

Seymour Wind Farm preliminary biodiversity assessment: Community Consultation

Ruffy and Upton 26 August 2023



Presentation summary

- *Project background*
- *Methods*
- *Results*
- *Conclusions and recommendations*



Project background

Scope and objectives

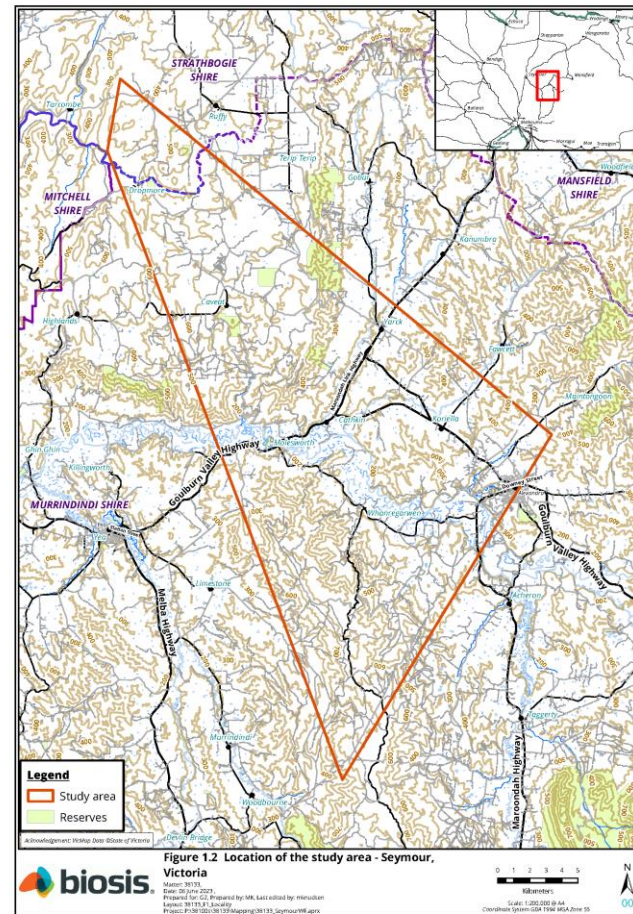
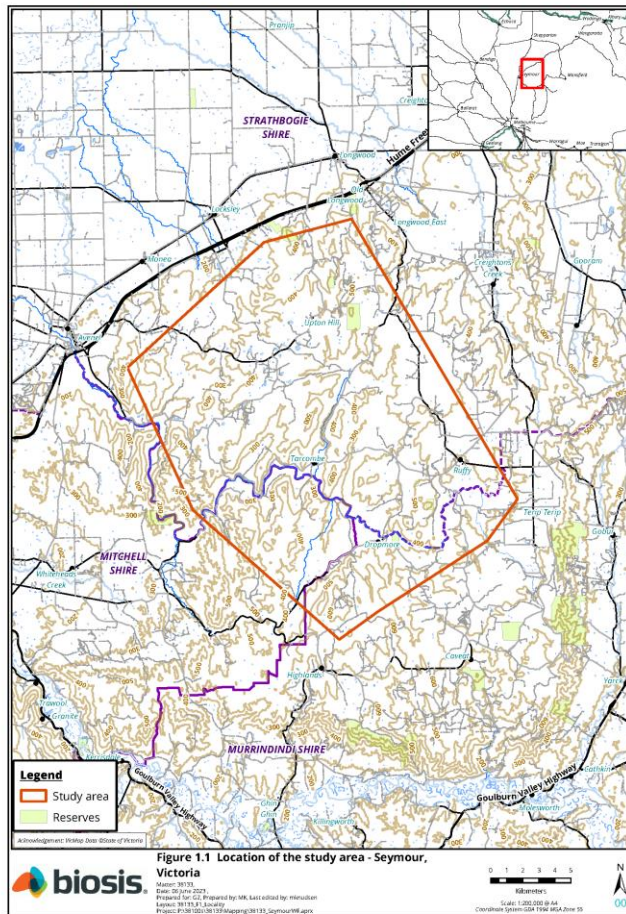
- Preliminary biodiversity assessment
 - Wind farm
 - Transmission line
- Aim:
 - Identify ecological values of the site using existing information and rapid field assessment
 - Recommend further actions to comply with relevant legislation and manage impacts to important biodiversity values



Study area

Wind farm

Transmission line



Methods

Desktop assessment

Database searches – 10 km radius

- Victorian Biodiversity Atlas – DEECA
- Protected Matters search tool – DCCEEW
- Atlas of Living Australia
- Sheldon (2004) Brolga flocking database
- Aerial imagery

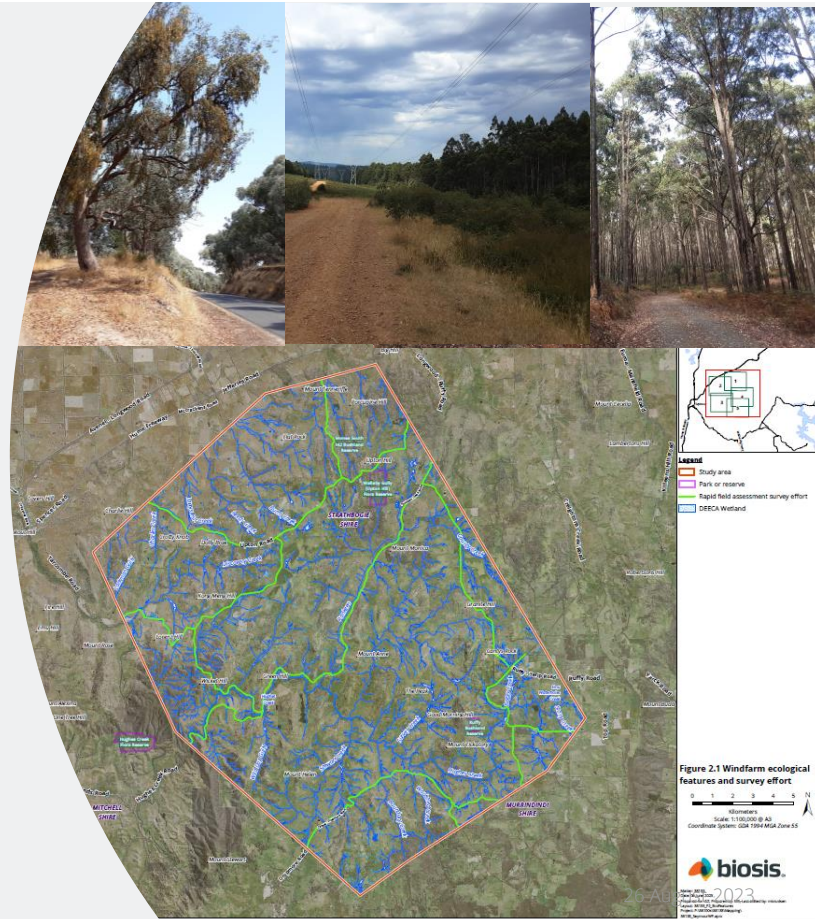


Methods

Rapid field assessment

Roadside assessment

- Senior Associate Zoologist and Senior Botanist
- Identified extent of native vegetation
- Potential habitat for threatened species
- Ecological vegetation classes



Results

Summary

Values

- Fauna habitat – woodland, grassland, aquatic
- Threatened species likelihood of occurrence
- Threatened ecological communities

Constraints

- Native vegetation cover and threatened flora and fauna habitat (fixed constraints)
- Birds and bats (dynamic constraints)



Results

Wind farm and transmission line

Native vegetation

- 22 Ecological vegetation classes (EVCs)
- Mainly woodland and forest vegetation
- 2 endangered EVCs
 - Grassy Woodland
 - Perched Boggy Shrubland
- 1 additional endangered EVCs along transmission line
 - Floodplain Riparian Woodland



Results

Wind farm and transmission line

Fauna habitat

- Woodland and forest
- Complex understorey
- Large hollow bearing trees
- Scattered trees
- Woody debris and rocky outcrops
- Roadside vegetation

Fauna habitat

- Wetlands and waterways
- Introduced vegetation
- Potential for native grassland habitat
- Goulburn River



Results

Wind farm

Threatened flora

- 31 likely to occur including EPBC Act listed:
 - River swamp wallaby grass
 - Matted Flax-Lily
 - Trailing hob bush



Results

Transmission line

Threatened flora

- 26 likely to occur including EPBC Act listed:
 - Clover Glycine
 - Euroa Guinea-flower
 - Round-leaf Pomaderris



Results

Wind farm

Threatened fauna

- 36 likely to occur with 11 EPBC Act listed species including:

Birds

- Swift Parrot
- Gang Gang Cockatoo
- White-throated Needletail

Species other than birds

- Southern Greater Glider
- Growling Grass Frog
- Striped Legless Lizard
- Golden Sun Moth
- Macquarie Perch
- Southern Pygmy-Perch



Results

Transmission line

Threatened fauna

- 44 likely to occur with 12 EPBC Act listed species including:

Birds

- Pilotbird
- Swift Parrot
- Gang Gang Cockatoo
- White-throated Needletail

Species other than birds

- Southern Greater Glider
- Growling Grass Frog
- Striped Legless Lizard
- Golden Sun Moth
- Barred Galaxias



Results

Threatened Ecological Communities

Nationally listed (EPBC Act)

- Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South-eastern Australia (Endangered)
- Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater) of the Temperate Lowland Plains (Critically Endangered)
- White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland (Critically Endangered)



Results

Threatened Ecological Communities

State listed (FFG Act)

- Victorian Temperate Woodland Bird Community
- Lowland Riverine Fish Community of the Southern Murray Darling Basin

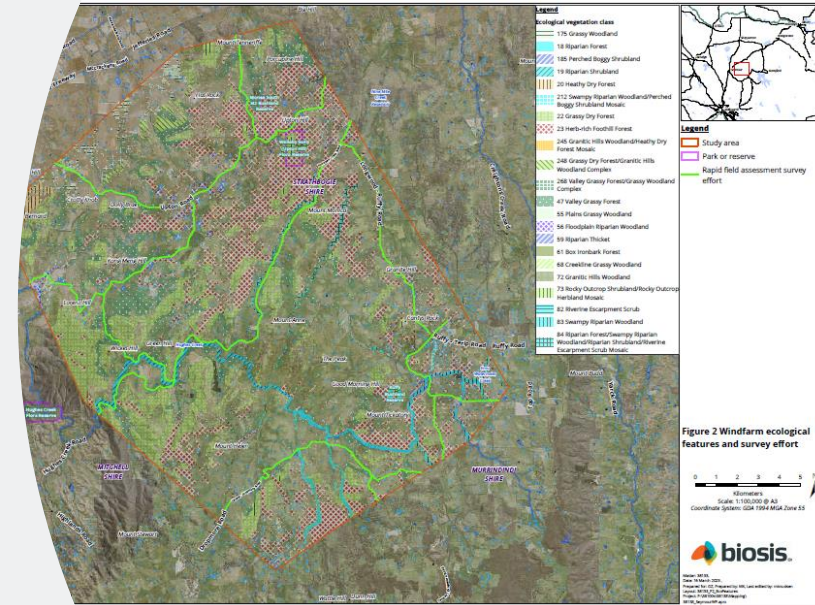


Conclusions and recommendations

Avoiding impacts on biodiversity values

Avoid, minimise and mitigate impacts

- Findings inform project design to avoid impacts
- Biodiversity values → design constraints, project layout
- Typically, in Victoria wind farm projects can achieve avoiding significant impacts through design



Conclusions and recommendations

Avoiding impacts on biodiversity values

Seymour Wind Farm will aim to:

- Avoid/minimise native vegetation removal, which will avoid impact on threatened species habitat
- Consider bird and bat collision risk in infrastructure siting
- Avoid threatened woodland and derived native grassland
- Minimise waterway/floodplain impacts through siting and under-boring

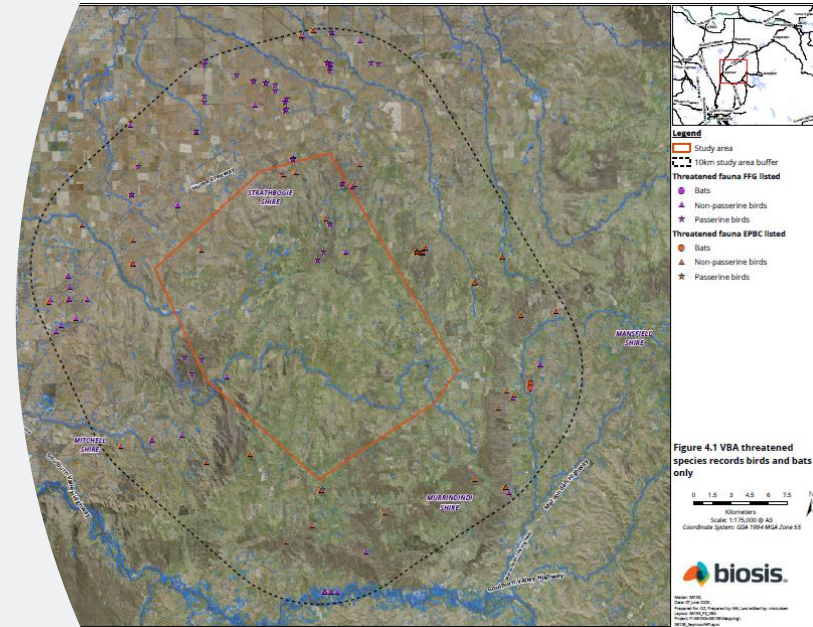


Conclusions and recommendations

Legislative considerations

Commonwealth

- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
 - Consider potential impacts on EPBC Act listed species and communities likely to occur



Conclusions and recommendations

Legislative considerations

State

- Planning and Environment Act 1987 (incl. Planning Schemes)
 - Planning permit for native vegetation removal
 - Native vegetation removal requires offsets
 - Specific permit requirements of overlays
- Victoria's Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation
 - Avoid, minimise and offset requirements



Conclusions and recommendations

Legislative considerations

State

- Environment Effects Act 1978
 - SWF may require EES referral
- Fisheries Act 1995
 - Considered any impacts on aquatic fauna
- Water Act 1989
 - GBCMA consultation, works in waterways permit
- Environment Protection Act 2017: Environmental Reference Standards

Department of
Sustainability and
Environment

Ministerial guidelines for assessment of
**environmental
effects** under the
Environment Effects Act 1978

Conclusions and recommendations

Biodiversity survey and technical studies program

- Detailed flora and fauna assessment – mapping and identifying
 - Native vegetation and fauna habitat
 - Threatened ecological communities
 - Threatened species habitat
- Bird and bat utilisations studies (12–24 months)
 - Systematic point-count surveys
 - Targeted threatened species surveys



