# **PO4 - SHADOW FLICKER ASSESSMENT**

**Forest Wind** 

August 2019







CleanSight Pty Ltd www.cleansight.com.au

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE** 

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### Table of Contents

1.	Introduction						
2.		Planning Guidelines					
3.		Shadow Flicker Assessment	5				
3	.1	1 Shadow Flicker Overview	5				
3	.2	2 Shadow Flicker Model	5				
3	.1	1 Proposed Layout	Э				
3	.2	2 Sensitive Receptors	Э				
4.	. Results						
5.	9 Blade Finish						
6.	Conclusion						
7.	References						
App	Appendix A: Figures						
Арр	Appendix B: Tables						

## List of figures

Figure 1: Wind rose and typical shadow flicker impact area	. 8
Figure 2: Zone of Influence of Shadows	13
Figure 3: Shadow Flicker Map in SR09 Vicinity	14

#### List of tables

Table 1: SDAP PO4 - Shadow Flicker	. 4
Table 2: Shadow flicker model settings	. 6
Table 3: Project Compliance with PO4 Shadow Flicker	10
Table 4: WTG Coordinates - 226 WTG Nominal Layout	15
Table 5: Sensitive receptor coordinates	18

## 1. Introduction

Forest Wind Holdings Pty Ltd (**FWH**) proposes to develop and construct a wind farm called Forest Wind (**Forest Wind**) (the **Project**) located within an actively managed and operational exotic pine plantation in Queensland Government (the **State**) owned Toolara, Tuan and Neerdie State Forests (**State Forests**), situated between Gympie and Maryborough in the Wide Bay Region of Queensland. Specifically, the Project comprises a wind farm with up to 226 wind turbines and ancillary infrastructure (herein referred to as the Wind Turbine Area).

The Wind Turbine Area is characterised by flat to undulating terrain with elevations of 10m to 135m AHD (Australian Height Datum) and is used for the primary purpose of growing and extracting exotic pine from Australia's largest pine forestry plantation.

FWH proposes that the Wind Turbine Area will accommodate up to 226 turbines, each with a capacity to generate up to 6MW (+/- 3MW), with a maximum height to blade tip of 295m above ground level (agl).

CleanSight Pty Ltd (**CleanSight**) has carried out an assessment of the impact of shadow flicker for the areas surrounding the Project and presents details and results in the following report which demonstrates planning compliance.

## 2. Planning Guidelines

The Queensland State Development Assessment Provisions (SDAP) for wind farm developments, State Code 23 (the **Code**) [1] for wind farm developments includes performance outcomes and corresponding acceptable outcomes relating to PO4 - Shadow Flicker as outlined in Table 1.

Tabla 1.	State	Code	22		Shadow	Flicker
Table T.	State	Coue	25	PU4 -	SIIduow	гискег

Performance outcome	Acceptable outcomes		
<b>PO4</b> Development avoids or minimises shadow flicker impacts on existing or approved sensitive land uses	<b>AO4.1</b> The modelled blade shadow flicker impact on any existing or approved sensitive land use(s) does not exceed 30 hours per annum and 30 minutes per day		
	AND		
	<b>AO4.2</b> Wind turbine blades have a low reflectivity finish/treatment.		

Supporting actions for Acceptable outcome AO4.1 and AO4.2 are provided in the State Code 23: Wind Farm development Planning Guidelines (the **Guidelines**) [2] as follows:

#### Acceptable Outcome AO4.1:

"Undertake a shadow flicker assessment that identifies the potential impacts and how these may be mitigated or managed. This assessment should consider the potential impacts on existing or approved sensitive land uses, and ensure that any modelled blade shadow flicker impacts affecting a sensitive land use do not exceed 30 hours per annum and 30 minutes per day."

#### Acceptable Outcome AO4.2:

"Provide information which demonstrates that the wind turbine blades have a low reflectivity surface treatment/finish."

Appendix 2 of the Guidelines outlines a methodology for carrying out the assessment for potential shadow flicker impacts.

This involves in the first instance determining the extent of the area around the wind turbines to include in the assessment. This is specified as 265m x maximum blade chord and no assessment is required outside of this distance.

All existing and approved sensitive land uses including a 50m buffer, within the extent of the shadows from the proposed turbine positions must be identified and input for assessment. Recommended modelling parameter settings along with those used in the assessment for the Project are provided in Table 2. Guidelines for mitigating the potential impact on sensitive uses through assessment of cloud cover, vegetation blocking and turbine scheduling are included in the Guidelines.

Sensitive land uses mean any of the following as defined in the code:

"(1) caretaker's accommodation (2) child care centre (3) community care centre (4) community residence (5) detention facility (6) dual occupancy (7) dwelling house (8) dwelling unit (9) educational establishment (10) health care services (11) hospital (12) hotel (13) multiple dwelling (14) non-resident workforce accommodation (15) relocatable home park (16) residential care facility (17) resort complex (18) retirement facility (19) rooming accommodation (20) rural workers' accommodation (21) short-term accommodation (22) tourist park.

A sensitive land use receptor does not include a temporary or mobile habitable building structure sited on the land (i.e. a caravan on private property)."

## 3. Shadow Flicker Assessment

### 3.1 Shadow Flicker Overview

Shadow Flicker can be described as intermittent shadows cast due to the rotating blades of wind turbines which appear to flicker to an observer at a fixed ground position.

The occurrence and duration of shadow flicker depends on many factors which combine to produce a 'strobing' shadow effect as the sun passes behind the rotating blades of a wind turbine, including:

- Position of the sensitive receptor in relation to the turbine
- Viewer's distance from turbine: the further the observer from the turbine, the less pronounced the effect
- Weather patterns, number of cloudy days per year: cloud cover may significantly reduce hours of shadow flicker
- Wind direction: the shadow shape will be determined by the position of the sun relative to the rotor blade orientation, the rotor will be oriented to face the wind
- Wind speed: shadow flicker will only occur when wind turbine blades are rotating, the blades will be static during periods of low wind, high wind or during scheduled downtime for operational/maintenance purposes
- Position of the sun in relation to the turbine
- Time of year (season) and time of day
- Turbine height and rotor diameter
- Topography of the area: hills may reduce the occurrence of shadow flicker
- Vegetation cover: shadow flicker may be reduced by extensive vegetation/ forestry
- Visibility: reduced visibility due to haze, fog, smoke and other airborne particles reduces occurrence of shadow flicker

## **3.2 Shadow Flicker Model**

The number of annual hours of shadow flicker at a given location can be calculated using geometrical models incorporating the sun path, the topographic variation and wind turbine rotor diameter and hub height. In such models, the wind turbine rotor is modelled as a disk or sphere i.e. assuming worst case path of the sun always intersects the rotor and is always directly facing the sun.

CleanSight created a shadow flicker model for the Project using the Openwind Enterprise version 01.08.00.2886i software. The parameter settings used in the CleanSight Model are in line or more conservative than those specified in the Guidelines as described in Table 2.

Model Parameter			Guidelines Recommended Setting	CleanSight Model
Zone of shadows	influence	of	265m x maximum blade chord	Typical blade chords 3-5m, currently intended model is 4.5m (1192.5m) CleanSight's has elected to assess a conservative assumption, being evaluation of a zone of influence of shadows for a blade chord of up to 5m (1325m)

#### Table 2: Shadow flicker model settings

Minimum angle to the sun	3°	3°
Shape of the sun	Disk	Point – more conservative
		Where the sun-turbine vector intersects any part of the turbine blade/sphere it is considered to cause shadow flicker. Where the sun is modelled as a disk, it can happen that light rays from different portions of the sun disk superimpose around a shadow resulting in light intensity variations less than human perception.
		Where the sun is positioned directly behind the wind turbine hub, there is no variation in the light intensity at the receiver location and therefore no shadow flicker. Where a point source is used shadow flicker still arises in this case.
Time and duration of modelling	One full year representing a non-leap year 12 to 15 years after date of DA submission	2031
Orientation of the rotor	Sphere or disk facing the sun	Sphere
Offset between rotor and tower	Not required	NA
Time Step	Ten (10) minutes of less	1 minute
Effects of topography	Include	Included
Receptor height	1.5m -2m and window / balcony height where dwellings have more than one storey	1.75m (single storey building)
Receptor Location	Map should be provided showing highest level of annual shadow flicker within 50m of centre of dwelling	Receptor with 50m buffer mapped
Grid size for mapping and assessment	Not more than 25m	25m

It is noted that a number of the model parameters result in a worst-case scenario. There are mitigating factors which can be calculated and applied in a Shadow Flicker Assessment as mentioned in Section 2. CleanSight has not investigated any mitigations for the worst-case scenario as based on the results it is not considered necessary for the Project. Considerations and assumptions in the CleanSight model for the Project which provide for a worst-case conservative scenario are outlined below.

- 1. Cloud cover has not been assessed.
- 2. The model assumes that the WTGs (spheres) will always be facing directly into or away from the sun. Figure 1 below shows the expected wind rose or wind direction frequency distribution for the Project showing this will be the case for only a small proportion of the time. A typical shadow flicker impact area is superimposed on the wind rose assuming a WTG position at the centre of the rose, with the extremities of the protruding lobes to the north resulting from summer solstice and to the south resulting from winter solstice. The western area is a result of morning sun and the eastern area is a result of evening sun.



Figure 1: Wind rose and typical shadow flicker impact area

- 3. The diffusion of the direct sunlight due to airborne particulates and therefore intensity of light to cause shadows is not considered.
- 4. The WTGs are assumed to be always operating/ rotating, no consideration of wind speed or potential scheduling operation/maintenance downtime.
- 5. Vegetation blocking has not been assessed.
- 6. The modelling of the wind turbine blades as spheres to determine shadow path overestimates the shadow flicker effect. The blades are of non-uniform width with the thickest viewable blade width (maximum chord) occurring closer to the hub and the thinnest being located at the tip of the blade. As outlined in point 3 above, the direct sunlight is diffused resulting in a maximum distance from the wind turbine that a shadow can be cast. This maximum distance is dependent on the human threshold of perception of variation in light intensity. When the blade tip causes shadow, the diffusion of direct sunlight means that the light variation threshold occurs closer to the wind turbine than when a shadow is caused by the maximum chord. That is, the maximum shadow length cast by the blade tip is less than by the maximum chord.
- 7. The model does not consider that no shadow flicker occurs when the sun is positioned directly behind a WTG hub.

### 3.1 Proposed Layout

The proposed wind turbine layout for the Project consists of 226 wind turbine generator (WTG) generator locations (nominal coordinates provided in Table 4, Appendix B). In addition, there are proposed alternative locations, as shown in Figure 2, Appendix A. The combination of all these proposed locations has been used in determining the zone of influence of shadows for this assessment. A distance of 1325m from the proposed WTG locations was used as a conservative case and to demonstrate that a maximum chord length well beyond the currently proposed WTG model (4.5m) will be possible. In reality, as based on code requirement, there will be no perceptible impact from shadow flicker beyond the 265m x maximum blade chord, currently 1192.5m.

CleanSight considered conservative case hypothetical turbine configurations to assess the potential extent of the shadow flicker impact in the vicinity of relevant sensitive receptors. These included dimensions as follows:

- Rotor diameter up to 190m
- Upper blade tip height up to 295m
- Lower blade tip height down to 85m

It was observed that a turbine configuration of 295m tip height and 190m rotor diameter produced the worst-case and so this scenario was used to produce a shadow flicker map for the whole Project. The results of this assessment can therefore be considered conservative for any WTG model with dimensions within this envelope.

### **3.2 Sensitive Receptors**

Sensitive receptors were selected based on being the closest sensitive uses to the zone of influence of shadows boundary. Coordinates of sensitive receptors are shown in Figure 2, Appendix A, and provided in Table 5, Appendix B. Regardless of the conservative approach taken for the determination of the zone of influence of shadows, there is only one sensitive receptor within the zone. This is a caretakers accommodation on a host lot, labelled as SR09 in Figure 2.

## 4. Results

The worst-case shadow flicker was modelled as described in Section 3.2. It was found that only one sensitive receptor lies within the zone of influence of shadows. This sensitive receptor, SR09, is located to the south of the WTG locations and so there is no impact from shadow flicker.

Appendix A, shows SR09 with a 50m buffer and the shadow flicker impact from nearest WTGs. There is more than 400m separation between the 50m buffer around SR09 and the area of potential worst-case shadow flicker impact.

## 5. Blade Finish

Any reflection of the sun off the blades is not expected to be an issue for the Project. The blades will be coated with non-reflective paint complying with AO4.2.

## 6. Conclusion

The shadow flicker assessment as conducted by CleanSight in accordance with recommendations set out in the Guidelines shows that only one sensitive receptor is within the zone of influence and there is no impact from shadow flicker. Compliance for the Project with PO4 of the code is outlined in Table 3 below.

#### Table 3: Project Compliance with PO4 Shadow Flicker

Performance outcome	Acceptable outcomes	Compliance
<b>PO4</b> Development avoids or minimises shadow flicker impacts on existing or approved sensitive land uses	AO4.1 The modelled blade shadow flicker impact on any existing or approved sensitive land use(s) does not exceed 30 hours per annum and 30 minutes per day	<b>Complies with AO4.1:</b> No impact on any existing or approved sensitive land uses
	AO4.2 Wind turbine blades have a low reflectivity finish/treatment.	<b>Complies with AO4.2:</b> Blades will be coated with non-reflective paint

## 7. References

- [1] State Development Assessment Provisions v2.5, State of Queensland Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, July 2019
- [2] State Code 23: Wind Farm Development Planning Guidelines, State of Queensland Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, June 2018

# **Appendix A: Figures**

[refer to next page]









# **Appendix B: Tables**

Table 4: WTG Coordinates - 226 WTG Nominal Layout

WTG ID	Easting	Northing
	UTM z56 So	outh (WGS84)
1A_1	483768	7165491
1A_2	483625	7164998
1A_3	483479	7164519
1A_4	483264	7164073
1A_5	484180	7163791
1A_6	484076	7162498
1A_7	484189	7161711
1A_8	483696	7161487
1A_9	483070	7161120
1A_10	482780	7160765
1A_11	482346	7160250
1A_12	482146	7159940
1A_13	481935	7159547
1B_1	486211	7128427
1B_2	485233	7128009
1B_3	486343	7127867
1B_4	486706	7127070
1B_5	485088	7127056
1B_6	484246	7126399
1B_7	483489	7125687
2_1	481047	7167641
2_2	482202	7166893
2_3	481047	7166949
2_4	482101	7166324
2_5	480925	7166211
2_6	479998	7166065
2_7	482013	7165844
2_8	479920	7165465
2_9	481920	7165319
2_10	480051	7164748
2_11	481584	7164011
2_12	480278	7163998
2_13	481432	7163590
2_14	481763	7164518
2_15	482776	7163269
2_16	481440	7162932
2_17	483116	7162460
2_18	481448	7162280
2_19	483050	7161835

2_20	480844	7159474
2_21	481931	7158983
2_22	481560	7158681
2_23	481294	7158116
2_24	480960	7157328
2_25	482223	7157149
2_26	480265	7156658
2_27	482364	7156654
2_28	482428	7156134
2_29	482475	7155462
2_30	482242	7154987
2_31	481409	7154650
2_32	484542	7154702
2_33	483484	7152750
2_34	480958	7154090
2_35	484847	7153773
2_36	484411	7153527
2_37	480451	7153415
2_38	484120	7153140
2_39	484400	7150722
2_40	480172	7152397
2_41	482769	7152027
2_42	479298	7150947
2_43	481162	7152302
2_44	481839	7152228
2_45	479787	7151295
2_46	485524	7151223
2_47	480072	7151886
2_48	485211	7150914
2_49	483735	7150813
2_50	478816	7150677
2_51	484838	7136386
2_52	483127	7150461
2_53	482080	7141517
2_54	482152	7150163
2_55	482328	7142050
2_56	481772	7149352
2_57	481245	7149164
2_58	485648	7149075
2_59	480609	7149235
2_60	479525	7149140
2_61	482850	7138829
2_62	485221	7148439
2_63	484345	7137273

2_64	483368	7131489
2_65	486191	7147664
2_66	484382	7147828
2_67	485873	7147225
2_68	484021	7146890
2_69	485583	7146744
2_70	485586	7145914
2_71	484019	7145776
2_72	480313	7145620
2_73	481212	7145351
2_74	483510	7145642
2_75	481896	7145219
2_76	482928	7142808
2_77	485217	7144955
2_78	483083	7145376
2_79	482550	7145246
2_80	483528	7143846
2_81	480799	7144375
2_82	484916	7144101
2_83	480230	7143873
2_84	484369	7143845
2_85	485853	7143726
2_86	480149	7143313
2_87	485242	7142829
2_88	483595	7142792
2_89	484771	7142154
2_90	482699	7142373
2_91	484573	7141592
2_92	481633	7141314
2_93	484189	7141043
2_94	481142	7141187
2_95	479991	7140190
2_96	479561	7139535
2_97	482200	7138880
2_98	484016	7138918
2_99	483449	7138871
2_100	481389	7138186
2_101	480060	7137702
2_102	485233	7136699
2_103	483652	7137173
2_104	484460	7135504
2_105	485168	7135574
2_106	483002	7137168
2_107	481172	7134833

2_108	484077	7134864
2_109	484919	7134414
2_110	483707	7134249
2_111	484896	7133918
2_112	480873	7133197
2_113	483262	7133488
2_114	485017	7133347
2_115	481900	7133272
2_116	483288	7132883
2_117	479710	7132927
2_118	484216	7132670
2_119	485343	7132338
2_120	481395	7131973
2_121	483640	7131859
2_122	485025	7131461
2_123	485657	7131430
2_124	486375	7131417
2_125	482983	7131034
2_126	481494	7130878
2_127	485757	7130694
2_128	482757	7130565
2_129	484902	7129815
2_130	484507	7129606
2_131	486695	7129581
2_132	484058	7129314
2_133	486656	7128647
2_134	486076	7129137
2_135	483489	7128905
2_136	483036	7128504
2_137	482457	7128229
2_138	481903	7127953
3_1	479254	7156683
3_2	477788	7155629
3_3	479290	7155188
3_4	477027	7155103
3_5	476472	7154051
3_6	475359	7152878
3_7	474603	7152223
3_8	473130	7151255
3_9	478206	7150165
3_10	477821	7149567
3_11	483628	7149304
3_12	478744	7148554
3_13	482689	7148265

3_14	477514	7147649
3_15	482087	7147596
3_16	476164	7146997
3_17	482494	7146717
3_18	481577	7146740
3_19	475047	7146156
3_20	475573	7146431
3_21	474475	7145973
3_22	479465	7144982
3_23	478592	7144744
3_24	477733	7144082
3_25	477000	7143716
3_26	475458	7143434
3_27	476351	7143327
3_28	478892	7142255
3_29	476914	7141688
3_30	478221	7141559
3_31	478300	7140344
3_32	476960	7138982
3_33	477002	7137876
3_34	475559	7137275
3_35	482026	7136529
3_36	481235	7136412
3_37	480074	7136141
3_38	480889	7135922
3_39	479426	7136050
3_40	478939	7135633
3_41	478374	7135365
4_1	478792	7162926
4_2	478542	7162577
4_3	481454	7161680
4_4	478198	7162213
4_5	481232	7161245
4_6	478376	7161439
4_7	478050	7161032
4_8	480653	7161339
4_9	480551	7160720
4_10	477743	7160608
4_11	480172	7160431
4_12	477685	7159749
4_13	476775	7159378
4_14	475996	7159348
4_15	477438	7159316
4_16	478581	7159245

4_17	475607	7158969
4_18	478626	7158597
4_19	475320	7158475
4_20	474494	7157923
4_21	478804	7157794
4_22	474101	7157613
4_23	473684	7157187
4_24	473379	7156791
4_25	472902	7156161
4_26	472479	7155608
4_27	472240	7154371

Sensitive receptor	Classification	Environment	Easting	Northing	Height (m AHD)
Host lots					
SR09	Caretaker accom.	Forestry yard	483374	7124827	50
Non-host lots					
SR01	Caretaker accom	Demolition yard	478534	7169811	16
SR02	Dwelling house	Rural	470298	7160786	40
SR03	Dwelling house	Rural	468335	7159198	21
SR04	Dwelling house	Rural	466763	7155600	40
SR05	Dwelling house	Rural	469848	7149608	35
SR06	Dwelling house	Rural	470800	7148861	30
SR07	Dwelling house	Rural	470612	7139963	56
SR08	Dwelling house	Rural	477704	7123913	65
SR10	Dwelling house	Rural	489701	7129760	88
SR11	Dwelling house	Rural	484902	7158499	7
SR12	Dwelling house	Residential	490293	7155589	8
SR13	Dwelling house	Residential	487291	7160004	5
SR14	Dwelling house	Residential	487646	7161478	5
SR15	Dwelling house	Residential	486989	7167139	8

## Table 5: Sensitive receptor coordinates