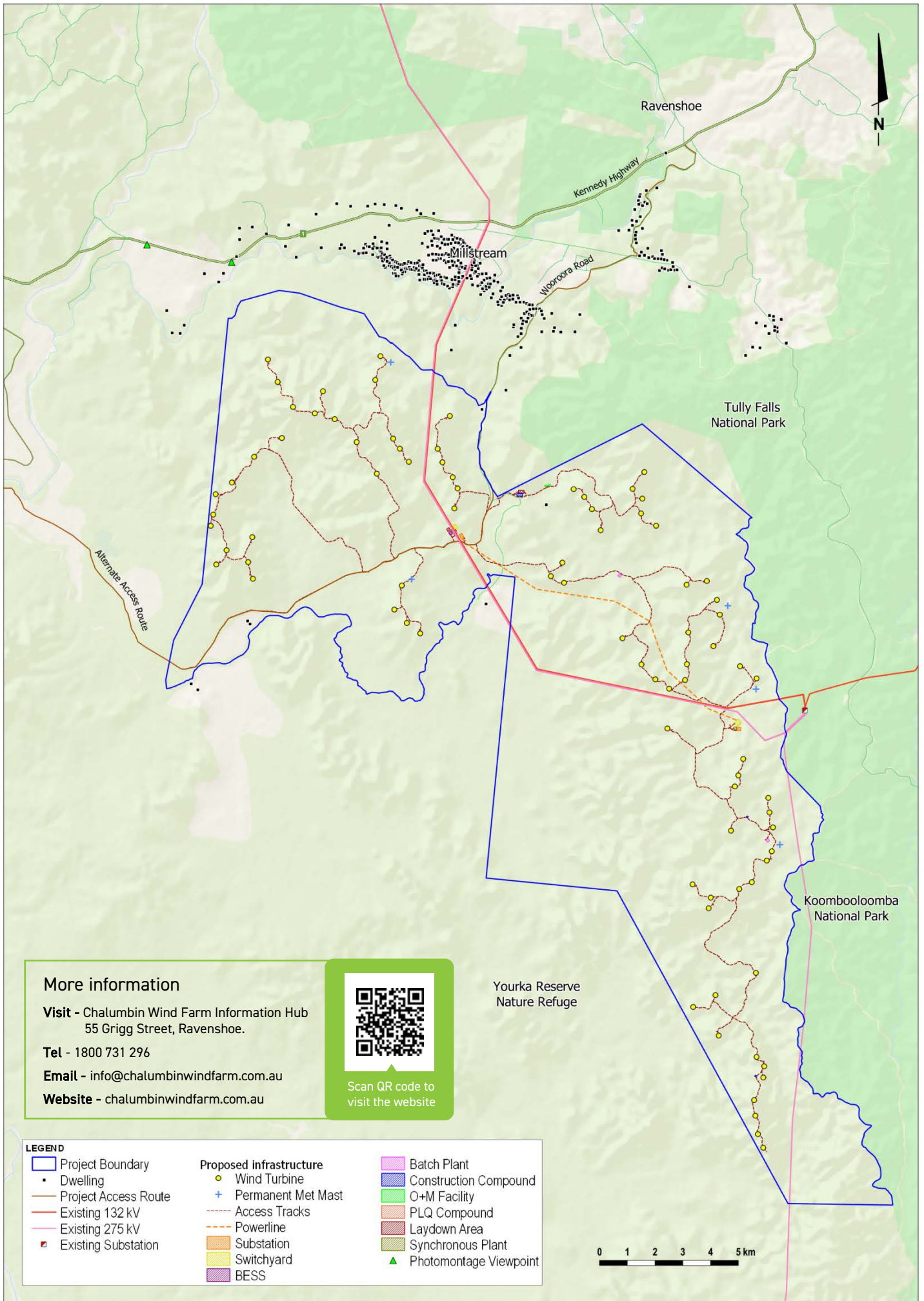


The Chalumbin Wind Farm project area is within two privately owned cattle grazing properties about 15 km south-west of Ravenshoe in North Queensland. They include existing access tracks and high voltage transmission lines. The project does not involve the Chalumbin wilderness area of the same name or the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area, and completely avoids rainforest.



"We have focused on developing a proposal that will provide a significant contribution to renewable energy capacity, as well as local social, environmental and economic benefits that outweigh the project's unavoidable impacts.

"In addition to industry-leading community benefit funding, hundreds of jobs and millions in economic activity, this proposal provides conservation benefits for key species and can achieve a significant net gain for biodiversity in the project area over the longer term."



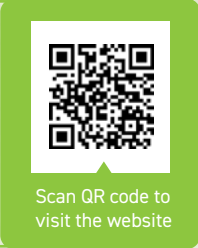
More information

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LEGEND

Project Boundary	Wind Turbine	Batch Plant
Dwelling	Permanent Met Mast	Construction Compound
Project Access Route	Access Tracks	O+M Facility
Existing 132 kV	Powerline	PLQ Compound
Existing 275 kV	Substation	Laydown Area
Existing Substation	Switchyard	Synchronous Plant
	BESS	Photomontage Viewpoint