



FOREST WIND

Frequently Asked Questions

August 2020

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1. What are the environmental impacts associated with Forest Wind?

What studies and assessments have been carried out to determine the environmental impact?

What are the results of the assessments?

What mitigation and management measures will be put in place to manage environmental impacts?

In accordance with the Queensland *Planning Act 2016*, under State Code 23: Wind Farm Development (the **State Code**), within the State Development Assessment Provisions (**SDAP**), wind farm development is required to ensure that risks to flora, fauna and associated ecological processes are mitigated or managed through effective siting, design and operation of the wind farm.

Forest Wind has been designed to comply with the State Code and the accompanying *State code 23: Wind farm development - Planning Guidelines* (June 2018) (**Planning Guidelines**). Technical studies have been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Guidelines to confirm Forest Wind's compliance and include mitigation and management measures to meet the State Code's performance outcomes.

An ecological assessment has been undertaken over three years, and remains ongoing, to describe the existing environment and to assess the potential impacts that the Project may have on flora and fauna, particularly Matters of State Environmental Significance (**MSES**) and Matters of National Environmental Significance (**MNES**). This information has informed the application for a Development Approval for a Material Change of Use for a wind farm and referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (**EPBC Act**).

Preliminary ecological assessments were undertaken by O2 Ecology (2016) and Premise Environment (2017-2019). The initial assessments informed further survey design and assessments undertaken by Premise between 2017 and 2019. As the Project has undergone design changes, additional surveys and targeted assessments have been undertaken by Fox & Co Environmental Pty Ltd.

Forest Wind is located within the Tuan, Toolara and Neerdie State Forests, which are highly modified landscapes of operational exotic pine plantations, mostly comprising a hybrid of *Pinus elliotii* (slash pine) and *Pinus caribaea* (caribbean pine). There is a network of remnant regional ecosystems (**REs**) throughout the Project area primarily associated with creek and drainage lines which historical and ongoing pine plantation practices have avoided. This has created a network of often disconnected remnant vegetation patches throughout the pine plantation. Up to 82.6% of the Project Area comprises exotic pine plantation and cleared tracks with the remaining 17.4% comprising a mosaic of native remnant vegetation which provides habitat for native species. There will be no clearing of REs for the construction of the wind turbines or hardstand areas as they are all located within pine plantation areas. Clearing in riparian areas is expected to be negligible and limited to upgrades of existing waterway crossings to enable the delivery of oversized components.

The Forest Wind Ecological Assessment Report (available at www.forestwind.com.au/planning-documentation) consolidates the flora and fauna assessments undertaken, with particular reference to the occurrence of threatened and /or migratory species (EPBC Act and/or Queensland's *Nature Conservation Act 1994* (**NC Act**)). Native species such as Least Concern (NC Act) species have also been assessed. The report identifies the potential significance of impacts from the Project on terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna and provides management measures proposed to mitigate potential impacts on flora and fauna during construction and operation of the wind farm.

There are no world heritage properties, national heritage places, wetlands of international importance or commonwealth marine areas within the Forest Wind Project Area. Forest Wind is not within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Key findings of the investigations to date include:

- Forest Wind is ideally situated as the exotic pine plantations are considered of low ecological value and remnant vegetation, which provides the highest value for flora and fauna, within the plantation area will be avoided wherever possible (except some marginal works areas to enable access for oversized components).
- the mosaic of remnant vegetation within the Forest Wind Project Area provides the most valuable habitat for native species within the Project Area. These areas, including waterways, will be avoided with all infrastructure within the Project Area sited within existing exotic pine plantation and not remnant vegetation.
- one flora species of conservation significance was identified, Pineapple Zamia (*Macrozamia pauli-guilielmi*) - Endangered (EPBC Act and NC Act).
- nine fauna species of conservation significance were identified:
 - White-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) – Vulnerable (V), Migratory Terrestrial (MT) and Listed Marine (LM) (EPBC Act)
 - Fork-tailed swift (*Apus pacificus*) – MT (EPBC Act)
 - Rainbow bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*) – LM (EPBC Act)
 - Cicadabird (*Coracina tenuirostris*) – LM (EPBC Act)
 - Spectacled Monarch (*Monarcha trivirgatus* (syn. *Symposiachrus trivirgatus*) LM, MT (EPBC Act)
 - Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) - (V (EPBC Act and NC Act)
 - Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) – V (EPBC Act)
 - Swamp crayfish (*Tenuibranchiurus glypticus*) - Endangered (NC Act). It is not listed under the EPBC Act
 - Wallum froglet (*Crinia tinnula*) – V (NC Act). It is not listed under the EPBC Act
- no migratory shorebirds were observed within or flying over the Project Area on any of the bird surveys.
- Additional conservation significant flora and fauna species are considered to have at least a moderate potential to occur based on previous records in the region and potential habitat on or adjacent to the Project Area.

Potential impacts to the above identified conservation significant species, conservation significant species with at least a moderate likelihood of potentially occurring and common Least Concern species known to fly at rotor height were considered.

Mitigation measures to minimise potential impacts to all species, particularly conservation significant species are provided. Avoidance is the guiding principle to avoiding impacts on MNES and MSES as well as least concern species. Avoidance measures utilised in the Project include:

- The wind farm is located within an existing exotic pine plantation and avoids remnant vegetation and waterways. Remnant vegetation will not be cleared for the construction of the wind turbines.
- Only marginal clearing of remnant vegetation may occur for upgrades to existing waterway crossings to enable access to the site.
- Electrical cabling will mostly be underground along existing access tracks, or in track drains, which will further reduce the likelihood of collision and/ or electrocution of birds and bats. Some track drains may potentially provide suitable habitat for some acid frog species such as *Crinia tinnula*. Pre-clearance surveys will be undertaken prior to works in low-lying drain areas and, subject to the pre-clearance surveys, further mitigation measures may be implemented.
- Other infrastructure such as construction compounds avoid remnant vegetation and waterways and therefore avoid damage to remnant areas of natural habitat.
- Existing forestry tracks will be used to provide access within the wind farm and therefore avoids disturbance to remnant vegetation and habitat associated with remnant vegetation.
- The Transmission Line spans waterways and significant vegetation such as known populations of Pineapple Zamia.
- Pre-clearance/pre-construction surveys to determine if site -specific micro-siting of wind turbines will be required to further minimise impacts.

- No-go areas will be designated prior to detailed design of Transmission Line to ensure sensitive areas are spanned (eg. Pineapple Zamia's, confirmed essential habitat, waterways). No-go areas will be clearly defined prior to works in roadside drains and access tracks.
- Hollow bearing trees within the Overhead Transmission Corridor (**OTC**) will be avoided where possible by spanning remnant areas. Hollows will be replaced at a previously agreed replacement ratio.
- Comply with existing site-specific management plans currently implemented for the operating forestry practices.
- Erosion and Sediment Control Plans (**ESCP**) will be developed by a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (**CPESC**).
- Storage of fuels, chemicals, wastes and other potentially contaminating substances will be stored in appropriately bunded areas and away from waterways.

Additional mitigation measures to reduce collision-based impacts to birds and bats during the operation of the wind farm are associated with adaptive management and reducing the risk of attracting birds and bats into the rotor swept area (RSA) of the wind farm. This includes:

- An adaptive management bird and bat monitoring program has been prepared and already commenced implementation. Should the monitoring program's results demonstrate that further mitigation is required, further assessment will be undertaken to determine appropriate mitigation or management measures. Additional measures may include deploying a radar detection and deterrent technology system.
- Spatially and temporarily replicated carcass monitoring undertaken by suitably qualified ecologists, trained detector dogs or other approved method. This will be used to identify particular wind turbines that may be causing excessive number of deaths. Monthly surveys to be undertaken at a stratified random representative selection of turbines. Surveys will also be timed to occur at times of flowering of eucalypt and melaleuca where possible. Should mortality be shown to exceed an acceptable mortality rate, comprehensive evaluation of risk factors will be undertaken and mitigation plans adopted until the risk of impact has been abated. Mitigation plans may include changes in operational regimes of the turbine causing impact, for example, different systems, limiting rotational speed or suspension of operation of high risk turbines in high impact periods which may be identified through detection systems (eg. departure and return flight times in evening for bats, identified with a radar).
- Trial acoustic and/or sonar to deter bats/birds. Subject to potential impacts, slow rotor speeds or temporary shutdown of subject turbines during Summer period of known migratory aerial insectivores when birds may be on site.

Forest Wind Development Application was assessed by the State Government, which included an independent consultant's review of the Forest Wind Ecological Assessment Report, Management Plans and Appendices.

The State Government issued a Decision Notice on 21 February 2020 for Forest Wind stating that the development application was approved, subject to conditions, which include the preparation of a Vegetation and Fauna Management Plan and a Bird and Bat Management Plan, both to be certified by a suitably qualified ecologist.

2. What happens to the wind turbine, including the blades, after decommissioning?

The current wind turbine design configuration is for a hub height of around 160m, with blade length of 83m, seeing tip height in the order of 240m. Forest Wind Holdings did nominate up to 295m in the development application, however, technology does not yet provide for such a height configuration, however, may do so over time. The blades are typically made of fibre glass.

At the end of a wind turbine's life, it will be decommissioned, with the wind turbine being disconnected, dismantled and all components above ground removed from the Site. The steel tower sections are expected to be recycled and turned to new steel items for new purposes. The gearboxes and generators may be refurbished and given an extended life on Site, or elsewhere, or alternatively melted down and recycled. The removed section of the foundation to a 1m depth (to allow ongoing forestry) would become recycled concrete, which is used in road base applications, such as highway upgrades, or even recycled for used in new concrete applications.

Recycling of blades is becoming more common and expected to be standard practice in 25-30 years, will include a range of recycling options. For example, recycled wind blade material is currently being used as filler for cement in a process that can reduce the carbon dioxide output of the cement manufacturing process by up to 16%.

Composite materials are being recycled today at commercial scale through cement co-processing, where the cement raw materials such as silica are being partially replaced by the glass fibres and fillers in the composite, while the organic fraction is burned in the process for energy, replacing coal. The wind blades can be broken down by the grinding equipment on location, so there is no need to ship entire blades to a recycling point.

Another example involves alternative technologies like mechanical recycling, solvolysis and pyrolysis are being developed, which will ultimately provide the industry with additional solutions for end of turbine life.

As part of Forest Wind's Development Permit Condition no.17, Forest Wind is required to prepare a Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Management Plan (DRMP) prepared by a suitably qualified person. The requirements of the DRMP are outlined in the enclosed Development Permit conditions, no. 17.

3. Will there be health impacts associated with Forest Wind, including from infrasound and shadow flicker?

In 2015, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) released an updated statement on the impact of wind farms on human health. The statement was based on a rigorous independent assessment of the existing scientific evidence on wind farms and human health. According to the NHMRC statement:

“There is no direct evidence that exposure to wind farm noise affects physical or mental health...While exposure to environmental noise is associated with health effects, these effects occur at much higher levels of noise than are likely to be perceived by people living in close proximity to wind farms in Australia. The parallel evidence assessed suggests that there are unlikely to be any significant effects on physical or mental health at distances greater than 1,500 m from wind farms...Although individuals may perceive aspects of wind farm noise at greater distances, it is unlikely that it will be disturbing at distances of more than 1,500m. Noise from wind farms, including its content of low-frequency noise and infrasound, is similar to noise from many other natural and human-made sources.”

Source: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/environmental-health/wind-farms>

The Australian Medical Association states:

“The available Australian and international evidence does not support the view that the infrasound or low frequency sound generated by wind farms, as they are currently regulated in Australia, causes adverse health effects on populations residing in their vicinity. The infrasound and low frequency sound generated by modern wind farms in Australia is well below the level where known health effects occur, and there is no accepted physiological mechanism where sub-audible infrasound could cause health effects.”

Source: <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/wind-farms-and-health-2014>

Forest Wind will implement industry leading 3km separation distance between turbines and existing residences and other sensitive land uses—doubling the separation distance required under the State Code requirements, and thereby mitigating against potential noise impacts on residents and reducing community concern regarding perceived health impacts.

An independent acoustic amenity assessment undertaken for Forest Wind confirms that noise levels will not exceed 37dB during the day and 35dB during the night for non-host lots, as required by the State Code requirements.

A shadow flicker assessment has been carried out for the Project. The assessment confirms that there is no impact from shadow flicker on sensitive receptors, such as residences. The report is available for download at www.forestwind.com.au/planning-documentation. The State planning guidelines do not require a shadow flicker impact assessment on roads to be carried out.

4. What will be the noise impacts from Forest Wind?

Will they cause a disturbance at my residence?

What are the sound level requirements during the day and night?

Forest Wind will implement industry leading 3km separation distance between wind turbines and existing residences and other sensitive land uses—doubling the separation distance required under the State Code requirements, and thereby mitigating against potential noise impacts on residents.

The Project has been strictly planned in line with international best practice and the requirements set out in the State Code for wind farm development.

An independent acoustic amenity assessment undertaken for Forest Wind confirms that noise levels will not exceed 37dB during the day and 35dB during the night for non-host lots.

A copy of the noise assessment is available at forestwind.com.au/planning-documentation.

Forest Wind's Development Permit conditions also detail a comprehensive set of assessments, operational strategy and reporting to ensure Forest Wind operates within the acceptable acoustic levels once construction has begun and the wind farm becomes operational. These requirements are outlined in the enclosed Decision Notice and Conditions available on our website at forestwind.com.au/planning-documentation.

A Fact Sheet explaining the assessment and results is on acoustic is available at <https://www.forestwind.com.au/fact-sheets-resources>

5. What will be the impact of Forest Wind on landscape and visual amenity?

Forest Wind will implement an industry leading 3,000 (3km) separation distance between wind turbines and existing residences and other sensitive land uses—doubling the separation distance required under the State Code requirements, and thereby mitigating against or reducing visual impacts on residents.

An independent comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (**LVIA**) was undertaken for Forest Wind's Development Application. An excerpt from the conclusion is provided below, and a full copy of the report is available at <https://www.forestwind.com.au/planning-documentation>.

The assessment examined the likely effects of the proposed wind farm on the landscape and visual amenity of the site and surrounding area.

The assessment found that the significant effects of this proposed wind farm would be limited to:

- *Some parts of the Undulating Forested Lowlands LCT (LCT C) within the vicinity of the site*
- *A limited number of parts of the Estuaries and Coastal Foreshores with Wallum LCT (LCT F) within approximately 7-8km of the proposed development,*
- *Some parts of the Ocean Passages LCT (LCT I) closest to the proposed development*
- *A limited number of residents around Eckert Road and Oak Street, Boonooroo and a very limited number of residents in individual residential properties,*
- *Motorists on limited sections of the Maryborough Cooloola Road, Boonooroo Road and Tin Can Bay Road.*
- *A limited number of receptors at the southern tip of 75 Mile Beach and Inskip Point who are visiting these locations specifically in order to appreciate the view, rather than for water sports, transport across Wide Bay etc.*

The LVIA has described and illustrated that, in general terms, the visibility of the proposed wind farm would be extremely limited. This has been indicated but perhaps underplayed by the viewpoints [used in the stud], which have been located at some of the most open, well used and publicly accessible locations within the study area. The viewpoints illustrate some of the views seen on typical journeys through this study area, but they generally illustrate the most open views of the proposal from these journeys.

It is also important to recognise that the turbines may often be less visible than the viewpoint photomontages illustrate due to the turbine positions in relation to the prevailing wind direction as well as the varying visibility available across the area due to varying weather conditions throughout the year. The visibility data tends to indicate that in general terms, the more distant the receptor is from the wind farm, the less of it would be visible, on average.

There would be no significant effects on the vast majority of residents, tourists, recreational users, motorists, or rail users within the study area. Due to the carefully considered location and design of the proposed wind farm, the proposed turbines would be at least partially screened in many views, limiting the potential effects on both visual receptors and on landscape character.

By siting the proposal wholly within plantation forestry, the impacts on landscape character and landscape fabric have been limited; the plantation continually works on a rotation felling basis where the wind turbines will utilise existing plantation tracks and will result in no loss of distinctive landscape features. Furthermore, as the proximate viewpoints indicate, the forestry itself provides a natural visual buffer in many views.

As the ZVIs indicate, from the vast majority of the study area the proposed development would be entirely screened from view by the considerable and dense vegetation and undulating land form. Limited and scattered potential visibility of the turbines would be available from a few locations within the site and also some locations at greater distances from the site, although this visibility would predominantly be limited to under 25% percent of the wind farm.

Furthermore, whilst a number of national parks, recreation areas and the Fraser Island World Heritage Site are all located within the study area, the LVIA has provided information to confirm that the proposed wind farm would not fundamentally alter the reasons for which any of these assets were designated.

Therefore, to summarise, it is considered that the significant effects on landscape and visual amenity as a result of the proposed wind farm would be extremely limited and contained in this location.

6. Will Forest Wind cause any electromagnetic interference?

Forest Wind must ensure that television and radio reception is maintained at the same quality that was recorded pre-construction.

An Electromagnetic Interference Impact Assessment was undertaken by a suitably qualified consultant, as part of the technical studies required for the Development Application. The report is available for download at <https://www.forestwind.com.au/planning-documentation>.

The assessment was completed in accordance with the requirements of Appendix 1 of Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning (**DSDMIP**)'s State Code 23: Wind farm development, Planning Guidelines (June 2018). A summary of the impacts, management and mitigation measures are provided in Section 7.3 of the report.

The Queensland Government (DSDMIP) issued a Decision notice on 21 February 2020 for Forest Wind stating that the development application was approved, subject to conditions, including conditions that relate to mitigation of electromagnetic interference.

The Development Permit Conditions state that the Project must:

- (a) Prepare a pre-construction assessment of the television and radio reception strength at the location of any existing or approved dwellings as at the date of this approval that is within five (5) kilometres of any proposed wind turbine. The preconstruction assessment must be undertaken by an independent television and radio monitoring specialist, and include testing at locations to be determined by the television and radio monitoring specialist to enable the average television and radio reception strength to be determined.
- (b) Provide the pre-construction assessment of television and radio reception strength required by part (a) of this condition to the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning (windfarms@dsdmip.qld.gov.au).
- (c) Prepare a post-construction assessment of the television and radio reception strength at the location of any existing or approved dwellings as at the date of this in the area that is situated within five (5) kilometres of any wind turbine and in which any existing or approved dwellings are located as at the date of this approval. The post-construction assessment must be undertaken by an independent television and radio monitoring specialist and include testing at locations to be determined by the independent television and radio monitoring specialist to enable the average television and radio reception strength to be determined.
- (d) If the post-construction assessment establishes an unacceptable increase in interference to reception as a result of the wind farm, as determined by the independent television and radio monitoring specialist, measures to restore the affected reception to pre-construction quality must be undertaken.

7. What are the fire risks associated with wind farms and Forest Wind?

Forest Wind will be located in Australia's largest exotic pine plantation, between Maryborough and Gympie.

Forest Wind recognises the importance of fire risk management and is committed to deliver its responsibilities under the *Queensland Fire and Emergency Service Act (1990)*.

Wind farms and fire risk

AFAC, the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, believes that "*wind farms are not expected to adversely affect fire behaviour, nor create major ignitions risks*".

Fires in wind turbines are rare. International data indicates that the risk of a fire in a turbine in any year was historically 0.017% (GCube Insurance 2015).

No one wants a fire and therefore the latest design and technology developments incorporate enhanced prevention and managements systems:

- passive, which include design features such as transformer isolation, arching avoidance design and fire proof materials
- active, such as smoke, heat and fire detection systems and extinguisher systems
- more sophisticated maintenance procedures and checks and balances.

Ongoing development of mitigations is expected to result in the low rate of fire incidence reducing further over time.

Forest Wind Fire Planning

A detailed Fire Hazard Impact Assessment has been undertaken, identifying potential hazards within the wind farm and the forest operation. This assessment informs the control strategy in our Fire Management Plan.

Forest Wind turbines and support infrastructure will have in-built active and passive fire protection systems to minimise the likelihood of a fire occurring.

Controls may include:

- smoke alarms, heat detectors, heat protective coatings and fire proof materials
- system remote control shutdown and isolation following exceedances
- real time monitoring of detectors and alarms at the Forest Wind control centre
- in-built fire suppression systems
- underground cabling throughout the site, other than the overhead transmission line corridor

Operators of the wind farm will be trained in both forest and wind farm asset fire response.

Operators will work with the plantation manager to reduce fuel loads immediately around infrastructure and manage fires that occur within the wind farm.

In addition, as part of the Project's Development Permit Conditions no. 9 and no. 10, Forest Wind is required to prepare a Bushfire Management Plan and a Safety and Emergency Management Plan. Requirements of these Plans are outlined in the enclosed Development Permit Conditions.

8. How will co-location of Forest Wind impact the operation of the pine plantation?

Forest Wind will be situated within an existing and actively managed operating pine plantation. Existing plantation forestry land management practices will remain unaffected by the operating wind farm, with the Plantation Licensee continuing to use the land for agricultural, harvesting, trucking, haulage and processing of timber products.

Up to approximately 500ha of land will be used for the Project within the Plantation Licence Area (PLA) following the construction phase.

Comprehensive operational management plans are being developed to effectively enable the construction and operations of the wind farm alongside the ongoing operation of the pine plantation and associated land management practices.

The total area proposed to be cleared is less than one percent of the PLA for these State Forests.

Forest Wind will utilise existing forestry access tracks to provide access to the wind turbines and ancillary infrastructure and therefore this is not new infrastructure and is not included in the Project footprint.

Forest Wind respects the forestry industry is dependent on trees to survive and thrive and has undertaken to replace any permanent plantation clearing areas with a new offset – creating “no net loss” timber production.

Native vegetation will not be cleared for the construction of the wind turbines or supporting infrastructure, such as operations compounds, substation, site entrances and construction facilities.

9. How will Forest Wind impact local traffic?

A preliminary Traffic Impact Assessment has been completed for Forest Wind. The assessment considered the number of light and heavy vehicles required to access the site during the construction and operational phases as well as potential construction access routes. Access within the wind farm will be on existing forestry access tracks and there will be limited impact to the public.

Forest Wind is currently completing a detailed options assessment of potential access routes to the wind farm site using a range of constraints including community impacts. As part of the assessment, we are reviewing options to minimise the impact on local residents including identifying access routes that are located away from residential areas. As such, a dedicated access route for oversized vehicles will avoid Maryborough Cooloola Road and Tin Can Bay Road so as to limit any impacts to residents living in this area. Consultation will occur with all relevant stakeholders once the access routes have been further assessed.

As required in the Development Permit Conditions, prior to construction, Forest Wind will prepare a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) for the project to identify impacts on the safety, efficiency and condition of local roads.

10. Do wind farms affect property values?

Property prices are determined by many factors, although primarily supply of property/housing and demand for property/housing. These factors are affected by local and regional economic growth, inflation and interest rates, government affects such as capital gain and income tax and depreciation and social security. Other factors include local government planning zones/conditions, availability of land/housing, vacancy rates and access to services, such public transport, shops, schools and medical facilities. Demographic factors, such as population growth and age distribution also are key factors.

It is therefore difficult to assess any one factor that may affect property prices, however, there have been studies undertaken around the world and in Australia, it is not possible for Forest Wind to make a definitive statement on how wind farms affect property values because of the different context of each wind farm, and the market dynamics at the time of a property sale.

A report titled 'Assessment of the Impact of Wind Farms on Surrounding Land Values in Australia' conducted by Preston Rowe Paterson in 2013 provides some insights. However, because wind farms have been developed in locations generally removed from densely populated areas, and 'as a result, the small samples of sales transactions available for analysis limited the extent to which conclusions could be drawn'. The report is available for download at:

<http://eisdocs.dsdip.qld.gov.au/Coopers%20Gap%20Wind%20Farm/Final%20EIS/Final%20EIS%20-%20Appendices/appendix-i-assessment-of-the-impact-of-wind-farms-on-surrounding-land-values-in-australia.pdf>

Forest Wind will implement an industry leading 3,000 (3km) separation distance between turbines and existing residences and other sensitive land uses—doubling the separation distance required under the State Code requirements, and thereby reducing actual and perceive impacts on residents.

11. How has the community been informed of Forest Wind? What are your plans for community engagement going forward?

Since the Forest Wind proposal was announced by the State on December 18, 2019, the Forest Wind team has undertaken a wide range of community and wider stakeholder engagement activities. This has included:

- Mail out of introductory letter and brochure to 992 residents / property owners within 5km of Forest Wind proposed turbine sites. A second mail out of 740 letters providing information on Forest Wind and inviting community to participate in visit to Coopers Gap Wind Farm (which unfortunately had to be postponed due to COVID-19).
- Advertisements in five different local newspapers/ bulletins.
- Community Information Sessions over weekend of 8 and 9 February with approximately 200 people attending across: Kia Ora, Tinana (Maryborough) and Poona.
- An online Forest Wind Community Information and Consultation Sessions through Zoom on June 13 (considering COVID-19 restrictions on people gathering).
- A project website providing detailed information of the proposal including planning documentation and technical assessments, feedback form, contact details, supplier registration form. Since its launch, there has been:
 - 100 business supplier database registrations, the majority of which are within Wide Bay
 - 12,400 unique visitors to the Forest Wind website
- Regular E-Newsletters to over 410 subscribers, providing project updates, information on consultation activities and outcomes, opportunities for business and invitation to nominate to Community Consultative Committee.
- Operated an enquiry and complaint handling system via phone and email, enabling direct communication with residents and community members.

The Forest Wind team will continue a strong engagement program with surrounding communities, local businesses, Traditional Owners and local government. The timeline till construction provides at least 12 months of community engagement to build an understanding of the Project and for the community to provide feedback on Stage 1 plans within the Development Permit conditions granted by the State.

The primary community engagement initiative moving forward will be the establishment of a Community Reference Group. The purpose of the Community Reference Group will be to provide a forum for discussion between Forest Wind Holdings and representatives of the community, Traditional Owners, stakeholder groups such as local businesses, resident groups and associations, environment groups and the local councils on issues directly relating to the Project.

Our community engagement program has been impacted by COVID restrictions. As COVID-19 related restrictions are lifted on gatherings of people, we are recommencing face-to-face engagement activities such as Community Engagement sessions and the trip to Coopers Gap Wind Farm.