

# WILLATOOK

## Wind Farm



### PROJECT UPDATE

We are pleased to report that the Willatook Wind Farm Environment Effects Statement (EES) and Permit Applications were successfully exhibited publicly during July and August, and a broad range of views on the project were submitted to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

The next step in the EES process is the Willatook Wind Farm Project Inquiry and Panel hearing. This public hearing will commence at 10am on Tuesday 11 October at the Lighthouse Theatre in Warrnambool and will be open to the public to view in person or online via Zoom.

An independent Inquiry and Panel Committee was appointed by the Minister for Planning to advise on the EES and submissions received on the project. The Inquiry members are Con Tsotsoros (chair), Rachael O'Neill (deputy chair), Phil West (member) and Jacqueline Gorski (member).

The committee will consider all written and verbal submissions

received before making recommendations to the Minister on the environmental effects of the project.

At the hearing, there will be presentations by several expert witnesses, government agencies, Moyne and Glenelg shire councils, and community members who made submissions on the EES and who requested to present to the Inquiry.

The hearing will conclude on 7 November and once the hearing is complete, the committee will submit its report to the Minister for Planning within 40 business days.

For more information about the panel hearing, and how to access it in person and remotely, see below or visit:

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/willatook-wind-farm-inquiry>

Warm regards,

The team at Wind Prospect

## THE PROJECT

Willatook Wind Farm will harness strong and reliable winds to generate renewable energy through 59-wind turbine generators and battery storage system. It will have the capacity to produce enough clean renewable electricity to power up to 200,000 Victorian homes.

## ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT PROCESS



## WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE RECENTLY

### EES public exhibition

The EES along with the planning permit applications were placed on public exhibition for 30 business days between 4 July and 12 August 2022. Submissions on the EES were collected by Planning Panels Victoria (PPV). Submissions on the planning permit applications were separately collected by the Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning (DELWP) on behalf of the Minister for Planning who is the responsible authority. In total there were 67 submissions on the EES and 47 submissions on the planning permit applications.

### Directions hearing

The Inquiry and Panel held a Directions Hearing on Friday, 2 September 2022 online by video conference using Zoom. The Directions Hearing discussed the format for the Hearing including time and venue, timetable of speakers and directions on the exchange of information.

## NEXT STEPS

### Public hearing

The Inquiry and Panel will conduct a public hearing, which provides an opportunity for those who have made submissions on the EES or planning applications and indicated that they would like to speak in support of their written submission.

The Inquiry and Panel Hearing will commence at 10am on Tuesday 11 October and run across four weeks until Monday 7 November.

The **in-person** hearing days will run from:

- Tuesday 11 October to Friday 14 October, and,
- Wednesday 2 November to Friday 4 November

Members of the public are welcome to attend these sessions in-person to observe proceedings or alternatively can observe via Zoom. Proceedings will be viewable via Zoom on **all** of the scheduled hearing days.

The venue for the hearings is Lighthouse Studio room, Level 1, Lighthouse Theatre, 185 Timor Street, Warrnambool.

Details on how to access the hearing via Zoom or telephone are available at: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/willatook-wind-farm-inquiry>

### Panel and Inquiry Report

Following conclusion of the hearing, the Inquiry will submit its report to the Minister for Planning to inform the Minister's assessment for the project.

The Minister for Planning will conclude the EES process by issuing a written assessment of the project's environmental impacts under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*. The Minister's assessment is not an approval in its own right, but will recommend whether the project's environmental effects are acceptable, and may set out modifications or further management measures that the Minister thinks are appropriate.

The Minister's assessment is authoritative statutory advice that needs to be considered by relevant decision makers of project approvals.



**Did you know...** The Willatook Wind Farm EES consists of 27 chapters, 16 supporting studies, a management plan and peer reviews, all of which have been reviewed by a Technical Reference Group.

# MOYNE SHIRE COUNCIL COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEY

The Moyne Shire Council recently sought feedback on its position for proposed new wind farms in the shire. Wind Prospect, along with a number of community members, took the opportunity to provide a submission to Council's draft wind farm position.

As part of this process, an independent phone survey of 400 Moyne Shire residents was conducted by JWS Research. The JSW Research report was tabled at Council's Ordinary Council Meeting on 6 September, and is available on the Council website.

We commend the council for undertaking this research to further understand community attitudes about wind farms.

Some of the key findings from the JWS Research report included:

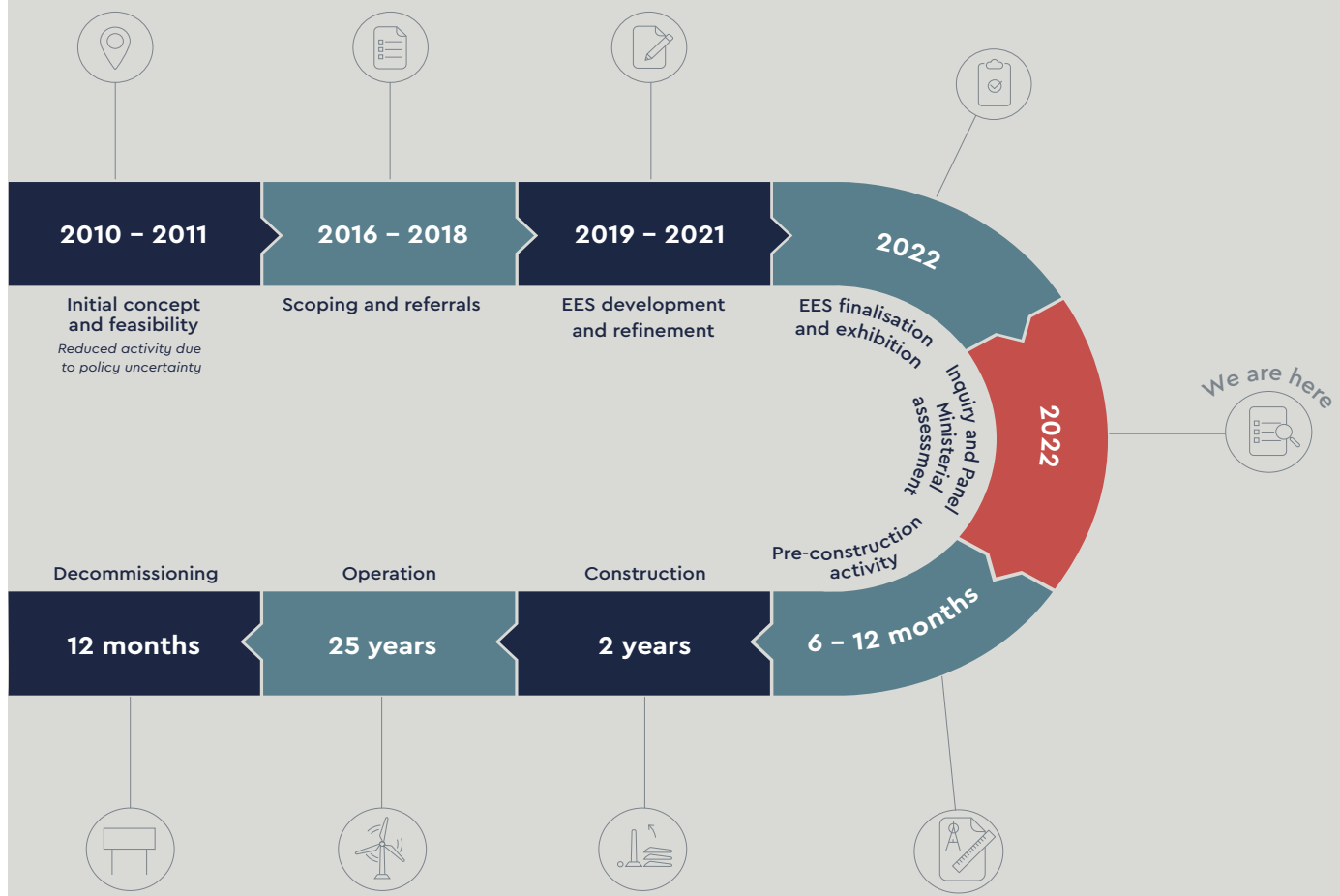
- 62 per cent of Moyne Shire residents have a favourable opinion about wind farms as an energy source, with 24 per cent being opposed.
- Residents in the central and western regions have significantly higher levels of favourability toward wind energy (79% and 65%, respectively). The western region had the highest proportion of residents who reported living within five kilometres of an existing or planned wind farm.

- 43% of residents support the continued construction of wind farms in Moyne, 30% oppose more wind farms, 11% are neutral and the remainder (16%) would like more information.

We acknowledge the updated council position, which is to recommend that the State Government pause the issuing of all wind farm planning permits in the shire until strategic land use planning in the South West Renewable Energy Zone (SWREZ) is completed in consultation with Moyne Shire and other affected Councils and communities.

While we do not support this position, Wind Prospect will continue to work collaboratively with the Moyne Shire Council, including through the Community Engagement Committee, to achieve the best possible outcomes for the community.

## PROJECT TIMELINE







## SHARING THE BENEFITS

Wind Prospect is committed to ensuring that those living closest to the proposed wind farm share the financial benefits. Information shared by residents and stakeholders has helped us to develop a series of programs that share the financial benefits fairly and appropriately. These include a Neighbour Benefit Sharing Program, Energy Cost Offset Plan, Community Co-investment Program (subject to interest levels), Community Benefit Fund and Community Sponsorship Fund. For further details visit the community page on the project website.

## COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP FUND

The \$20,000 annual Community Sponsorship Fund continues to support the local community. The program is open and applications are welcome. The fund assists community groups and organisations that operate in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm to improve their services, programs, initiatives and/or facilities. We are pleased to have made the following allocations under this fund recently.



### Port Fairy Consolidated School – \$4,997

Willatook Wind Farm has sponsored the Port Fairy Consolidated School to purchase a PA system that will help deliver fundraising events throughout the year in the community, while raising funds along the way for the school. This new equipment will also be used in their Performing Arts program to create learning opportunities for many young actors.

### We've Got You – \$5,000

*We've Got You Inc* supports families in south west Victoria who have experienced the loss of a child. Willatook Wind Farm has recently provided \$5,000 to the group to assist them in establishing a bereavement room at Southwest Health Care. As well as this, *We've Got You Inc* is working to provide bereavement training to healthcare workers in the region. *We've got you Inc* is supported by Southwest Healthcare and The Royal Children's Hospital.

### Port Fairy Cricket Club – \$4,500

Willatook Wind Farm will contribute \$4,500 to support the Port Fairy Cricket Club to replace the concrete on the outdoor cricket nets. Over time, the concrete has become unstable and this work will make the nets safe and accessible for the 350+ members and field teams, as well as community members and holiday makers, who regularly use the facility.

Do you have  
a community  
project that  
needs a little  
help?

Open  
now!

## Perhaps Wind Prospect can help.

As part of our commitment to the Willatook community, we have established a \$20,000 per year sponsorship fund to assist community groups and organisations that operate in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm.

### Open year-round

Application forms can be found at [www.willatookwindfarm.com.au](http://www.willatookwindfarm.com.au)