

Frequently Asked Questions – Rye Park Wind Farm | June 2014



Will damage to local roads be repaired and who pays?

Planning approval conditions for the project will require the Rye Park Wind Farm Company to repair any damage caused to local roads during the construction phase. The Rye Park Wind Farm Company is responsible for all costs associated with the repair of any local road.

Prior to construction, the Rye Park Wind Farm Company will prepare a dilapidation report which it submits to Council and the Department of Planning. At the end of construction, the Rye Park Wind Farm Company will assess the roads and, following consultation with Council and the Department of Planning, repair them to the same or similar condition as enjoyed by the Community prior to construction.

How many Rye Park Wind Farm vehicles will be on local roads during construction?

The average return trips by the Rye Park Wind Farm vehicles on local roads in any one day is approximately 3 over-mass (>42.5 tonnes) and over-size (>19m length, 2.5m width and 4.3m high), 60 trucks and 130 cars. It is anticipated that the worst case daily traffic volumes will be a total of 296 additional vehicles (over-mass, over-size, trucks and/or cars) across all key roads surrounding the wind farm site on any one day.

In addition, prior to construction, the Rye Park Wind Farm Company prepares a Traffic Management Plan in consultation with Council and the local community. During construction, the Rye Park Wind Farm Company must ensure that it adheres to the Traffic Management Plan.

Will there be any employment for construction and maintenance work in the local area?

It is estimated that the Rye Park Wind Farm will create 363 jobs during construction and approximately 34 ongoing jobs once operational for the life of the wind farm. The desired

skills and qualifications include: electricians, heavy vehicle drivers, steel fixers, riggers, labourers, crane operators, excavator operators, mechanical fitters and welders. Prior to construction, the Rye Park Wind Farm Company undertakes a recruitment process for the various trades required to construction the wind farm. The engagement of skilled labour from the local community is preferred, where possible.

As the Rye Park Wind Farm Company maintains a database of those interested in working at the wind farm, please email or call us with your details which we will retain for that purpose.

Do wind farms impact property values?

A study by the NSW Valuer General in 2009 into the impacts of wind farms on property values showed that in 88% of cases, wind farms did not appear to negatively affect property values. This result was in line with general findings from a number of National and international studies where significant sample sizes of real estate transactions showed no long term impact on land values from wind farms.

Further, the Draft NSW Planning Guidelines suggest that a wind farm company should consider the potential impact on the value of surrounding properties to the wind farm including properties within 2km of a proposed wind turbine. The Rye Park Wind Farm Company has addressed this in detail as part of the Environmental Assessment currently on exhibition at section 16.6.

What happens to the Rye Park Wind Farm at the end of its life?

Wind farms are expected to have life of approximately 20-30 years at which point the Rye Park Wind Farm Company will decide whether to upgrade the wind turbines to the latest technology (in which case the life of the wind farm continues) or decommission the Rye Park Wind Farm (in which case the life of the wind farm ends).

Any development approval in NSW will require that the wind farm site is returned to its pre-construction condition within 12 months of decommissioning and that a wind farm company bears the responsibility of removing wind farm infrastructure.

In relation to the Rye Park Wind Farm, its lease agreements with involved landowners include obligations upon the Rye Park Wind Farm Company to, at its cost, satisfactorily remove wind farm equipment and substantially remove all above ground structures of foundations which are greater than 1 metre below the finished ground level and remediate the land to the same condition as enjoyed by the landowners prior to construction except for any improvements to the landowner's land resulting from the wind farm.

Will the Rye Park Wind Farm impact aerial spraying?

Please refer to the information sheet on Aerial Landing Strips and Agricultural Spraying and Spreading which addresses this question in detail.

Will the Rye Park Wind Farm reduce the ability of the NSW Rural Fire Service to fight fires?

Epuron wrote to the Rural Fire Service to ask how they viewed wind farms when fighting fires on the ground or the air. The NSW Fire Brigade Assistant Commissioner noted that on the ground:

“...fire moving across the area of a wind farm is generally managed in the same way as another bush fire. Fire fighting strategies by the ground-based resources would continue and be subject to prevailing weather and topographic conditions”,

and from the air:

“...aircraft would avoid wind turbines in the same manner as they avoid other obstructions, such as power lines.”

During recent grass fires in South Australia started by lightning, the Snowtown Country Fire Service (CFS) Captain reported that the benefit brought by access roads built for a local wind farm was “absolutely of great benefit in helping us fight the fires ... if it weren't for those roads, the fires, which were going at fair rate of knots, would have just kept going ... they acted as a natural fire break, giving us an edge to work to enable us to back burn if we needed to. These new access roads provided an unexpected bonus, but they'll help us control fires in the future.”

Are there health impacts resulting from wind farms?

In March 2014 the Australian Medical Association (AMA) released their Position Paper which stated that there is no credible evidence that wind farms have a negative impact on the health of people who live near them. The paper found infrasound and low-frequency sound generated by modern wind farms in Australia is well below the level where known health effects occur. The paper can be found at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/wind-farms-and-health-2014>

In February 2014 the National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC) released its draft information paper on wind farms and health, which found that there is no reliable or consistent evidence that proximity to wind farms or wind farm noise directly causes health effects. Experts in social psychology, sleep, environmental epidemiology, and sound/acoustic engineering were convened to oversee the review. The draft paper can be found at <http://consultations.nhmrc.gov.au>

How will noise levels be monitored when the Rye Park Wind Farm is operational and what happens if the level is exceeded?

The Department of Planning's conditions of approval for the Rye Park Wind Farm will require the preparation of a Noise Compliance Plan. This will require monitoring of noise levels at nearby residences before and after the operation of the wind farm and, if levels are exceeded, the Rye Park Wind Farm Company will be required to either take steps to ensure compliance with the limits set out in the Noise Compliance Plan within the time period specified (if any) or provide acoustic remediation at the Rye Park Wind Farm Company's cost.

What is the visual impact of wind turbines?

The visual impact of wind turbines is subjective and can be a divisive topic in a local community. As such, there are strict planning guidelines which aim to address the community issues arising from the perceived visual impact of wind farms.

In relation to the Rye Park Wind Farm, the Environmental Assessment addresses in detail Community Perceptions and Public Consultation, Proximity to Urban Areas, Existing Landscape, Viewshed, Zone of Visual Influence and Visibility.

Further, photomontages showing the Rye Park Wind Farm before and after the construction of turbines have been prepared and are available for review at Section 9 and Appendix A of the Environmental Assessment currently on public exhibition and on display at the public Open Days.

How long will it take to offset the greenhouse gas emissions created by a wind farm?

Based on a life cycle greenhouse gas emission study by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in 2013, it is estimated that the greenhouse gas emissions created by the manufacture, construction, operation and decommissioning phases of a wind farm are offset in less than 1 year of its operation.

What is the impact of the Renewable Energy Target on electricity prices?

To meet Australia's Renewable Energy Target (RET) more investment in large-scale energy production (wind farms, hydro-electric projects and solar power plants) is required. But building renewable power plants, like wind farms, is expensive. The cost of investment in renewable energy is much higher than investment in traditional energy sources like coal and gas. The RET provides an incentive for companies to invest in renewables in that Energy retailers - the companies that deliver power to consumers - are required by law to purchase renewable energy certificates generated by renewable energy producers (eg wind farm companies). Energy retailers pass the cost of the RET onto consumers through retail pricing.

The RET also affects wholesale electricity prices because creating renewable energy once the infrastructure is in place is relatively cheap. Sources like solar and wind power are produced from elements that are free - unlike coal or gas power, which have higher ongoing production costs. Unlike retail pricing, consumers may not see the price reduction because retailers might not pass it on.

However, Energy regulators in Australia estimate the cost of the RET to consumers makes up between 1 and 5 per cent of power bills. In July 2013 the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) released its review of regulated energy prices for 2013 to 2016 and it was found that 1.3% of the increase in the cost of an electricity bill was because of 'green scheme' compliance which includes the RET.

How much water will be used during the construction and operation of the wind farm and where will it be sourced from?

Water used to make concrete for the Rye Park Wind Farm infrastructure such as turbine foundations need to be of a quality commensurate with potable water. Such water will be sourced from Yass or Boorowa with a total anticipated water requirement of 15,552 kL during the construction phase, which will be applied approximately half for turbine foundations and half for dust suppression. No water will be sourced from the local environment.

Erosion and sediment control measures are set out in the Environmental Management Plan which is prepared prior to construction of the Rye Park Wind Farm. Such measures aim to mitigate the any impact on surface and/or groundwater quality or quantity arising from wind farm construction and operation activities.

For further information regarding the Rye Park Wind Farm please call or write to us on:

Address	Rye Park Wind Farm Pty Ltd Level 11, 75 Miller Street, NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060,AUSTRALIA
Phone:	+61 2 8456 7400
Email:	info@epuron.com.au
Web:	www.epuron.com.au