

Our ref: HMS ID 6740

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Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (Heritage & Conservation Register)
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Exhibition of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Junction Rivers Wind Farm (SSD-30448824)

Dear Ms Bandaruk,

Thank you for your referral dated 11 July 2024 inviting comments from the Heritage Council of NSW on the above State Significant Development (SSD) proposal.

The proposed development involves:

- The development of the Junction Rivers Wind Farm. This includes the installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of up to 96 wind turbine generators (WTGs) 300 metres in height, and up to four battery energy storage systems (BESS) or static synchronous compensators (STATCOM devices).
- Ancillary devices including substations/switching stations, maintenance facilities, offices, underground and overhead transmission lines and access roads.
- Site compounds, rock crushing facilities and concrete batching plants during construction.

The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) relating to environmental heritage for the project require the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to undertake 'an assessment of the impacts to historic heritage having regard to the *NSW Heritage Manual*'.

The following reports were considered in our assessment:

- *Junction Rivers Wind Project Environmental Impact Statement*, Umwelt (Australia) Pty Ltd, May 2024, and specifically the following appendices:

- Appendix 09: *Junction Rivers Wind Farm Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Moir Landscape Architecture Pty Ltd, May 2024
- Appendix 13: *Junction Rivers Wind Project Historical Heritage Impact Assessment*, Umwelt (Australia) Pty Ltd, May 2024

As delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW, I provide the following comments:

- The site is not listed on any statutory heritage list and is not within the vicinity of an item listed on the State Heritage Register.
- The *Historical Heritage Impact Assessment* (HHIA) has identified that the ruins/remains of three 1890s homesteads – Lynwood, Tyndale and Oldham Park – remain on the site. The HHIA states that the site has high potential to contain archaeological material relating to these homesteads. The HHIA has assessed that depending on the integrity and contents of the archaeological resources, these homesteads may meet the threshold for listing as heritage sites on the Local Environmental Plan. There is also potential for archaeological materials related to other aspects of the area’s history to be present.
- An occupied 1890s homestead, Arundel, is located within the project area. There are also two 1890s residences within the vicinity of the project area, Spring Plain and Myall Farm. These three homesteads are not listed on any statutory heritage list but may have heritage value. None will be directly impacted by the proposed development.
- The *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (LVIA) has assessed that the proposed development will be prominent and will have a wide visual impact due to the number (96) and height (300m) of the WTGs, and the flat, open landscape of the project area. Heritage NSW considers that the WTGs and associated infrastructure will have a relatively small physical impact on the site’s landscape, with large areas of the site remaining physically unchanged. Section 14 of the LVIA proposes mitigation measures related to visual and physical impacts of associated infrastructure on the site which should be considered in the detailed design. The impact of the proposal on the site’s cultural landscape will be acceptable, subject to LVIA mitigation measures.
- The site is 9.6 kilometres south of Yanga Pastoral Station Complex, which is listed on the section 170 Conservation Register of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. According to the conservation management plan for this item, the item has significance at local, State and possibly National levels. According to the LVIA the proposed development will form a backdrop to views across the lake from key viewpoints, including the Yanga Lake viewing platform near the Yanga homestead. The HHIA has assessed that this would have a minor adverse impact due to the substantial distance between the viewpoints and the development area. Heritage NSW agrees with this assessment.

Heritage NSW Recommendations

- Exclusion zones are to be established around the ruins of the 19th century homesteads ‘Tyndale’ and ‘Lynwood’, as recommended in the HHIA. The exclusion zones are to be established prior to the commencement of works and are to remain in place until the completion of works. The boundary of each exclusion zone is to be defined with temporary fencing and the zones are to be clearly signposted. No works or related activities are

permitted within the exclusion zones, including roadways, tracks and the installation of services. Designated development corridors are to be redirected around the exclusion zones as required.

Reason: To ensure that historical archaeological resources are not damaged as a result of the proposed development.

- A targeted visual assessment of the project area is to be undertaken by a qualified archaeologist to identify areas not identified in the HHIA that may have potential for historical archaeology, including any navigable creeks and waterways. The visual assessment is to make recommendations for any additional exclusion zones that are required within the project area. The visual assessment is to be undertaken prior to the finalisation of the design and its recommendations for any exclusion zones are to be incorporated into the final design. The EIS is to be updated to incorporate the findings of the visual assessment.

Reason: The HHIA has assessed that the site may include areas of historical archaeological potential in addition to the identified 19th century homestead sites Lynwood, Oldham Park and Tyndale. A visual assessment is required to identify these areas.

- If impacts to potential archaeological sites cannot be avoided through the establishment of exclusion zones, further assessment and investigation is to be undertaken. This would be in the form of an Archaeological Research Design (ARD) and test excavation to determine the integrity, nature, and significance of any archaeological remains that may be present. Test excavation should be carried out by an appropriately qualified Excavation Director.
- An unexpected finds protocol (UFP) is to be established and implemented in the event that unexpected historical archaeological deposits, artefacts, or structures of potential heritage significance are identified. The UFP is to be developed in consultation with a qualified archaeologist.

Reason: To manage the risk of unexpected archaeological relics or works being found during construction.

- All project team members and construction personnel are to undergo a heritage-specific induction to support the use of the unexpected finds protocol prior to undertaking any activities within the Project Area.

Reason: To manage the risk of unexpected archaeological relics or works being found during construction.

- The mitigation measures related to associated infrastructure proposed in Section 14 of the *Junction Rivers Wind Farm Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* are to be adopted.

Reason: To minimise impacts on the legibility of the cultural landscape.

- A photographic archival recording of the remnant structures of 'Lynwood' 'Tyndale' and 'Oldham Park' is to be prepared prior to the commencement of works. The archival recording must be in accordance with the Heritage NSW publication 'Photographic Recording of Heritage Items using Film or Digital Capture' (2006). The digital copy of the archival record must be provided to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure prior to the commencement of works.

Reason: To record the physical attributes of the homesteads which are likely to have historical significance at the local level and which are at risk of further deterioration.

If you have any questions about this correspondence, please contact Anna Simanowsky, Senior Assessments Officer at Heritage NSW on (02) 9873 8500 or heritagemailbox@environment.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Tempe Beaven

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Heritage NSW
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
As Delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW
6 August 2024