

Tall Tree Wind Farm: Answering Your Questions



5 April 2024

About this document

Tall Tree Wind Farm is a renewable energy project proposed by ACCIONA Energía in Central West Victoria. The site is located in the Golden Plains Shire, West of Lethbridge, North of Teesdale and South of Meredith. Following information sessions in early March 2024 where we introduced the proposed wind farm to the local communities, we collated a large number of questions – and have now compiled responses with technical input from colleagues in our community, business development, environment & planning, engineering & construction and operations teams.

How to navigate

We have grouped your questions by theme to make it easier to explore, with a contents page and hyperlinks taking you to the responses – just click on the question or category you are interested in.

Getting in touch

We want to stay in touch and continue to listen to community – you can find out more about the project at our online community hub www.community.acciona.com.au/talltree.

You can also get in touch by email at talltree@acciona.com, by phone on 1800 283500 or by post at PO Box 24110, Melbourne VIC 3001.

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Question	Response
Project Location	
Why has this location been chosen?	The site was chosen due to its strong wind resource, open, gently undulating terrain, nearby port access and proximity to a strong electrical point of connection.
Why are the turbines located so close to homes, schools, and towns?	All of our projects are developed to comply with permitting requirements – we do this in consultation with community, not in isolation. Victoria has a legislated setback of 1km between turbines and non-involved dwellings. This would be the minimum setback applied to projects in Victoria, unless landowners agree to having turbines located closer. We will continue to adhere to regulations whilst working with the community to identify and consider their requirements. There have recently been changes to the noise regulations in Victoria in 2021, and ACCIONA Energía and the consultants will develop a wind farm layout that complies with current noise legislation. A planning application in Victoria requires a pre-construction noise assessment. This assessment must demonstrate that the proposed wind farm will comply with the New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics – Wind Farm Noise.
Why are there 6 towers proposed to be located so close to Teesdale and Lethbridge?	All of our projects are developed to comply with permitting requirements – we do this in consultation with community, not in isolation. Victoria has a legislated setback of 1km between turbines and non-involved dwellings. This would be the minimum setback applied to projects in Victoria, unless landowners agree to having turbines located closer. We will continue to adhere to regulations whilst working with the community to identify and consider their requirements. There have recently been changes to the noise regulations in Victoria in 2021, and ACCIONA Energía and the consultants will develop a wind farm layout that complies with current noise legislation. A planning application in Victoria requires a pre-construction noise assessment. This assessment must demonstrate that the proposed wind farm will comply with the New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics – Wind Farm Noise.
How close is the nearest turbine to homes, towns, and schools? Is this the closest wind farm to a school in Victoria?	We have recently launched an interactive online map at www.community.acciona.com.au/talltree , in addition to the downloadable map. Both maps include scales, enabling you to understand the distances from turbines to homes and townships. We can also provide more detailed information to individual enquirers regarding distances. In terms of schools, our Mortlake South Wind Farm is approximately 4km from the nearest school, Mortlake P-12 College – a similar distance to Lethbridge and Meredith Primary Schools. Waubra Primary School is approximately 2km from our Waubra Wind Farm which has been operational since 2009. Relationships with schools are important to us: we have provided grants to both schools, and hosted tours for Mortlake College in 2023 and 2024. We also offer scholarship programs for all our Victorian wind farms.
About ACCIONA Energía and the Energy Market	
Where is ACCIONA Energía from?	ACCIONA Energía is a Spanish company and the largest 100% renewable energy company in the world. With over 20 years' experience in Australia our 'build, own and operate' model sets us apart as a developer that works closely with landowners, neighbours, and the community to deliver integrated solutions.
Does ACCIONA Energía feel it is acting corporately and sociably responsible in relation to the placement of these wind turbines?	The present placement is an early design. While we would only ever propose a project layout which is compliant with regulations, it is important for us to go beyond this and ensure the community is consulted on project design, benefits and investment, before seeking approval to go ahead. We want to listen to your feedback and shape our projects around your needs, doing our best to mitigate concerns and maximise the social and economic opportunities.

Question	Response
Why is it a wind farm and not another energy source such as solar?	Solar panels need large areas of flat land and a strong solar resource. The solar resource is not sufficient to develop at this site. However, the wind resource is suitable.
Why onshore and not offshore?	Offshore wind is currently a nascent industry in Australia. The costs of these projects and barriers to market entry mean that this business is not attractive to ACCIONA Energía and it remains an economically unviable option for ACCIONA Energía at the moment. We have onshore wind farms operating, in construction, and in development in Australia - we are experienced in the onshore business.
Wind Turbines and Site Operation	
What are the proposed dimensions of the turbine foundation – in terms of span and depth - and what type of foundation will be used?	The foundation takes the form of an octagonal concrete gravity footing approximately 22m in diameter and up to 3.3m deep.
What is the length of the turbine blades?	The blades for the project are proposed to be a maximum of 91.5m long.
What size/height are the turbines?	The proposed turbines will be a maximum height of 271.5m.
How many turbines will the wind farm have?	As of April 2024, there are proposed to be up to 60 wind turbines.
What is the clearance under the blades?	Based on the current design, the expected clearance will be a minimum 56.5m.
Why is ACCIONA Energía using the higher turbines? Why are the higher turbines better?	Turbine technology progresses over time – taller turbines can utilise greater wind resources and enable more efficient energy generation.
Can ACCIONA Energía decide to use a different design/even higher turbine at construction?	No. The turbines' heights would be constrained by a planning permit, for which we are currently proposing a maximum of 271.5m.
Why don't the buffer zones increase as the turbines get higher?	Victoria currently has a legislated setback of 1km between turbines and non-involved dwellings. This setback does not stipulate height of turbines, therefore 1km is the minimum applied to projects in Victoria. We will continue to adhere to current regulations whilst working with the community to identify and consider their requirements.
Is this the first time that turbines of this height (271.5m) have been used on land?	271.5m will be the maximum height proposed for the planning application. We are not aware of turbines of this height operating currently, however, it is common within the industry to seek permission for larger turbines than presently operate. Our site at MacIntyre, which is due to become operational by 2025, hosts turbines which are 229.5m in height to the tip (Nordex Delta 4000-N163/5.7).
Why are there so many turbines in a small area?	Modern turbines are typically spaced at distances to ensure that all turbines can operate at maximum efficiency during windy conditions. As turbines have increased in size over the years, the spacing between turbines has typically increased. The Tall Tree Wind Farm is located in a good wind resource area. The extent of that good wind resource is finite and so the wind turbines are located to maximise the capture of that resource.
Will the wind farm operate 24/7?	Our facilities generally operate on a 24/7 basis, however the generation of electricity is impacted by numerous external factors such as wind conditions resulting in intermittent periods of no generation. Maintenance and operations activities at the facility would normally only take place between 7am and 4pm weekdays. Weekend work would take place on a callout basis and is limited as much as reasonably possible. The facility would at all times be monitored and operated by a remote operations centre.

Question	Response
Decommissioning / End of Life	
What percentage of the wind turbine is recyclable?	Currently, around 85-95% of the materials used in wind turbines are recyclable.
What is the expected lifetime of a turbine and its components?	A turbine and its components have an expected lifetime of at least 25 years. With careful maintenance, turbines can last for longer than this.
What is the decommissioning process? What happens to the parts after decommissioning?	<p>In the event that a wind farm is decommissioned we typically remove all above ground infrastructure including turbines, buildings and overhead lines, rehabilitate construction areas, hard stands and access tracks, however these details are subject to specific agreements made with landowners and the regulatory authorities.</p> <p>About 85-95% of a turbine can be recycled. As part of our commitment to recycling and a circular economy, we are working with partners to develop recycling technologies.</p>
Whose responsibility is it to decommission and who pays for decommissioning?	It is the responsibility of the wind farm owner, not the landowner, to decommission the project as well as fund the decommissioning.
What is the carbon footprint of producing and decommissioning a wind turbine?	The carbon footprint of wind energy is around 8-10 g CO ₂ eq per kWh of electricity produced. This includes all the infrastructure required to build the wind farm, operate it for 25-30 years and then decommission. The amount of energy that it takes to build, operate and decommission a wind farm is offset by the clean energy produced in less than one year.
Construction and Transmission Lines	
What is the construction process?	The construction process will be site-specific and tailored to its needs. However, we will typically start with upgrades to access roads and creation of temporary construction facilities, and then construction of internal roads works will begin. Construction of wind turbine foundations will precede the arrival and installation of the wind turbine parts (blades, nacelles and towers). Wind farm operations and maintenance buildings and substation will progress in parallel with the above civil works. Internal wind farm electrical medium voltage cables, with underground cables in trenches or overhead lines, will also progress in parallel. The completion of the above works will then allow commissioning of the wind farm to begin.
Will there be dust?	For certain activities and during certain times of the year, construction has the potential to create dust. Dust will typically be managed through mitigation measures such as watercarts and other methods throughout construction in accordance with a site-specific Environmental Management Plan.
What excavation will be required?	Examples of excavation that may be required include excavation in relation to geotechnical surveys (subsurface test drilling and pits), building of roads and medium voltage cable trenches, turbine foundations, building foundations (for example, for the operations and maintenance building and substation).
Will there be power outages?	There will be no scheduled power outages as a result of the wind farm construction or operation.
Will the wind farm affect phone and internet reception in the area?	A telecommunications and electromagnetic interference assessment would be completed prior to construction as part of the planning approvals process to understand the telecommunications within the area, which includes an assessment of TV, phone and internet reception. If potential interferences are identified, appropriate measures will be undertaken to mitigate or rectify issues.
Where will the transmission lines go?	High-voltage transmission lines will extend from the substation to the connection point of the grid network. The current proposed point of connection is the 220kV Moorabool to Ballarat transmission line. The exact route of the transmission lines is still being determined, but we will share details of this proposed route once there is more certainty.

Question	Response
When will the community see a transmission plan?	A transmission line route will be made available once the finer details have been confirmed through conversations with the landowners, which are currently in progress.
Will the lines be overhead or underground?	The lines that connect the wind farm to the existing grid are currently proposed to be overhead.
Will the transmission route use existing easements?	The exact route of the transmission line is still to be determined so we cannot confirm yet if existing easements will be used.
Landowners and Project Hosting	
Have payments been made to landowners?	Yes. Payments to landowners are made associated with land agreements to potentially develop a wind farm on their land.
How large is the wind farm area? What is an estimated land area use for the 60 proposed turbines?	Currently, the project footprint is approximately 770ha (which includes turbines, access tracks and other infrastructure). This is the land required for construction use. Operational land use will be significantly smaller as many of the areas temporarily impacted during construction will be reinstated. The land area contained by the project boundaries as shown on our map (see www.community.acciona.com.au/talltree), including estimated provisions for a transmission line, is approximately 6200 ha.
What is the project cost versus the return on investment?	Project costs are variable and will be dependent on the final layout, component costs at the time of construction and when the wind farm goes into construction. The return on investment will be dependent on all these factors along with the wind resource and market conditions.
Who is paying for the project? Does ACCIONA Energía receive government subsidies?	ACCIONA Energía pays for the lifetime costs of the project – we don't receive government subsidies.
How do access licences differ from an agreement lease?	An access licence provides access to property for a shorter period, and does not have a longer term agreement appended to it, such as a lease. An Agreement for Lease (or AFL) is a longer-term agreement with a 30-year lease attached to it.
How long are the leases?	30 years.
Can I host a turbine?	At this stage in the project, additional turbines cannot be accommodated based on the project constraints we currently know.
How many landowners are there?	There are anticipated to be 30 landowners involved in the project, including those hosting turbines and easements.
Will the wind farm affect future farming development in the region?	No – our projects are designed to co-exist with farming operations on the land we lease from landholders. This has been observed at our other wind farm sites.
Can land be compulsorily acquired?	No, ACCIONA Energía cannot compulsorily acquire land.
Visual Impacts	
What will be the visual impact on my home, and how is this determined?	Landscape and visual impact studies are undertaken as part of the planning process to determine the visual impacts, using a defined criteria for the assessment of landscape values which is based on recognised methodologies and in accordance with the requirements determined by the planning department, and requirements within the planning guidelines.
Will visual impact surveys be completed on all nearby properties?	As part of the planning process, we carry out a landscape and visual impact assessment to understand how the project would impact the surrounding landscape character and consider how to mitigate impacts. These look at critical local viewpoints, including local residences and points of interest. The assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements determined by the planning department and requirements within the planning guidelines.
Health	
Have studies been done on the impact, for example to health, of the 271.5m turbines?	A range of assessments will be undertaken through the planning process to assess the impacts of the turbine proposed.

Question	Response
What are the health impacts of the noise and vibration?	<p>Australia's leading medical and scientific agencies have exhaustively reviewed the available research and made several conclusions about the impacts of wind farms on the health of people.</p> <p>The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in their 2015 position statement 'Evidence on wind farms and human health' concluded that "there is currently no consistent evidence that wind farms cause adverse health effects in humans". The position statement details the type of evidence assessed (direct and parallel) and the circumstances in which it was gathered. The full systematic literature review by the University of Adelaide that informed the NHMRC statement is available online and additional evidence is available through the NHMRC website.</p>
What impacts does the wind farm have on existing health conditions such as tumours?	The scientific consensus is that properly sited and operated wind turbines do not pose a direct risk to human health, including conditions like tumours.
What sensory effects do wind farms have? How do they affect people with autism?	We are not aware of any studies that focus on the impact of wind farms on individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or hypersensitivity to noise. However, it is important to consider sensitive receptors for this project, and we will ensure that these groups are included in our assessments going forward.
What are the health impacts of the wind farm? Do wind turbines disturb sleep?	Numerous scientific studies have been conducted to assess the potential health impacts of wind farms, including their effects on sleep patterns. In summary, the scientific evidence suggests that wind farms do not have a direct impact on health or sleep.
Noise Impacts	
Will there be noise and vibration associated with the wind farm? What is the acceptable level of noise? How far will the noise and vibration travel?	<p>ACCIONA Energía will need to design a wind farm that will comply with current noise legislation. Approval for a wind farm in Victoria requires a pre-construction noise assessment. This assessment must comply with the New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics – Wind Farm Noise. The noise limit is assessed at dwellings and need to be less than 40dB or no more than 5dB greater than the background noise levels, whichever is higher.</p> <p>Noise and vibration during construction will also be addressed within a Construction Environmental Management Plan as required by the planning process.</p>
What noise and vibration tests have been done on 271m turbines?	A preliminary noise impact assessment has been undertaken based on the project layout which models a worst-case scenario to predict noise levels at sensitive receptor sites. In order to be approved by the Department of Planning, the full assessment that will support the planning application must demonstrate that the wind farm complies with the New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010, Acoustics – Wind Farm Noise.
Once operational will the wind farm test noise and vibration levels?	The Environmental Protection Regulations require an independent noise specialist in conjunction with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to measure and determine whether the operating wind farm complies with the legislated noise limits. Pre-construction noise monitoring is required to be undertaken at different receiver locations to obtain background noise data and determine operational noise limits at the receiver locations. This will be used during the operational compliance monitoring after the wind farm has been constructed. Following construction, noise monitoring must be undertaken at these same locations to assess whether the wind farm noise is compliant with the required standards.
Agriculture and Local Infrastructure	
What impacts will the noise and vibration have on farming?	Wind farms are very frequently co-located with farming land, used for both cropping and livestock – the small project footprint enables land use to continue. We don't anticipate impacts from noise or vibration on farming, which would be consistent with our experience at our other operational wind farms.

Question	Response
Can animals graze under the turbines?	Yes, wind farms are compatible with livestock grazing and other agricultural practices. We work with farmers all around Australia who successfully continue their sheep, cattle, and other grazing activities around wind turbines installed on their land.
What impact will the wind farm have on the local chicken farm?	We are not aware of any evidence to suggest that there are any impacts to chicken farming practices when located in proximity to an operational wind farm.
Are there any biosecurity issues associated with a wind farm near a pig farm?	We recognise that the development of renewable energy projects in rural areas must be done in a manner that does not lead to significant adverse impacts on the agriculture industry or the country's unique ecological diversity. An outbreak of certain diseases, weeds, or feral animals could have significant consequences to production or trade, and therefore we uphold strict biosecurity measures during construction and operation to reduce any biosecurity risks to all forms of stock, including pigs. Specific mitigation measures that we use vary based on the stage of the project, discussions with landowners and what is needed on each plot of land.
Will the turbines near the airport need safety lights?	An aviation risk assessment will be undertaken to determine if any safety lights are required on the turbines.
Will there be a no-fly zone near the wind farm? Will the wind farm impact flight paths?	No. Should the proposed wind farm proceed, the turbine locations will be registered with Airservices Australia and a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) will be released. The preliminary aviation impact assessment has not identified significant impacts to flight paths at this preliminary stage but the full impacts will be assessed as part of the aviation risk assessment that would support the planning application.
How will the wind farm impact Lethbridge Airport?	The final wind farm design will aim to minimise impacts to Lethbridge Airport and their operations while ensuring that all relevant regulations and guidelines are adhered to. Stakeholders will be closely consulted with to ensure any impacts are mitigated through design.
What size is the buffer zone around the airport?	Turbines are located at least 3 nautical miles (5.56km) from the Lethbridge Airport runway.
What will be the impact on roads?	Road upgrades would be required and carried out – the extent of these will depend on the traffic impact assessment results and through further consultation, especially as the project details become clearer and we know more about delivery routes for the major components. We acknowledge that roads are a significant concern for the community. We have worked effectively with local stakeholders on our recent Victorian developments to ensure local roads that are significantly utilised during construction are upgraded prior and returned to at least the pre-condition standard (if not in better condition), once construction is complete.
First Nations	
How will Cultural Heritage be protected? Has a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) commenced and how long will it take to complete?	A due diligence heritage desktop study is underway which will identify heritage registers, listed cultural heritage artefacts and historic heritage within the project area. Based on the desktop work, a further Cultural Heritage Assessment will be required as part of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) process. On-ground surveys with the Traditional Owners and Heritage Advisors will ensure impacts to Cultural Heritage are minimised or avoided where possible. Throughout this early phase of the project, ACCIONA Energía has been in regular contact with the Traditional Owners as the first step of understanding the project land and history.
Has ACCIONA Energía engaged with Traditional Owners?	Yes, we have briefed and engaged with Wadawurrung as the Traditional Owners and Registered Aboriginal Party for the Country that the proposed project site resides on.

Question	Response
Environment	
What impact will the wind farm have on native grasses? Specifically, has ACCIONA Energía done a native grass study/report for the Stony Creek area that runs to the west of Lethbridge?	We have engaged a specialist to conduct native vegetation surveys throughout the project area as part of the vegetation quality assessment in accordance with DEECA guidelines. All surveys have been undertaken within a footprint specified for the project which includes Stony Creek at the point where project infrastructure is located on and around the watercourse.
Will the wind farm affect groundwater?	It is not anticipated that the operation of the wind farm will impact groundwater. Activities that have the potential for impact groundwater will be assessed further as the project progresses.
What studies have been done on shadow flickers?	The proposed project is still in the early stages of development, and a full shadow flicker assessment has not been conducted yet. As part of the environmental and planning approvals, a shadow flicker analysis will be required. The assessment to be conducted for shadow flicker will need to demonstrate that the wind farm complies with the relevant guidelines.
What impact will the wind farm have on flora and fauna?	Preliminary biodiversity studies have been conducted within the project area since mid-2020 and will be ongoing in order to capture data through the different seasons. The completed surveys and associated data collected means that ACCIONA Energía can optimise the design in consideration to the flora and fauna habitats identified to minimise and mitigate impacts to local flora and fauna species. The specific impacts to flora and fauna of the current project design is still being understood as the surveys progress and we await advice from the specialists.
Bunjil's Lookout is a breeding ground for eagles. How will ACCIONA Energía protect them?	Efforts have been made to develop the project layout to minimise impacts to relevant avifauna species. The proposed project's turbines are currently located approximately 6.9km from Bunjil's Lookout in Maude. As more data becomes available, impacts to eagles and other species will be considered and reviewed. A detailed ecological impact assessment will be completed as part of a planning application that evaluates all ecological impacts including those to bird species.
What impacts will the wind farm have on bird migration?	Since 2021, we have undertaken bird surveys including the assessment of migratory species, amongst other biodiversity assessments, in accordance with the relevant guidelines within the project boundary to support the planning application.
What impacts will the wind farm have on frogs? Will ACCIONA Energía learn from Golden Plains frog studies?	Preliminary surveys have been conducted within the guidelines to understand if protected species are present and how they are using the waterways in and around the project area. Any impacts to aquatic species that are found will be minimised and appropriately mitigated as required.
What impact will the wind farm have on bats, snake neck turtles, broilgas, legless lizards, and earless geckos?	The proposed project is designed with consideration to listed fauna and as we continue to collect further data, the project design will change accordingly. An ecological impact assessment will support the Planning Application which will detail any impacts to protected species along with necessary mitigation measures required.
Who is conducting the environmental studies?	We have engaged multiple specialists to conduct environmental studies for this proposed project. The main consultant working on the EES Act Referral is Environmental Resources Management (ERM) who are advising on Noise, Heritage (Cultural and Historical Heritage) and Landscape and Visual Assessments. Ecology and Heritage Partners (EHP) have been engaged for Ecology, Flora and Fauna Biodiversity surveys, alongside Nature Advisory for Broilga studies. Aviation Projects have conducted the Aviation Impact Assessment. As the project progresses further, other technical discipline assessments will be conducted.

Question	Response
Firefighting	
Will the wind farm affect firefighting capabilities?	No, as the proposed wind farm is being designed in consultation with CFA and guided by the Design Guidelines and Model Requirements Renewable Energy Facilities v4 (CFA,2023). If the project progresses, prior to construction, there will be a Bushfire Mitigation Plan in place which is anticipated to be finalised in consultation with the CFA.
Will the wind farm affect aerial firefighting capabilities?	We will work to ensure that our design complies with the requirements for aerial firefighting, as set out by the CFA – see https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/building-planning-regulations/renewable-energy-fire-safety – section 4.2.6. This details the requirements to ensure adequate space between turbines, and required markings.
Who decides to shut off the wind farm in the case of a fire?	We have established emergency response plans and conduct regular drills and training to ensure that these plans are appropriate and our people are trained in their use. Our site teams are authorised to shut down the facility if they believe that there is a risk that the continued operation of the facility could in any way hamper the efforts of emergency services or cause an increased risk to the area. We will also respond to a request by the local emergency services lead, for example the CFA, to shut down the facility. The turbines are also designed to automatically shut themselves down when experiencing conditions which would normally be present in a bushfire situation, such as heat and thick smoke. We also have a senior leader on call 24/7 in case of emergency, who is capable of shutting down the facility almost immediately via our 24/7 remote operations centre.
How quickly can the turbines be turned off during a fire?	Our operations can be shut down within seconds in response to an emergency. The turbines themselves have monitoring systems installed to detect temperature increases – they will automatically slow or shut down the turbine if the temperature is too high.
How will firefighting take place when there is smoke?	The CFA guidelines identify minimum separation distances between turbines as this requirement ensures that aircraft can undertake firefighting duties locally, around the project area and within the wind farm in case of a fire. When there is a fire in the local area, the turbines can easily be shut down and blades placed in a ‘Y’ position and ensure that all turbines are rotated to face the same direction. Airservices Australia will be notified of the turbines locations as the project progresses and they would be included in aeronautical databases and charts to enable pilots to be aware of the turbines. A risk management process will be developed with the local CFAs to assess the risks associated with their operations to ensure that an acceptable level of safety can be maintained even in low visibility during bushfires.
What has ACCIONA Energía learned from fires and existing wind farms?	We take the opportunity to update our knowledge whenever possible to improve our bushfire mitigation plans, response plans and practices surrounding emergency events. For example, following an event near our Waubra Wind Farm in Victoria in early 2024, we included an ACCIONA Energía representative in the local control centre updates (for ongoing campaign fires) and immediately mobilised an emergency management team to support the onsite response. Although our facility was not impacted directly, we regularly communicated with the event control authority to ensure that our water was available to crews, and that the site could be shut down if required.

Question	Response
Project Planning and Timeline	
What is the EES process? Is it objective? How are the studies undertaken? What is the scope? Will the scope be made public?	<p>The Environmental Effects Statement process aims to assess the environmental impacts of the project. A summary of the objectives, studies/scope and commentary on public exhibition is made available on the Department of Transport and Planning website (www.planning.vic.gov.au).</p> <p>We are presently preparing referral documents under the Environment Effects Act 1978 which is anticipated to be lodged in 2024. The studies as part of the EES assessments are conducted according to the relevant guidelines and standards by independent and appropriately qualified consultants. The scoping requirements (effectively the scope of the project, should it go to EES) will be shared publicly at the outset for review and public comment.</p>
What is the project timeline?	<p>Currently, the proposed project is in the feasibility stage, with preliminary surveys ongoing at the site. We are presently preparing referral documents under the Environment Effects Act 1978 and Environment Protection Biodiversity Act 1999, which will be lodged in 2024, and the outcome of the referrals will determine the approvals pathway. This will continue to inform project design throughout the development phase, alongside feedback from the community. As we work through this process, we will post links to the Tall Tree Community Hub where you can access planning documents and provide feedback. The wind farm has a proposed construction commencement of mid-2026.</p>
Is there a new policy in Victoria to accelerate approvals for renewable energy projects?	<p>The announced changes will only be applicable to projects that do not trigger the need for an Environment Effects Statement (EES) under the Environment Effects Act 1978 (EE Act). Based on the scale of this project and our due diligence on the land and surrounding environment, the project is expected to be referred under the EE Act in Q2 2024, where in turn it is expected that the Minister for Planning will issue a decision for an EES to be prepared. This would make Tall Tree Wind Farm ineligible to utilise the accelerated planning approval pathway under the Development Facilitation Program (DFP). In short, the faster approvals pathway is not expected to apply to the proposed Tall Tree Wind Farm.</p> <p>Further information on the changes to Victorian planning referred to as the DFP is available on the Department of Transport and Planning website (www.planning.vic.gov.au).</p>
What overlays apply to the project?	<p>For a project of this size, multiple overlays could affect the design of this proposed project. Potential overlays include, but are not limited to: Bushfire Management Overlay, Flood Overlay, Land Subject to Inundation Overlay, Salinity Management Overlay, Environmental Significance Overlay and Heritage Overlay.</p>
Community Consultation and Benefits	
Where will the employees and contractors for the construction and operation of the wind farm come from?	<p>The recruitment of employees and contractors for both the construction and operation phases of the wind farm will involve a mix of local, regional, and international sources. We always prioritise local hiring whenever possible to ensure economic benefits are shared with the surrounding communities. Job opportunities typically range from construction workers and engineers to maintenance technicians and administrative staff.</p>
Will there be job opportunities for local residents?	<p>Yes, there will be job opportunities for local residents during both the construction and operation phases of the wind farm. These opportunities include a variety of roles such as construction workers, maintenance technicians, administrative staff, and other support roles. We always strive to work closely with local organisations to facilitate local hiring and skill development programs.</p>

Question	Response
Is there compensation available for visual impacts on neighbours? And will there be a community benefit fund?	<p>We will offer a neighbour benefit program to those closest to our wind farms. While we cannot provide all the details right now, for some other wind farms we operate, we provide a direct financial offering and also landscaping options to screen views.</p> <p>In terms of community funding, as a minimum, we will develop a small grants program, legacy investment program and scholarship program to support local people and initiatives – we are running similar programs in our other wind farms across Australia. We are also exploring an energy rebate which will help local community members pay energy bills. As the project progresses, we will provide many opportunities for input from the local community, to help shape a fund that is specific to the needs of Meredith, Teesdale, Lethbridge and Shelford and other surrounding communities.</p>
What will be the community benefits?	<p>The community will benefit from this project in numerous ways. Examples of benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgraded roads • Improved council services through rates contribution • Community grants • Tailored neighbour benefits program and landscape screening • Scholarship programs • 10 - 12 jobs during operation, including turbine technician and maintenance jobs • Over 270 jobs during construction • Increased economic activity in the local community.
Who will decide how the community benefit funds are allocated/used?	The allocation of funds is determined through a transparent process involving input from residents, community leaders, and ACCIONA Energía.
Will ACCIONA Energía negotiate on the height or location of the turbines? Who decides what turbines stay or go?	<p>We recognise concerns about turbine height, and should emphasise that 271.5m to the tip is the maximum proposed via the proposed planning application. We will continue to listen to feedback and consider the most appropriate height to balance project viability and community impact.</p> <p>Decisions about the location of turbines are made through a combination of factors including technical feasibility, environmental impact assessments, landowner negotiations, and regulatory requirements. Ultimately, ACCIONA Energía, in consultation with landowners, neighbours, the wider community, and regulatory bodies determines the final layout and configuration of turbines based on factors such as wind resource, land use considerations, and minimising impacts on surrounding communities.</p>
What is the impact on land values and property prices?	<p>We do not have information based on the local market, however recent studies have explored this issue more broadly – see for example https://reneweconomy.com.au/wind-turbines-have-negligible-impact-on-house-prices-new-study-finds/.</p>
How do community members object to the project – whether to ACCIONA Energía or elsewhere?	<p>At this informal stage of consultation, you can address your views on the project to us and we will acknowledge this – you can find contact details at www.community.acciona.com.au/talltree. You may also wish to share your concerns with your local council or MP. In time, as the formal approvals pathway is agreed, you will be able to share your views with the appropriate government authority (either state or local government, depending on the pathway).</p>

Question	Response
<p>How were the recent information sessions publicised? I didn't hear about them.</p>	<p>The Community Information Sessions held in early March 2024, attended by almost 200 people, were publicised across several channels. In the lead up to the information sessions, our team placed flyers on each physical community noticeboard in Lethbridge, Meredith and Teesdale, as well as in frequently visited shopfronts throughout each of the three townships. A flyer letterbox drop was also undertaken by the team to direct project neighbours and landholders.</p> <p>On 23 February a half page advertisement (outlining the information session dates, times and venues) was placed in the Ballarat Times newspaper, and the same advertisement was sent to the administrators of the Teesdale Community Noticeboard (Facebook page), the Teesdale Community Hall (Facebook page), the Lethbridge Community and Surrounds Facebook page, the Meredith Community Centre Facebook page, Maude, She Oaks and Steiglitz Community Facebook page and the Lethbridge community and surrounds Facebook page for publication ahead of the sessions.</p> <p>In addition to the print and social media advertisements, we engaged Australia Post to undertake a flyer mailout to the Lethbridge, Teesdale and Meredith communities. This mailout was to be completed by Australia Post during the week beginning 26 February. Unfortunately, some community members across all three townships have mentioned that they did not receive flyers ahead of the information sessions. We have lodged a formal request for review with Australia Post that is currently underway and will ensure this is not repeated ahead of the next round of information sessions.</p>
<p>When are the next information sessions?</p>	<p>In March 2024 we hosted three information sessions in Teesdale, Meredith and Lethbridge. Nearly 200 members of the community came to these initial sessions. These sessions represented the first time the project has been communicated to the community at large – but there will be many more opportunities for the community to hear about the project and have the opportunity to provide feedback. We always host information sessions well before any development application is submitted to the Planning Department and any formal consultation begins, so that community members can be made aware of the project and understand how they can get involved in the process both directly with us or via the department.</p> <p>We will be holding more information sessions in the near future and are aiming to confirm dates and times soon. You can receive updates on timing by signing up at our online community hub - www.community.accionna.com.au/talltree.</p>
<p>How will information be made available to the community?</p>	<p>We will continue to update the Tall Tree Wind Farm online community hub and subscriber list with any new information about the project as it progresses. Resources on the hub include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project factsheet • Project timeline • Live, interactive map • 'Ask a question' tool • Regular project news updates • General factsheets about wind farms and wind energy • Contact details and sign-up form. <p>The community hub address is www.community.accionna.com.au/talltree. You can also contact us by email at talltree@accionna.com or by phone on 1800 283550. We are happy to receive enquiries by post at ACCIONA Energía, PO Box 24110, Melbourne VIC 3001.</p>

Question	Response
When were local councils notified about this project and when did they advise residents?	We have been in contact with Golden Plains Shire Council over the course of the feasibility stage, with our first briefing in late 2021 and most recently in November 2023. As a key project stakeholder, we will continue to keep the council updated as the project progresses and plan to meet in May to provide an update. Questions received by council prior to the information sessions have been referred onto ACCIONA Energía. With the project shared publicly, we recommend getting in contact with the council if you wish to find out more.