



# ***Collector Wind Farm Mod 3***

*State Significant  
Development  
Modification Assessment  
(10\_0156 MOD 3)*



August 2019

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# Executive Summary

Collector Wind Farm Pty Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of RATCH-Australia Corporation Limited (Ratch), has approval to develop the Collector Wind Farm, approximately 30 kilometres (km) southwest of Goulburn and 3.5 kilometres northwest of the village of Collector in the Upper Lachlan Shire local government area.

Since its approval in 2013, the project has undergone two modifications, involving changes to the layout of ancillary infrastructure, minor turbine changes, revised biodiversity offsetting and noise limits to reflect current NSW Government policy, transmission line connection point and the incorporation of the works required to upgrade Lerida Road South. The approved project includes the construction and operation of up to 55 wind turbines, and associated infrastructure.

## Proposed Modification

The original application contemplated the possibility of an onsite temporary concrete batch plant (TCBP), but did not seek approval for a TCBP. Ratch have identified that the use of an onsite TCBP would result in construction efficiencies and reduce impact on the State and local road network.

The modification application seeks approval for a TCBP to operate onsite during, and for the purpose of, the construction of the wind turbine concrete foundations. An onsite TCBP would enable concrete pours to be completed within one day, and significantly reduce the number of heavy vehicle movements on the approved heavy vehicle access route on the Hume Highway between Goulburn, the site and Gunning.

## Engagement

The Department published the application on its website on 19 July 2019 and sought comment from Upper Lachlan Shire Council, the Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Industry – Lands & Water, the Environment Protection Authority and Roads and Maritime Services for advice. None of the agencies had residual concerns about the modification.

## Assessment

In assessing the merits of the proposed modification, the Department has considered the existing project approval conditions; previous environmental assessments for the project; the modification application and supporting information; applicable government policies and guidelines; and requirements of the EP&A Act. The key issues considered in the Department's assessment are impacts on biodiversity values, noise and water.

The TCBP has been located to avoid impacts to areas of biodiversity and heritage sensitivity and riparian zones.

The TCBP would result in clearing 0.7 ha of derived native grassland in poor condition. The Department and OEH accept that no offset is required for this impact and note that the area would be rehabilitated following construction.

The proposed modification would result in a net reduction of 3,750 heavy vehicle movements, and the project would continue to meet construction noise criteria. Wastewater would be used where possible and excess wastewater would be transported offsite to a licensed facility.

In accordance with the existing approval, Ratch is required to revise its strategies to include the scope of this modification. Subject to existing conditions, the Department considers the modification would result in negligible impacts on the environment.

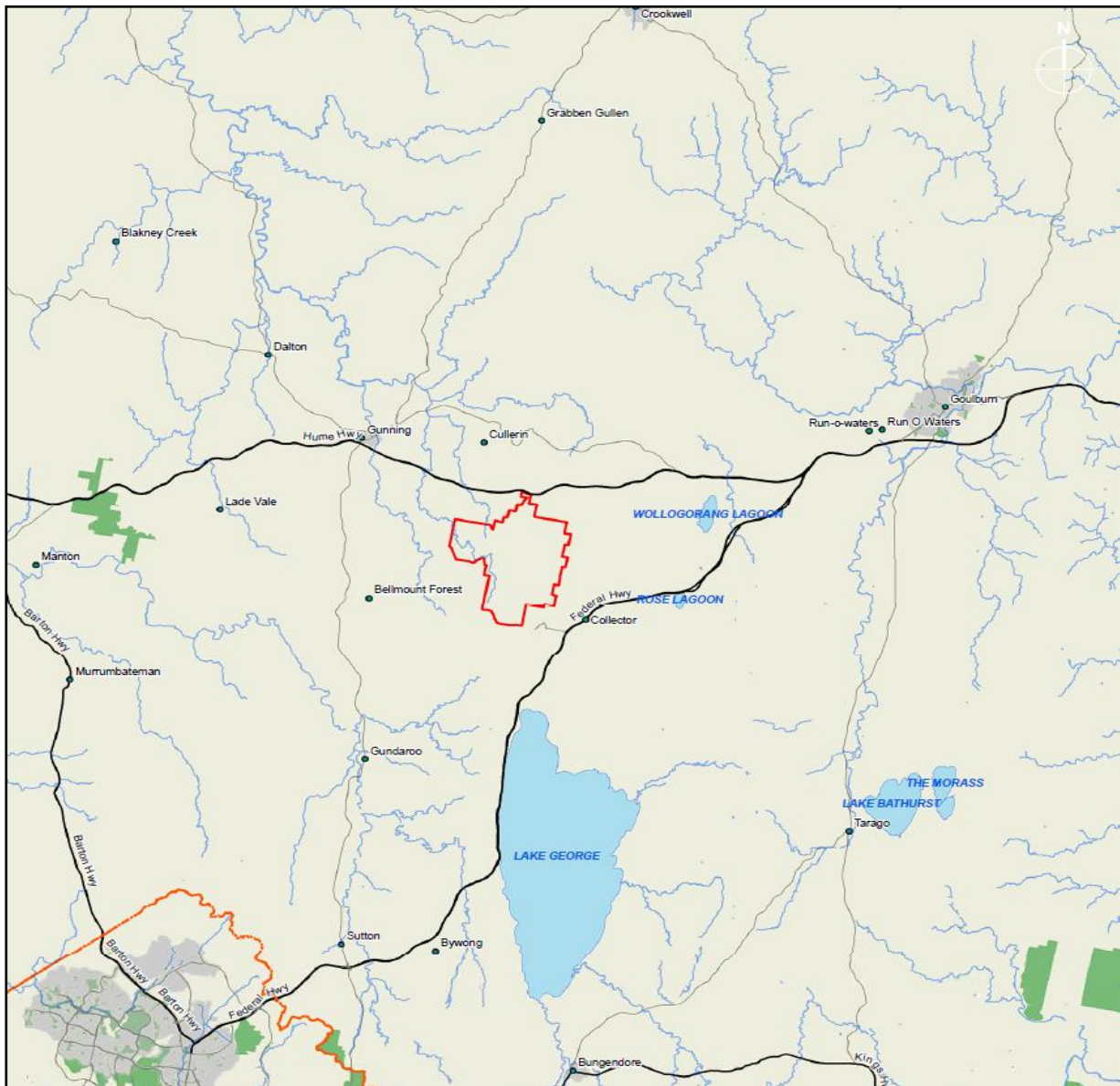
## Summary

The Department's assessment has concluded that the modification would not significantly increase the environmental or amenity impacts of the project beyond those that were already assessed and approved. Further, the use of a TCBP would allow for a more efficient construction process and a safer and more efficient operation of the approved road network. As such, the Department considers that the proposed modification should be approved.



# 1. Introduction

Collector Wind Farm Pty Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of RATCH-Australia Corporation Limited (Ratch), has approval to construct and operate the Collector Wind Farm (the project), approximately 30 kilometres (km) southwest of Goulburn and 3.5 km northwest of Collector in the Upper Lachlan Shire local government area (see **Figure 1**).



**Figure 1** | Site Location

The project was originally approved by the NSW Planning Assessment Commission (the Commission)<sup>1</sup> in 2013. The approval has subsequently been modified two times. These modifications resulted in a number of changes to the layout of ancillary infrastructure, turbine blade lengths, revised biodiversity offsetting and clearing limits, transmission line connection point and incorporating works required to upgrade Lerida Road South.

<sup>1</sup> Now the Independent Planning Commission

The project as currently approved allows for the construction and operation of:

- up to 55 wind turbines (up to 150 metres [m] in height with a maximum blade diameter of 117 m), associated ancillary infrastructure and access tracks; and
- an onsite substation and grid connection to TransGrid's existing 330 kilovolt (kV) transmission line (TL04).

Ratch has recently commenced the upgrade works on Lerida Road South as required under the project approval prior to any heavy or over-dimensional vehicles accessing the site.

## 1.1 Concrete Batching

Under the current approval, the concrete required for constructing the project, predominantly for the wind turbine foundations, would be delivered from Goulburn via the Hume Highway and would equate to approximately 4,000 heavy vehicle (concrete agitator) movements.

The designated heavy vehicles route requires all heavy vehicle egress from Lerida Road South to turn left onto the Hume Highway and continue west for approximately 13 km to Gunning before safely turning around and returning to Goulburn, adding approximately 26 km to the return journey.

This additional distance travelled by all concrete agitators delivering concrete to site would result in concrete pours being split across two days, which has implications on construction timeframes and the quality of the hardstand foundations.

The original application contemplated the possibility of an onsite TCBP but did not seek approval for an onsite TCBP. Consequently, Ratch is seeking to modify the approval to include an onsite TCBP.



## 2. Proposed Modification

The modification application seeks approval for the construction, operation and decommissioning of a TCBP on the project site, which would operate during the approved construction hours for approximately 45 weeks of the construction period. The proposal also includes the storage of fuel and additives, and stockpiles of sand and aggregate.

The operation of the TCBP would have a:

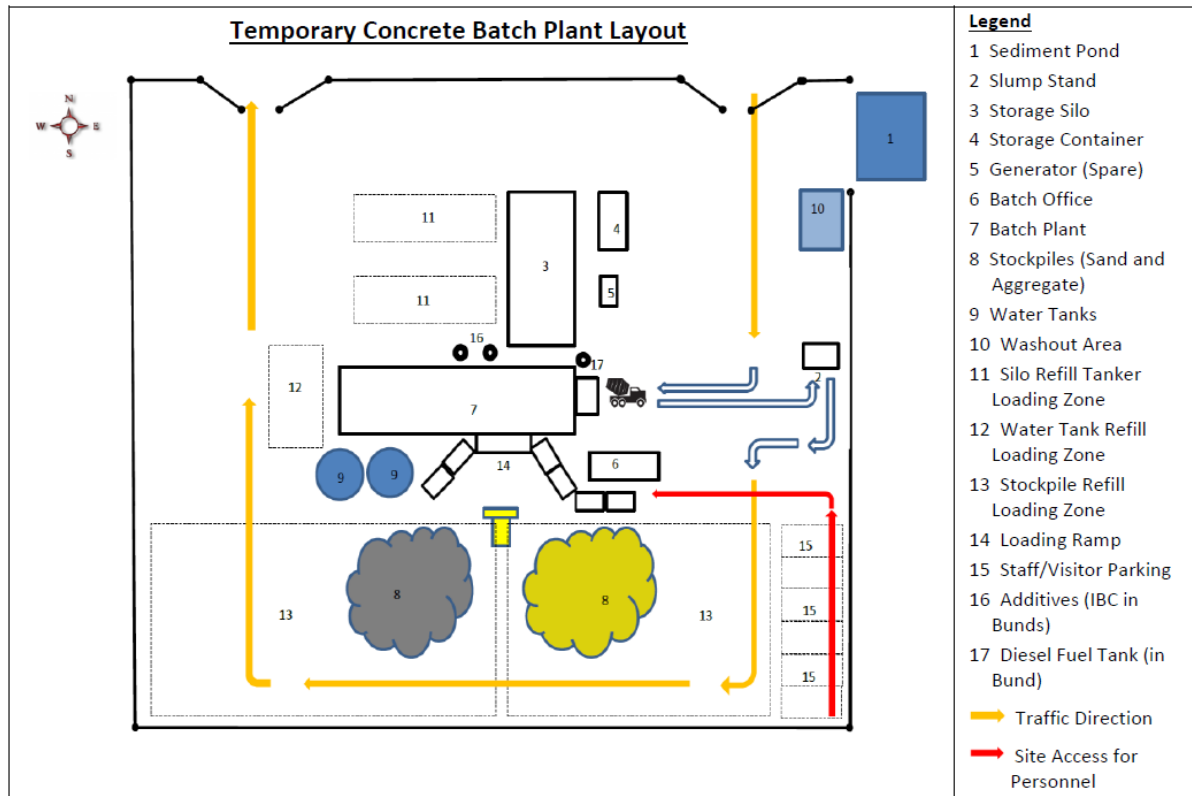
- maximum pour size of 500 m<sup>3</sup>;
- total concrete supply of 27,000 m<sup>3</sup>;
- peak production rate of 60 – 75 m<sup>3</sup>/hr.

The TCBP and associated infrastructure would require an area of approximately 6,750 m<sup>2</sup>, which would include all required batch plant equipment, stockpiles and environmental controls. The proposed layout of the TCBP has been designed to ensure the concrete agitators can be loaded efficiently and safely, as well as incorporating the required environmental controls (see **Figure 2** below).

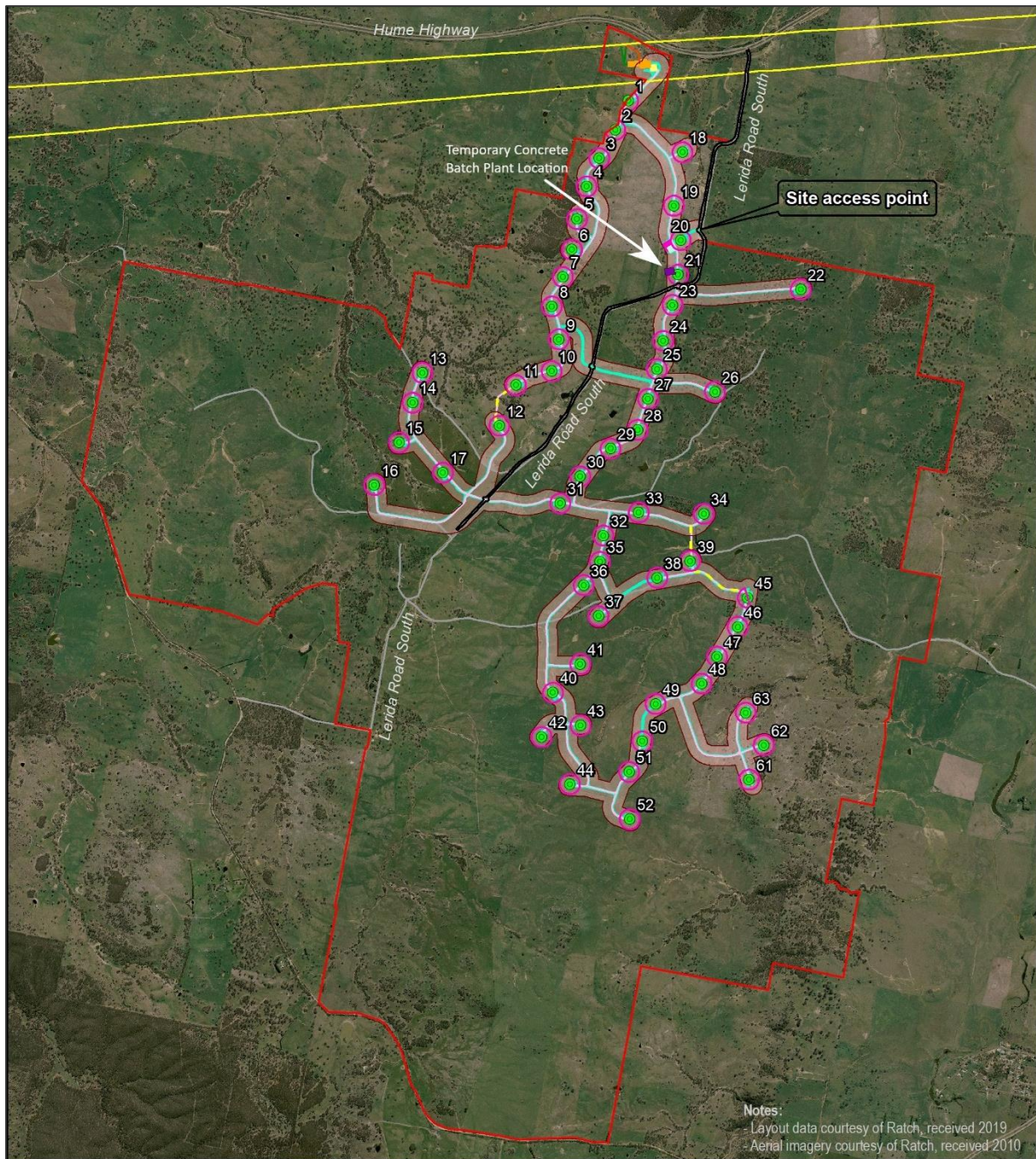
The TCBP would be located within the project site in close proximity to wind turbine 21 (WTG 21) and accessed via the approved site access point on Lerida Road South and internal access tracks (see **Figure 3** and **Figure 4**). The TCBP has been located to avoid impacts on native vegetation, riparian zones and public amenity. The proposed area would be cleared, levelled, layered with crushed rock temporary hardstand and fenced to protect livestock.



Ratch considers that the proposed TCBP would streamline the construction phase of the project by enabling concrete pours to be completed within a day and reduce traffic movements associated with the delivery of concrete to site.



**Figure 2** | Proposed Temporary Concrete Batch Plant Layout



## MODIFIED PROJECT LAYOUT

### Collector Wind Farm Modification Application

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <span style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 2px;"> </span> Site boundary  | <span style="background-color: purple; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span> Temporary concrete batch plant |
| <span style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span> Lerida Road South upgrade boundary                         | <span style="background-color: lightblue; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span> Ancillary infrastructure    |
| <span style="border-bottom: 2px solid yellow; display: inline-block; width: 20px;"> </span> Existing transmission lines  | <span style="background-color: pink; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span> Development envelope (roads)     |
| <span style="border-bottom: 2px solid grey; display: inline-block; width: 20px;"> </span> Existing roads                 | <span style="border-bottom: 2px solid cyan; display: inline-block; width: 20px;"> </span> Road layout                  |
| Wind turbines  | <span style="border-bottom: 2px solid pink; display: inline-block; width: 20px;"> </span> Cabling trench               |
| <span style="color: green;">●</span> Approved turbine locations  | <span style="border-bottom: 2px solid orange; display: inline-block; width: 20px;"> </span> Comms cable trench         |
| <span style="border: 2px solid purple; padding: 2px;"> </span> Development envelope (turbines)                           | <span style="border-bottom: 2px solid green; display: inline-block; width: 20px;"> </span> HV lines                    |
| Ancillary facilities   | <span style="border-bottom: 2px dashed yellow; display: inline-block; width: 20px;"> </span> Potential overhead line   |
| <span style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span> Transgrid laydown area           | <span style="background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span> Substation                     |
| <span style="background-color: magenta; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span> Temporary construction compound | <span style="background-color: lightblue; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span> O&M building & compound     |

0 0.25 0.5 1 Kilometres

A4 @ 1:55000  
Ref: 5541-7  
Author: BH

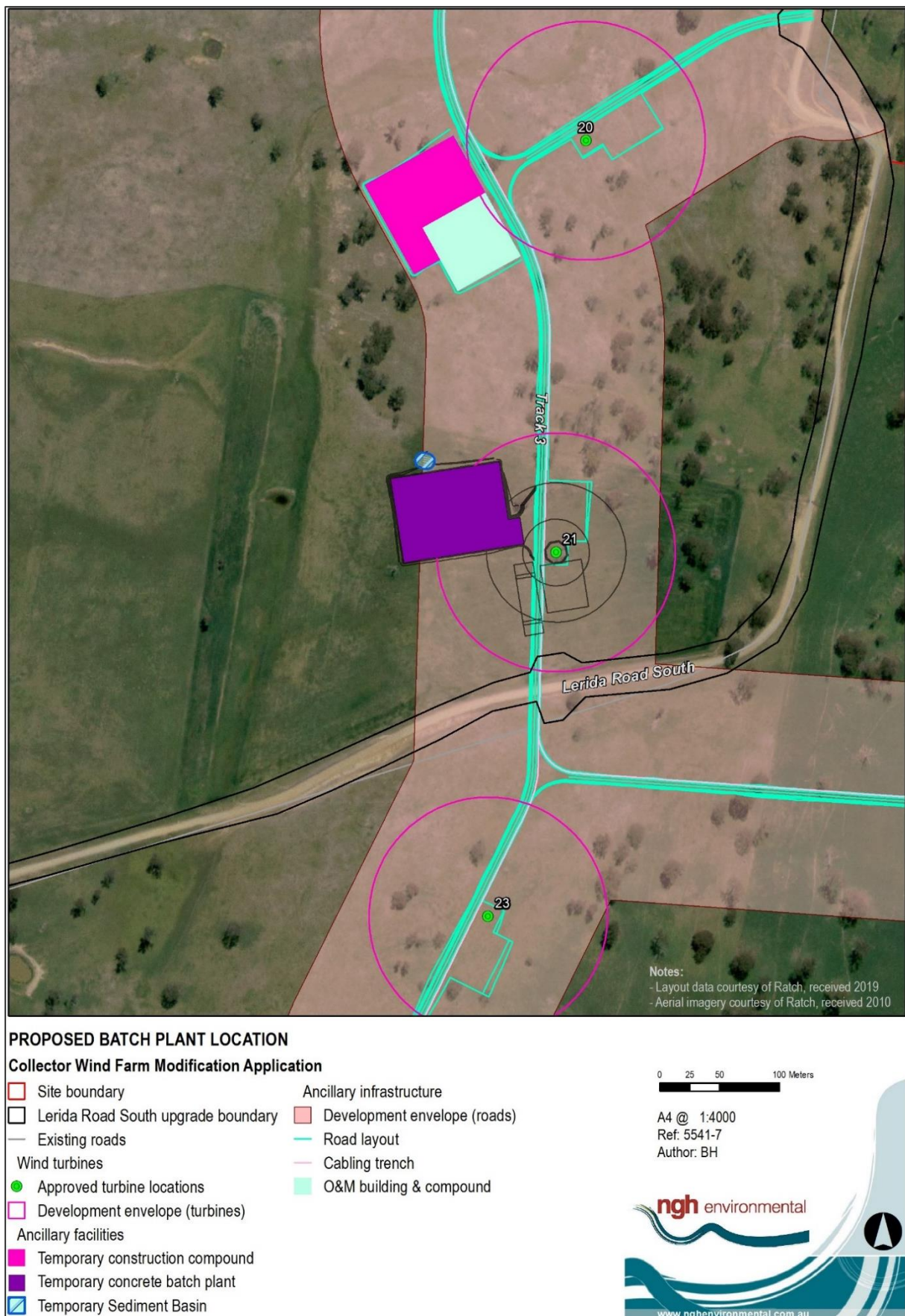
ngh environmental



www.nghenvironmental.com.au

Figure 3 | Project Layout





**Figure 4** | Proposed Temporary Concrete Batch Plant Location



## 3. Statutory Context

### 3.1 Scope of the Modification

The project was originally approved on 2 December 2013 under the former Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

Under clause 6 of Schedule 2 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment (Savings, Transitional and Other Provisions) Regulation 2017*, the Project was transitioned to State significant development (SSD) by order, which took effect by publication in the NSW Government Gazette on 6 July 2018.

The proposed modification does not seek to significantly alter the approved project as:

- no new turbines or changes to the existing turbines are proposed;
- the concrete batching plant is to be operated temporarily during the construction period;
- it would reduce the volume of heavy vehicle traffic required to build the project; and
- it would not significantly increase the environmental impacts of the project as approved.

Consequently, the Department is satisfied that the application can be characterised as a modification to the existing approval under Section 4.55(1A) of the EP&A Act, as it would result in substantially the same project as originally approved.

### 3.2 Consent Authority

Although the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces is the consent authority for the application, the Director, Energy Assessments, may determine the application under the Minister's delegation dated 11 October 2017 as Council did not object, Ratch did not make any political donations and there were no objections.

### 3.3 Matters for Consideration

In accordance with section 4.55(3) of the EP&A Act, the following must be considered in granting the modification application as relevant to the application:

- environmental planning instruments, proposed instrument or development control plan;
- any planning agreement;
- EP&A Regulation;
- likely impacts of the modification application, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts;
- suitability of the site;
- any submissions;
- the public interest; and
- the reasons for granting the approval for the original application.

The Department has considered the relevance of the considerations for the modification application below.

#### ***Environmental planning instruments, proposed instrument or development control plan***

The environmental planning instrument relevant to this modification is the *Upper Lachlan Local Environment Plan 2010* (Upper Lachlan LEP).

There are no proposed or draft LEPs or development control plans (DCPs) for Upper Lachlan LGA for consideration in this modification.

#### ***Any planning agreement***

There are no voluntary planning agreements between Ratch and Upper Lachlan Shire Council.

### **EP&A Regulation**

There are no additional considerations relevant to the modification application in the EP&A Regulation.

### **Likely impacts of the modification application**

The likely impacts of modification are considered in **Section 5** of this report.

### **Suitability of the site**

The suitability of the project site was assessed and considered by the Department in the original application and is not considered relevant to the modification application.

### **Submissions**

The Department notified and sought advice from Upper Lachlan Shire Council, the Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Industry – Lands & Water, the Environment Protection Authority and Roads and Maritime Services and this is discussed further in **Section 4** of this report.

### **Public Interest**

The consideration of public interest is provided in **Section 6** of this report.

### **The reasons for granting the approval for the original application**

The Commission considered the impacts and benefits of the wind farm in accordance with the EP&A Act in granting approval.



## **4. Engagement**

### **4.1 Department's Engagement**

In accordance with the EP&A regulations, the Department is not required to notify any other parties of the modification application. Notwithstanding, the Department sought comment from Upper Lachlan Shire Council, the Office of Environment and Heritage, the Environment Protection Authority, Department of Industry – Lands & Water and the Roads and Maritime Services, and the application was made available on the Department's website from 19 July 2019.

While none of the agencies objected to the proposed modification, several provided advice. This advice is summarised below, and where relevant, considered in more detail in **Section 5** of this report.

The **Office of Environment and Heritage** (OEH) raised no concerns, confirming that the biodiversity assessment undertaken for Modification 2 assessed the area proposed for the location of the TCBP, and that the mapped low-quality vegetation that would be cleared for the TCBP would not require additional offsetting.

**Environment Protection Authority** (EPA) provided advice and recommendations on implementing all reasonable and feasible measures to mitigate noise impact, dust emissions, sediment discharge and chemical spills. The Department notes that the EPA's recommendations are already reflected in the conditions of approval. Further, the EPA advised that should the modification be approved, the existing Environment Protection Licence (EPL) would need to be updated to reflect the inclusion of a TCBP.

**Roads and Maritime Services** (RMS) initially raised concerns regarding safety on the Hume Highway between Goulburn and Lerida Road South. After additional consultation, RMS provided further comments acknowledging that any impacts on the road network were assessed and approved as part of the project, and that the modification

is proposing a net reduction of about 3,750 heavy vehicle movements during construction and therefore a reduction in assessed and approved impacts.

**Department of Industry – Lands and Water** (DoI – L&W) raised no concerns and is supportive of siting the proposed TCBP in an area chosen to specifically avoid construction within waterfront land.

**Upper Lachlan Shire Council** (Council) raised no concerns with the proposed modification.



## 5. Assessment

The Department has considered the merits of the proposed modification application in accordance with the relevant matters for consideration described in **Section 3.3**.

In assessing the merits of the proposed modification, the Department has considered the existing project approval conditions; previous environmental assessments for the project; the modification application and supporting information; applicable government policies and guidelines; and requirements of the EP&A Act. A list of the key documents that informed the assessment is provided in **Appendix A**.

The Department has considered whether the proposed changes would result in any material increases in the environmental or amenity impacts of the project. The key issues considered in the Department's assessment are impacts on biodiversity values, noise and water.

The proposed TCBP would have a disturbance footprint of approximately 6,750 m<sup>2</sup> in an open paddock located north of WTG 21. This area has historically been used for stock grazing and is located away from mapped areas of significant vegetation and areas of Aboriginal significance.

The Department, in consultation with OEH, considers that the proposed location of the TCBP:

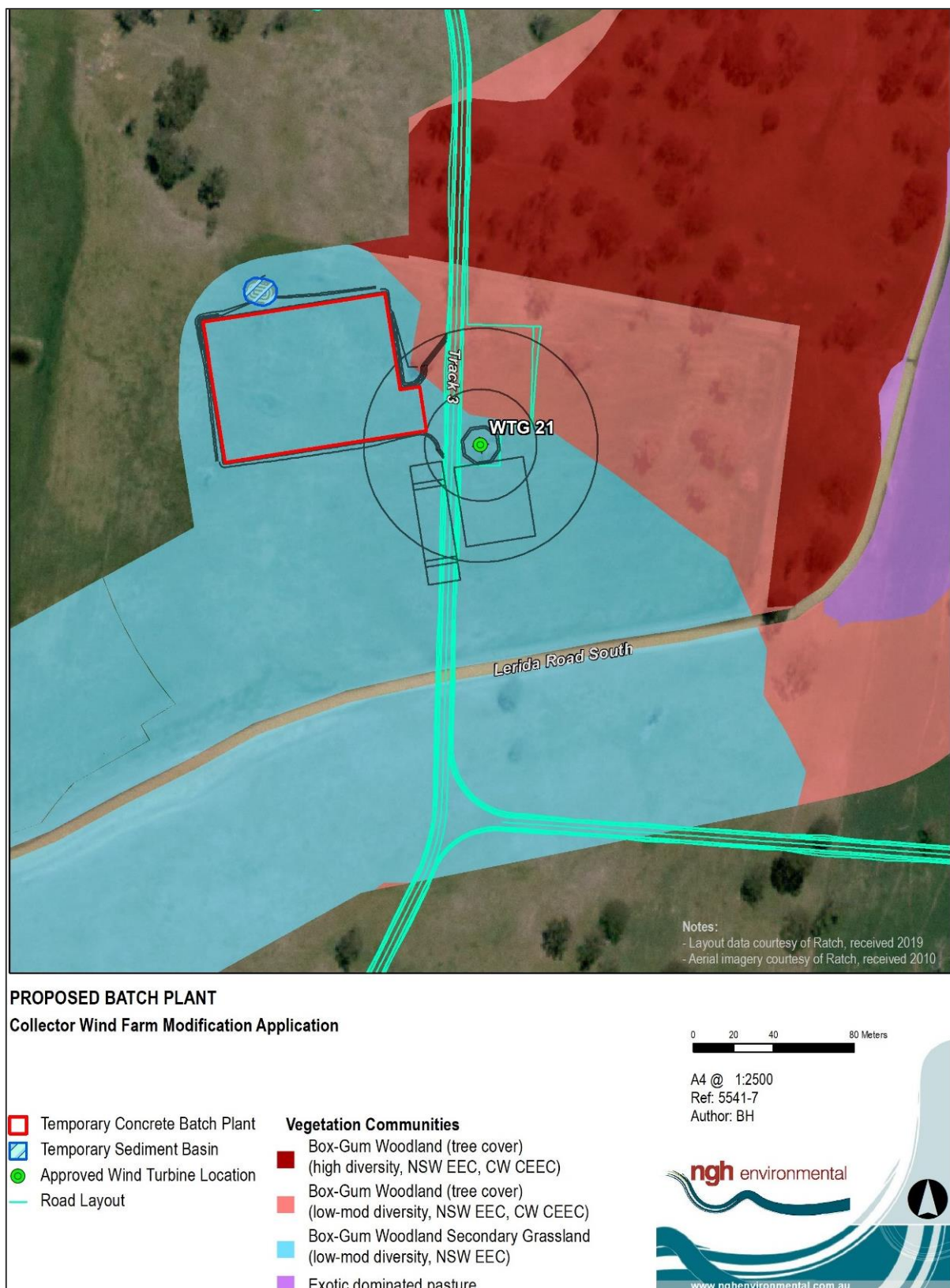
- was assessed in the BDAR submitted as part of Modification 2 (as shown in **Figure 5**),
- would result in the clearing of 0.7 ha of Derived Native Grassland in poor condition, and therefore would not generate any additional offset requirements; and
- would be rehabilitated once the TCBP is decommissioned.

The Department and OEH is satisfied that the modification would not increase impacts to biodiversity values and a further BDAR is not required.

A noise assessment was undertaken by Marshall Day Acoustics, which assessed the proposal's worst case scenario noise levels for the construction of the project including the proposed TCBP and concluded that the proposal would comply with the project noise trigger levels at all relevant receivers.

Ratch has committed to manage water by containing and storing stormwater runoff to avoid discharge into the surrounding environment and to making use of the water in the batching process. Wastewater would be captured in a sealed cavity separate to the first flush system to ensure no overflow of wastewater would occur during rain events. Where possible, the wastewater would be reused in the concrete batch footings and any excess wastewater would be transferred off site and reused, recycled or disposed of in accordance with the EPA's requirements for management of concrete water.





**Figure 5** | Mapped Vegetation communities

If approved, these standard mitigation measures would be managed in accordance with updated versions of the existing management plans required under the project approval.

There would be no increase in impacts to heritage values, and the avoidance of drainage lines and waterways reduce the potential for contamination from the TCBP.

The Department considers that although the TCBP would be visible from Lerida Road South, it is unlikely to increase the visual impacts of the project given the nearest non-associated resident is approximately 3.5 km southeast of the proposed TCBP and the impact would be temporary.

The transport route and site access point for construction vehicles undertaking the delivery for the proposed TCBP would not change from the approved project. The materials required for the TCBP would be delivered to the project site by standard heavy vehicles.

Importantly, the onsite TCBP would result in a net reduction of approximately 3,750 heavy vehicle movements during the construction of the project with no deliveries of concrete but deliveries of the input materials such as aggregate, sand and water.

Subject to the existing conditions, the Department considers that the modification would result in negligible impacts on the environment. Further, the use of a TCBP would allow for a more efficient construction process and a safer and more efficient operation of the approved road network.

In accordance with the existing approval, Ratch is required to review and, where necessary, revise its strategies, plans, and programs to include the scope of this modification. Further, should the modification be approved, Ratch would need to submit a variation application to the EPA for the existing EPL to include a TCBP as an ancillary activity on the licence.

In summary, the Department considers that the proposed modification would not result in any environmental or amenity impacts beyond those currently approved for the project and that the existing conditions of approval adequately address any potential impacts.



## 6. Evaluation

### Proposed Modification

The Department has assessed the modification application in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements, having regard to the approved project. The Department has assessed the proposed modification to allow for the construction, operation and decommissioning of an onsite TCBP during, and for the purposes of, the construction period of the wind farm.

### Likely impacts of the modification application

In assessing the merits of the proposal, the Department has considered the:

- relevant matters for consideration identified in Section 3.3;
- existing conditions of approval;
- previous EAs for the project; and
- requirements of the EP&A Act.

The Department considers that the proposed modification application meets these requirements as:

- the modification is consistent with the objectives of the Upper Lachlan LEP;
- the proposed modification would not impact on the natural and built environments, and there would not be any social and economic impacts given the temporary nature of the concrete batching plant;
- there are no draft environmental planning instruments, development control plans and planning agreement or requirements in the EP&A regulation relevant to the modification application;
- there are no land use conflicts between the land and the use of surrounding land in the locality (including agricultural land) noting that the wind farm and associated infrastructure have been assessed in detail and the existing approval would effectively manage and minimise any residual impacts associated with the project; and
- the modification application is consistent with the reasons given for the original approval.

The Department's assessment has found that the proposed modification would not result in any significant impacts beyond those that were assessed and approved for the original project and would reduce impact on the State and local road network. Any residual environmental and amenity impacts associated with the proposed modification could be mitigated and managed through the existing conditions of approval.

Importantly, the proposed modification would reduce the number of heavy vehicles movements on the road network during the construction period between Goulburn, the project site and Gunning.

Consequently, the Department considers that the proposed modification is in the public interest, and recommends that it should be approved, subject to conditions.

The Department has prepared a recommended Notice of Modification (see **Appendix C**) and a consolidated version of the project approval as modified (see **Appendix D**). To permit the proposed modification, the conditions have been updated with a new definition of the EIS and a revised figure for the modified project layout.

Ratch has reviewed the proposed changes to the conditions and does not object to them.



## 7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Director, Energy Assessments, as delegate of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces:

- **considers** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- **determines** that the application Collector Wind Modification 3 falls within the scope of section 4.55(1A) of the EP&A Act;
- **forms the opinion** under section 7.17(c) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* that a biodiversity development assessment report is not required to be submitted with this application;
- **accepts and adopts** all of the findings and recommendations in this report as the reasons for making the decision to grant approval to the application;
- **modify** the approval (MP10\_0156); and
- **signs** the attached approval of the modification (**Appendix C**).

Recommended by:

15/08/2019

**Natasha Homsey**

Environmental Assessment Officer  
Energy Assessments

Recommended by:

15/08/2019

**Anthony Ko**

Senior Environmental Assessment Officer  
Energy Assessments



## 8. Determination

The recommendation is: **Adopted** / Not adopted by:

16/8/19

**Nicole Brewer**

A/Director  
Energy Assessments





# Appendices

## **Appendix A – List of Documents**

Modification Application titled *Collector Wind Farm Third Modification Application*, NGH Environmental Pty Ltd, July 2019.

Appendix C of the Submissions Report for Collector Wind Farm Modification 2, titled *Biodiversity Development Assessment Report, Lerida Road South Upgrade*, NGH Environmental, Pty Ltd, April 2019

## **Appendix B – Modification Application**

## **Appendix C – Notice of Modification**

## **Appendix D – Consolidated Approval**

Appendices B-D - See the Department's Major Projects Website at:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/14731>