



Bald Hills Wind Farm Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the Bald Hills Wind Farm Project?

A. The Bald Hills Wind Farm is an exciting project that will supply clean and sustainable energy. The Project is located approximately 10 kilometres south-east of Tarwin Lower in South Gippsland and will consist of 52 turbines with a total capacity of 106.6 megawatts (MW).

Q. When will the Bald Hills Wind Farm be built?

A. Construction of the Bald Hills Wind Farm commenced on 07 August 2012. It is expected that the Bald Hills Wind Farm will be fully operational by early 2015.

Q. How much electricity will the Bald Hills Wind Farm generate?

A. Based on a long-term average forecast, the Bald Hills Wind Farm should produce 335,100 MW hours (MWh) of electricity per year. This is equivalent to powering over 62,000 average homes.

Q. How will electricity generated from the wind farm connect to the network/grid?

A. Electricity generated from the Bald Hills Wind Farm will contribute to the national electricity network through a connection to the existing 66kV sub transmission network at Leongatha South. A powerline, or sub-transmission line, will be built to carry the electricity generated at the wind farm to connect to the existing 66kV network.

Q. How do you select a route for the powerline?

A. The process for selecting the most appropriate route for a powerline for any development or project is complex. The Bald Hills Wind Farm is no exception. Many issues, including technical, environmental, regulatory and landowner impacts, need to be thoroughly assessed and considered before the route of the powerline is selected.

Q. Will the community have a say as to where the powerline will go?

A. Selecting the most appropriate route for a powerline for any development or project is a complex process. All potentially affected landowners are being consulted. Landowner feedback and suggestions will be taken into consideration in finalising the preferred route for the power line.



Q. What environmental assessments will be done on the powerline route?

A. Environmental assessment on all of the options for the powerline route will be conducted and considered as part of the process of selecting a preferred route.

Once a preferred route is selected, a comprehensive flora and fauna assessment will be undertaken to ensure that impacts to native vegetation and habitat are avoided and or minimized wherever practical.

There are strict guidelines for flora and fauna management in Victoria. We are working closely with the local council and Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to ensure that all guidelines are complied with.

The clearing of native vegetation is regulated under local government planning schemes in Victoria and under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. In most cases losses must be offset by the protection or management of similar vegetation elsewhere. A site close to the wind farm has already been identified by BHWF for offsetting.

Q. Will pylons or poles be used for the powerline?

A. The powerline will be a single power pole construction, which is typical for the distribution of 66kV in the South Gippsland area. Concrete or treated hardwood poles are usually preferred for distributing electricity at this voltage.

Q. What process will you follow to put the powerline on private land?

A. The process to put in powerline on private and public properties is through the creation of easements. The process for creating an easement and the rights of landowners are described in the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1998* and associated regulations. The agreement for an easement clearly stipulates the terms and conditions for both the landholder and the beneficiary of the easement.

Q. Will easements be compulsorily acquired for the powerline?

A. Bald Hills Wind Farm will be consulting with all potentially affected landowners on the powerline route. We aim to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement with each landowner along the selected powerline route.

As a licensed electricity generator Bald Hills Wind Farm has certain rights under the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* to carry out works specified in the Act. Compulsory acquisition is regarded as a last resort only if all reasonable attempts to negotiate a mutually acceptable outcome are exhausted and agreement cannot be reached.



Q. How is compensation to affected landowners covered?

A. The *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1998* and associated regulations describe the process for creating easements, landowners' rights and general principles on which compensation is to be based. If an easement is created on your property, Bald Hills Wind Farm will pay fair compensation. Compensation will be assessed on the basis of the market value of your interest in the land which is required for the easement. The value of the property will be assessed by a qualified valuer. Compensation will be paid following registration of the easement on the title.

Q. How wide will the easement for the powerline be?

A. Typically the width of the easement required for a single pole 66kV powerline is approximately 15 metres.

Q. How many poles will be placed on each property?

A. The exact number of poles on any one property is dependent on a number of factors including the length of the powerline on the property, the topography of the land and other local conditions. Typically, for a 66kV sub-transmission line, there are approximately 10 to 15 poles per kilometre.

Q. Is undergrounding the powerline a possible option?

A. Overhead powerlines are common for long distances in rural and regional areas. While underground powerlines may have less visual impact, they can have a greater impact on the environment and possible cultural heritage sites. During the construction phase, they would cause greater disruption to farming activities and would cost significantly more to build.

There are restrictions on easements where underground powerlines exist. For example, any excavation works on easements where there are underground powerlines would be severely limited to ensure that electricity cables are not damaged. In Victoria it is an offence to damage cables and tough laws and penalties are in place for any damage caused. Landowners will be restricted in terms of structures that they can build on the easement, such as fence posts, and restrictions will also apply on what can be planted on the easement.

In the event of a fault, work on repairing underground powerlines will take a lot longer to complete than that on an overhead powerline. There will be significant ground disturbance to locate and repair any faults with an underground powerline.

Q. Who will maintain the powerline once it's built?

A. It is anticipated that the local distribution network service provider, SP AUSNET, will be responsible for operation and maintenance once the powerline is operational.



Q. Will the powerline have any effect on my family's health?

A. Electromagnetic fields, or EMF, are generated in the vicinity of power lines, mobile phone towers, broadcast towers and similar transmitters.

The powerline for the Bald Hills Wind Farm will be constructed on a single pole, which is typical for the distribution of 66kV in the South Gippsland area.

Scientific evidence has not demonstrated a causal link between typical exposures to EMF and adverse health effects.

Q. Will you be removing any native vegetation to put in the powerline?

A. We will avoid and minimize where practicable the reduction or removal of any native vegetation in constructing the powerline.

There are strict guidelines for the removal and replacement of native vegetation in Victoria. We are working closely with the local council and Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to ensure that all guidelines are complied with. This includes provisions such as offset that would be required if any native vegetation is removed.

Q. How long will the construction of the powerline take?

A. The construction of the powerline is expected to take approximately twelve months, depending on weather conditions.

Q. How will the local community benefit from this project?

A. The project will boost the local community by creating local jobs during the construction of the wind farm and for the ongoing operations. This could include direct employment for road building, electrical works contractors, fencing and landscaping. We expect that indirect benefits may also flow to other areas such as retail and accommodation.