

1. Introduction

A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) was prepared by TransGrid for the Coppabella Wind Farm - Rebuild of Transmission Line 99M and was determined in March 2020.

As a result of the connection of other renewable generation in the Yass region which has imposed constraints on the network, there is now a requirement to install an additional transformer at Yass substation to support the grid connection of Coppabella Wind Farm (CWF) (the proposed modified activity).

An Addendum Review of Environmental Factors (Addendum REF) was prepared by TransGrid (July 2020) to assess the potential impacts of the proposed activity.

The objectives of this Decision Statement are to:

- > Document consultation with agencies and the public
- > Review the environmental impacts of the proposed modified activity and the significance of those impacts
- > Explain clearly why the key conclusions in the Addendum REF were or were not accepted
- > Document the authorised person's engagement with the Addendum REF
- > Make a determination of the proposed modified activity, or make a decision that there is insufficient information to discharge the duty under section 5.5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

2. Consultation

Consultation for the proposed modified activity was undertaken in accordance with TransGrid's Consultation Protocol and legislative requirements. A summary of the consultation undertaken with the general public and Government agencies is provided below. Full details of all consultation undertaken for the proposed modified activity are included in the Addendum REF and the Addendum Submissions Report.

During the preparation of the Addendum REF, TransGrid provided written notification of the proposed modified activity between 20 May and 25 May 2020 to Yass Valley Council, occupiers of land adjoining Yass substation and the Chair of the Coppabella Windfarm Community Consultative Committee.

The Addendum REF was publically displayed for 26 business days between 3 August and 7 September 2020 on TransGrid's website (<https://www.transgrid.com.au/what-we-do/projects/current-projects/yass-murrumburrah-project>). Emails and letters were sent to key stakeholders between 29 July and 2 August 2020 advising them of the display of the Addendum REF and how they could make a submission. The email and letters included exhibition timeframes and details on how to make a submission on the proposed modified activity. The key stakeholders included affected landholders adjoining the Yass substation, potentially affected landholders along the heavy vehicle transport route through Yass Township, relevant Government agencies and all landholders previously consulted as part of the original REF.

During public exhibition of the Addendum REF, TransGrid received submissions from seven respondents. A total of five submissions were from individuals, one submission from a local community group and one submission from Hilltops Council. The key issues raised which are specific to the proposed modified activity include:

- > Ownership and cost;
- > Disturbance to contaminated soil;
- > The need for the proposed modified activity;
- > Lack of transparency and consultation surrounding the need for the additional transformer; and
- > Construction noise.

All six submissions lodged by the community were not supportive of the approved project and the proposed modified activity.

TransGrid prepared an Addendum Submissions Report (October 2020) to address all issues raised in the submissions and how they have been considered and taken into account.

3. Consideration of Impacts

The Addendum REF and Addendum Submissions Report details the proposed activity, assesses the potential impacts on the environment and provides management measures to avoid, minimise, manage and/or offset those impacts.

The Addendum REF and Addendum Submissions Report addresses the requirements of Section 5.5 of the EP&A Act by considering to the fullest extent possible, all matters affecting or likely to affect the environment from the proposed activity. The REF also considers factors prescribed under clause 228 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*.

The Addendum REF and Addendum Submissions Report conclude that the proposed activity is not likely to significantly affect the environment, threatened species, ecological communities, or their habitats and is not to be carried out on land that is, or is part of a declared area of outstanding biodiversity value.

The Addendum REF and Addendum Submissions Report also consider that the proposed activity is not likely to have a significant impact on matters of National Environmental Significance (NES) or Commonwealth land, and therefore does not require a referral under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

With consideration of the environmental impacts detailed in the Addendum REF and Addendum Submissions Report, the key conclusions are accepted for the following reasons:

- > The Addendum REF and Addendum Submissions Report has been prepared by persons appropriately trained to consider and assess the impacts of the proposed activity;
- > It is considered that the Addendum REF and Addendum Submissions Report provides a true and fair review of the proposed activity in relation to its potential effects on the environment; and
- > The REF and Submissions Report is comprehensive and examines and takes into account, to the fullest extent possible, all matters affecting or likely to affect the environment as a result of the proposed activity.

4. Determination

I, BRIAN SALTER, as an authorised person on behalf of TransGrid, have examined and considered the Addendum REF and Addendum Submissions Report for the proposed modified activity in accordance with section 5.5 of the EP&A Act.

I have been provided a detailed briefing on the contents of the Addendum REF and Addendum Submissions Report, and I have gained an understanding of the impacts of the proposed activity.

As per the requirements of section 2.5.1 of the Code, I have not been involved in conducting the assessment.

The proposed modified activity is not likely to significantly affect the environment, and is not likely to significantly affect threatened species, populations, ecological communities or their habitats and is not to be carried out on land that is, or is part of a declared area of outstanding biodiversity value.

I determine that an Environmental Impact Statement and Species Impact Statement are not required in respect of the proposed activity. The proposed activity may now proceed subject to the implementation of the revised mitigation measures detailed in Appendix A of the Addendum Submissions Report.

This is not a conditional decision and no further conditions are required (other than the mitigation measures stipulated in the Addendum Submissions Report).



Brian Salter

EM/ Legal Governance and Risk

TransGrid

Date: 06/11/2020