

Mount Emerald Wind Farm Update



Mount Emerald Wind farm substation earthworks the focal point for construction

Construction progress at the Mount Emerald Wind Farm has been increasing in pace, with activities focused on the construction of the Powerlink Switchyard bench. The switchyard will provide the connection point for the wind farm taking the power generated from the wind turbines and transferring it to the national electricity grid via the existing transmission line which traverses the site.

Bulk earthworks are in full swing at the substation site and additional equipment has been mobilised to site, notably a crushing plant, dump trucks and water carts.

The construction of the site entry road is continuing along with approximately 7.8km of internal access tracks which have now been cleared.

Further civil works for the construction of the foundations and hardstands at a number of wind turbine location have also commenced.



We welcome feedback

While it is the intention for the construction and operation of the Mount Emerald Wind Farm to be performed with as little disruption as possible, there may be times where neighbours and members of the public may have issue with some of the activities.

To assist in the smooth construction and operation of the wind farm a range of mechanisms are available to allow people to raise their reasonable concerns.

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Site clearance activities

Site clearance activities precede any construction works (roads, hardstands, foundations or other site facilities) and are conducted by specialist teams on our behalf.

Such activities require the co-ordination and co-operation of the construction contractor to remove disruptions to the construction program.

Construction contractors Vestas and CPP provide regular “look-ahead” work schedules identifying the upcoming work areas for a future two-week period. This allows the clearance teams to clear these areas to ensure they are safe and will have minimal impacts on the existing environment.

Site Clearance Activity includes:

- Quolls – capture, tracking and removal if needed of Northern Quolls
- Plants – identification, avoidance or translocation of endangered plant species
- Heritage – identification, avoidance or translocation of indigenous artefacts
- UXO – detection, removal or disposal of unexploded ordnance from World War II



Quolls

Given the Northern Quoll is listed as an endangered species it is critical for the construction works at Mount Emerald to be conducted to minimise any impact on the resident population.

Teams from **4Elements Consulting** have been placing specialised baited traps across the designated construction zones to capture any quolls within this area. Captured quolls are fitted with lightweight radio tracking collars before they are released to allow teams to more easily clear work areas in the future.

The initial estimate of the quoll population on site was around 55, however, work to date has seen 93 individuals captured, collared and released with all seemingly going about their business in an undisturbed manner.

NOV16

Sunwater upgrade works to Kippen Drive intersection.

All financing secured for project.

Pre-construction activities. UXO study and geotechnical surveys.

DEC16

FEB17

EPC Contractor Vestas formally handed site.

Construction activities include access road upgrades, and excavation of substation bench.

MAY17

OCT17

Wind turbines components will commence being delivered to site and erected.

Substation is completed and wind farm is connected to the electricity grid network.

MAY18

SEP18

All turbines are erected. We flick the switch, full commercial operations begin.



Plants

There are six endangered plant species identified as potentially occurring across the Mount Emerald site. To date **4Elements Consulting** clearance teams have been able to pin-point over 800 individuals. Once found checks are undertaken to see if the find can be avoided and left in-situ, if this cannot be done plants may be removed from their current location and replanted in an area away from planned works.

Where avoidance or translocation cannot be done, programs are being run to collect seeds, seedlings or to propagate new plants so they can be planted on the project site or within the designated offset area.

To assist in the success of these programs a green house has been established on-site where plants can be grown or held before being planted.

Heritage

Given the relatively undisturbed nature of the Mount Emerald site there does exist a real possibility for the discovery of indigenous heritage items across the site.

RATCH is working closely with the local **Mbabaram** people to identify and preserve any such items encountered. To date, the **Mbabaram** survey team has identified two significant locations to be preserved through exclusion zones and collected around 1,000 artefacts to be analysed and returned to site.



UXO

During the time of World War II, part of the wind farm property was used for military training as a firing range for mortars and grenades.

Specialised consultants, **MILSEARCH** have been engaged to undertake clearance surveys of the work areas using a range of detection devices, to identify any potential threats from unexploded ordnance (UXO).

To date, **MILSEARCH** has cleared approx. 62ha of planned work areas and buffer. There have been six confirmed UXO found.

Once found strict protocols are followed to allow the device to be removed or disposed of before works can continue in the area. Protocols include establishing an exclusion zone, defence department inspection and if required disposal/removal, followed by final inspection and re-opening.

In addition to the UXOs found, there have been over 150 exploded or remnant items discovered (predominantly mortar tail fins).