

Chalumbin Wind Farm

Project Update

December 2021



Ecological assessment update

Ecological assessment work is still underway by independent specialists and studies are providing further clarification of species' utilisation of the project area. For example, a nest originally considered to potentially be a Red Goshawk nest has since been found to be disused. Despite targeted investigations of nesting habitat and area wide bird surveys, no Red Goshawk presence or nests have been confirmed within the site.

Work to minimise the disturbance footprint is ongoing. As the assessment work is being done the project design is being refined and modified in consultation with ecology experts and key stakeholders. Recent improvements have reduced the disturbance footprint by 9%. The proposal has been revised from 95 to 94 wind turbines and the overall clearing reduced from 1,250 to 1,132 hectares, less than 4% of the overall land area.

Epuron estimates the development application and accompanying assessment reports will be ready to submit to the Queensland Government by the end of 2021. Once lodged it will be assessed with technical input from relevant departments.

The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) has also determined that it will assess the proposal under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) through a Public Environment Report (PER).

DAWE is due to issue final guidelines for the draft PER soon and they will be published on the EPBC Act – Public notices portal (Referral number 2021/8983): epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/publicnoticesreferrals/.

Epuron's ecology consultants will prepare a draft PER in early 2022 after the remaining assessment work has been completed. It will include the results of onsite investigations and any proposed offset strategies. Once DAWE is satisfied with the draft PER it will be placed on public exhibition.

Community information session early 2022

Epuron is planning to host an information session in Ravenshoe in early 2022 to give interested members of the community an opportunity to discuss the proposal with the project team.

To be notified directly when this has been scheduled please register your interest with the project team by email (address below) or register for project updates.

Register for email updates at epuron.com.au/mailling-list-details or to receive updates via post please send the project team your name, address and a request to be added to the mailing list: info@chalumbinwindfarm.com.au

Location The proposed location for Chalumbin Wind Farm is not in the wilderness area known locally as 'Chalumbin'. The site is in two agricultural properties used for cattle grazing with existing disturbed areas and Powerlink easements. Much of the vegetation within the project boundary is open woodland (see pictures above left). The project does not involve any rainforest. The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area boundary protects the rainforest and the closest disturbance area would be more than 1 km away.

Access tracks Roads would generally be the standard width of 5.5 m and only wider in parts where required for safety or assembly during construction. Where this is required the verge area would be rehabilitated.

Planning and assessment

Queensland Government

- 1 Site selection, initial concept and preliminary investigations
- 2 Pre-lodgment meeting with State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA)

WE ARE HERE Studies and assessments (prescribed by SARA State Code 23)

- 4 Application and assessments submitted to SARA
- 5 *If required* - further information requested and further assessment
- 6 *If required* - public notification of proposal
- 7 Assessment
- 8 Determination

Commonwealth

- 1 Referral to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment for review under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)

- 2 Decision: controlled action (Referral 2021/8983), assessment by Public Environment Report (PER)

WE ARE HERE PER guidelines issued

- 4 Preparation of draft PER
- 5 Draft PER on public exhibition
- 6 Final PER submitted
- 7 Determination

Ecological assessment process

The Chalumbin Wind Farm proposal will be subject to rigorous and comprehensive environmental assessment by both state and federal government authorities, with special focus on key flora and fauna species.

Assessment by the Queensland Government

Ecological assessment requirements for the development application are outlined in the Queensland Government's *State code 23: Wind farm development*. It includes assessment for avifauna (birds and bats), habitat and corridors, and on-site vegetation. Assessment requirements include field surveys, species-specific studies, strategies to minimise and mitigate impacts, preparation of numerous technical reports to meet the requirements of relevant state codes; and preparation of preliminary vegetation, fauna, and bird and bat management plans.

State code 23 aims to ensure wind farms avoid, or minimise and mitigate, adverse impacts on the natural environment (fauna and flora) and associated ecological processes. A copy of the code can be downloaded at tinyurl.com/y3meslhf or by scanning the QR code right:



Assessment by the Australian Government

Based on Epuron's referral to the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) the project has been deemed a 'controlled action' under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). This means the proposal must also be assessed and approved by DAWE under the EPBC Act.

The purpose of a referral is to enable DAWE to review the proposal under the EPBC Act and determine whether it warrants federal assessment. A referral is not an impact assessment report and is done prior to the bulk of the assessment work with impact estimates based on a cautious approach to species that could potentially be in the area.

DAWE has determined it will assess the proposal through a Public Environment Report (PER), a multi-step process that gives members of the public the opportunity to participate. Epuron is required to submit a draft PER based on guidelines provided by DAWE, and once accepted it will be placed on public exhibition. Submissions are then reviewed before a final PER is submitted for consideration by the Minister.

Questions and comments welcome

Epuron is a founding signatory to the Clean Energy Council's Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Projects, a commitment to engage respectfully with communities, be sensitive to environmental and cultural values, and make a positive contribution to the regions in which we operate. We welcome input from members of the community and where practicable incorporate community input to improve project outcomes and benefits. Questions and comments are welcome and can be sent to the project team via info@chalumbinwindfarm.com.au or the online feedback form available on the website: chalumbinwindfarm.com.au.

Thank you to everyone who has engaged with us on this project. We wish you all a safe and happy festive season and new year.



More information

Website: chalumbinwindfarm.com.au or scan QR code:
Email updates: epuron.com.au/mailling-list-details
Project contact: Paul Stangroom, Development Director
Email: info@chalumbinwindfarm.com.au

