

## ASSESSMENT REPORT

### White Rock Wind Farm

#### Subdivision Modification (10\_0160 MOD 5)

---

## 1. BACKGROUND

The White Rock Wind Farm (the project) is an approved renewable energy development located approximately 20 kilometres (km) west of Glen Innes in the Northern Tablelands, within the Inverell and Glen Innes Severn local government areas (see Figure 1).

White Rock Wind Farm Pty Ltd (White Rock), a jointly owned subsidiary of Goldwind Capital (Australia) Pty Ltd (Goldwind) and CECEP Wind-Power Corporation, is responsible for managing the construction and operation of the project.

The project was approved on 10 July 2012 by the then Deputy Director-General of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, as delegate of the Minister for Planning. The project has been modified on three occasions<sup>1</sup>.

The project as currently approved involves the construction and operation of:

- Stage 1 – up to 70 wind turbines, access tracks and associated infrastructure, including a transmission line connecting to TransGrid's existing 132kV Inverell – Glen Innes transmission line at the northern end of the site, and associated 132kV/32kV substation; and
- Stage 2 – 49 wind turbines, access tracks and associated infrastructure, including a transmission line connecting to TransGrid's existing 330kV Armidale – Dumaresq transmission line at the western extent of the site, and associated 330kV/132kV substation.

Construction of Stage 1 commenced in May 2016, with 47 turbines operating by mid-2017 and the remaining 23 turbines expected to be operating by the end of 2017. The construction of Stage 2 is planned to commence by mid-2018.

Once both stages are operational, the project will have a generating capacity of 297.5 megawatts (MW) of electricity<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. PROPOSED MODIFICATION

TransGrid will take ownership of both substations constructed under White Rock's project approval. To enable registration of long term leases of the substations to TransGrid, the associated land needs to be excised from the existing allotments through subdivision of the land.

Accordingly, White Rock is seeking to modify the project approval to facilitate the subdivision of two lots. The subdivisions would result in the creation of:

- a 4 hectare (ha) lot at the site of the 330kV substation; and
- a 1.4 ha lot at the site of the 132kV substation.

Both subdivisions would be located within the Inverell local government area and the approved project boundary.

The proposed allotments are shown in Figures 2 and 3. The proposal is described in more detail in the information that accompanied the modification application (see **Appendix A**).

---

<sup>1</sup> Modification 1 was withdrawn by the proponent at the time (Epuron) prior to determination.

<sup>2</sup> Assumes 119 turbines with generation output of 2.5 MW per turbine.

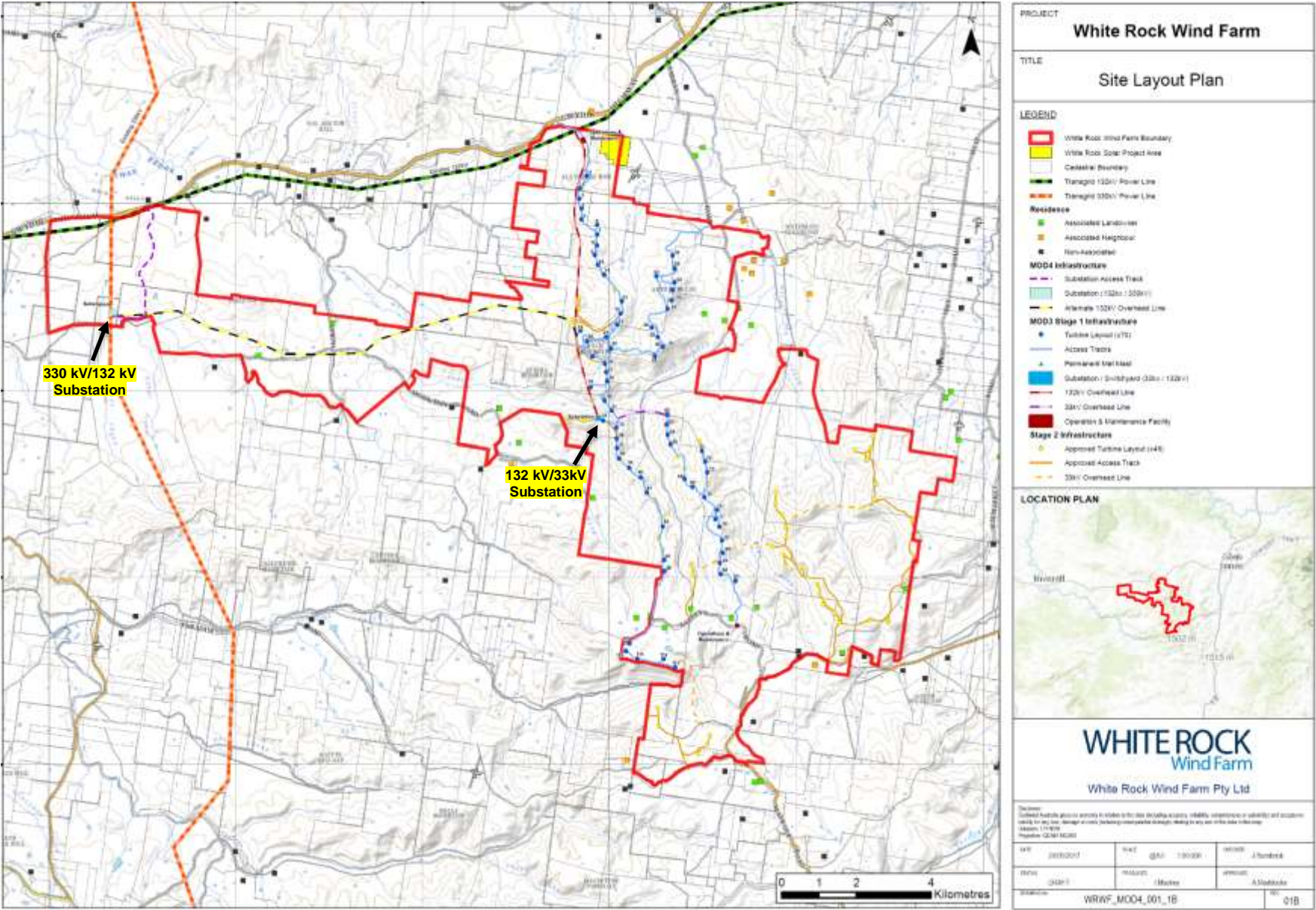
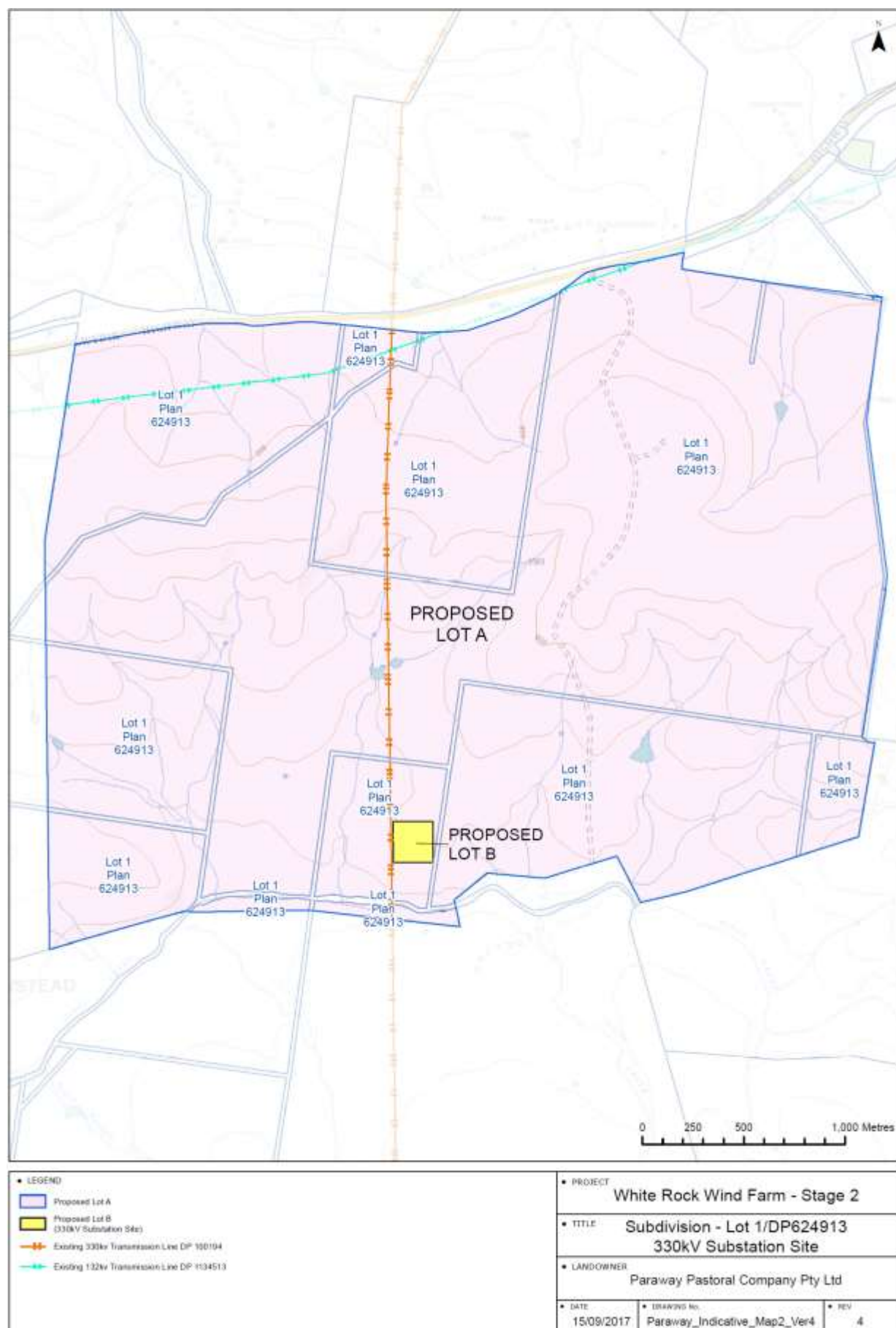
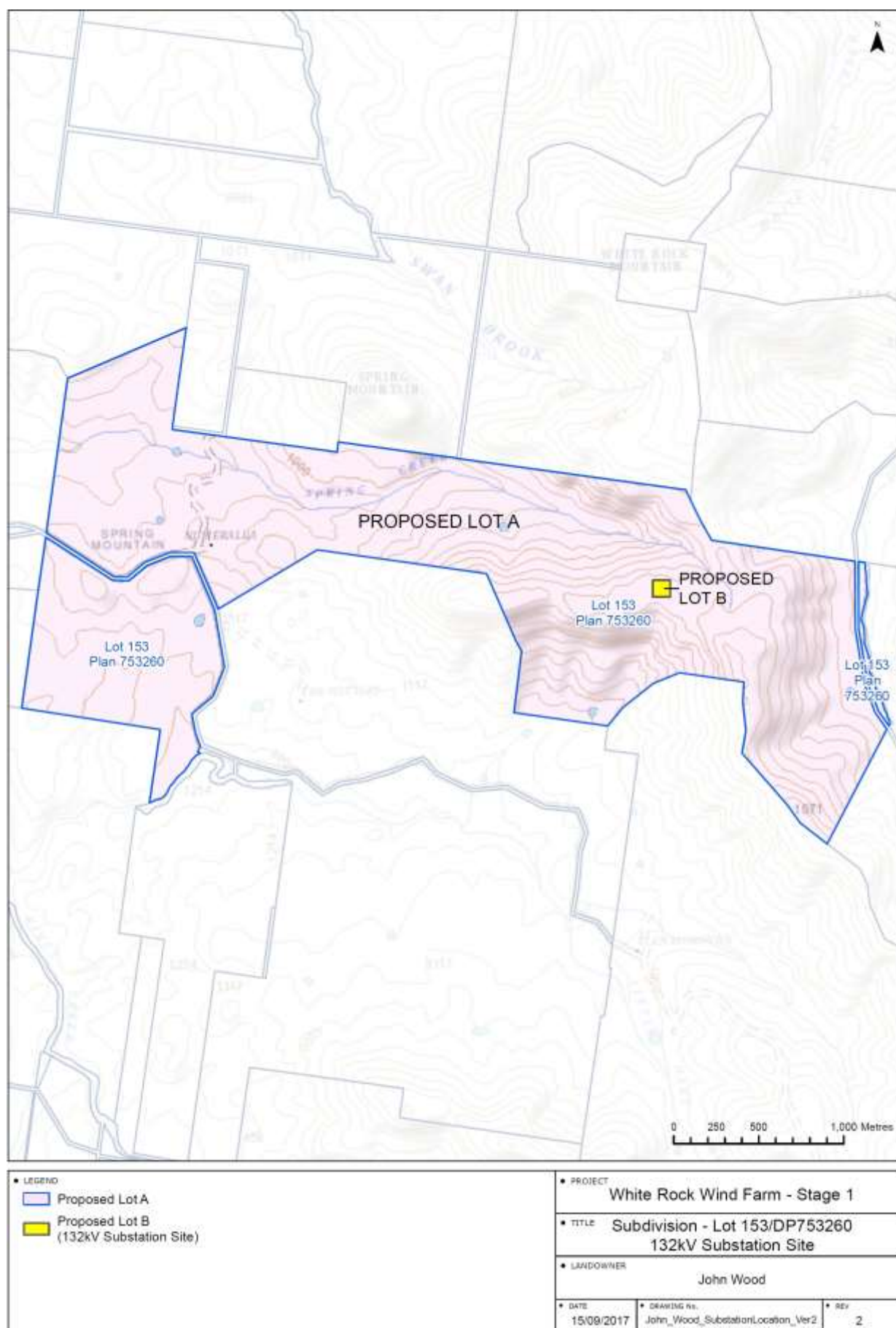


Figure 1: White Rock Wind Farm



**Figure 2: Proposed subdivision of 330kV substation**





**Figure 3: Proposed subdivision of 132kV substation**

### 3. STATUTORY CONTEXT

#### 3.1 Section 75W Modifications

The project was originally approved under the former Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). Although Part 3A was repealed on 1 October 2011, the project remains a “transitional Part 3A project” under Schedule 6A of the EP&A Act and is to be assessed and determined under Section 75W of the EP&A Act.

Based on its assessment (see Section 5), the Department is satisfied that the application can be characterised as an administrative modification. The proposed subdivisions would result in two additional lots, and would not change any other aspect of the project as approved. Consequently, the Department considers that the proposed modification is within the scope of Section 75W of the EP&A Act.

#### 3.2 Approval Authority

The Minister for Planning is the approval authority for the modification application. However, under the Minister’s delegation dated 16 February 2015, the Director, Resource and Energy Assessments, may determine the application. This is because no public submissions were received on the proposal, no reportable political donations were made and Inverell Shire Council did not object to the proposal.

### 4. CONSULTATION

The Department notified Inverell Shire Council and TransGrid about the proposed modification, and made the modification application publicly available on its website from 15 September 2017. Council and TransGrid raised no concerns about the proposed modification (see **Appendix B**).

### 5. ASSESSMENT

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

- existing conditions of approval;
- previous EAs for the project, including previous modifications;
- modification application and supporting information;
- applicable government policies and guidelines; and
- requirements of the EP&A Act.

The lots proposed to be subdivided are located on land zoned RU1 – Primary Production under the *Inverell Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012*. The minimum subdivision lot size for land zoned RU1 is 200 ha.

The proposed new lots would be below the minimum lot size. However, Clause 4.1B of the Inverell LEP provides specific requirements for exceptions to the minimum lot size requirement for certain rural subdivisions.

The Department considers that the proposed subdivision meets these requirements as:

- the project is a permissible use as energy generation works under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007*;
- the subdivided land would not be used for residential purposes;
- the subdivided land would be the same use (as energy generation works) allowed under the existing approval;
- the subdivisions are necessary for the ongoing operation of the wind farm as they are required for the transfer of the substations to TransGrid;
- there are no land use conflicts between the subdivided land and the use of surrounding land in the locality (including agricultural land) noting that the wind farm and associated substations have been assessed in detail and the existing approval would effectively manage and minimise any residual impacts associated with the project; and
- the subdivisions are consistent with the natural and physical constraints of the land.

Consequently, the Department supports White Rock’s request to subdivide the land.

## 6. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

The Department has drafted a recommended Notice of Modification (see **Appendix C**), as well as a consolidated version of the project approval as modified (see **Appendix D**).

The amended conditions would enable White Rock to subdivide the land, and subsequently lodge a Subdivision Application with a Principal Certifying Authority in accordance with clause 157 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*.

The Department has also amended the conditions to reflect updated agency names.

White Rock has accepted the proposed amended conditions.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The Department has assessed the modification application in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements, having regard to the modification justification, comments from Council, and documentation relating to the original project.

The Department considers that the proposed modification is administrative in nature and would not result in any environmental impacts. Further, the modification is consistent with the requirements of the Inverell LEP, and is necessary to facilitate the long-term lease of the substations to TransGrid and realise the overall benefits of the approved White Rock Wind Farm.


Consequently, the Department considers that the proposed modification should be approved.

## 8. RECOMMENDATION


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

- **consider** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- **determine** that the request (10\_0160 Mod 5) falls within the scope of section 75W of the EP&A Act;
- **modify** the approval (10\_0160); and
- **sign** the attached modification of approval (**Appendix A**).

Recommended by:


 10/10/17  
Elle Donnelley  
Senior Planner  
Resource and Energy Assessments

Recommended by:

 10/10/17  
Nicole Brewer  
Team Leader  
Resource and Energy Assessments

## 9. DECISION

The recommendation is Approved / Not approved by:

 11/10/17.  
Mike Young  
Director  
Resource and Energy Assessments  
as delegate of the Minister for Planning

## **APPENDIX A:**

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

---

## **APPENDIX B:**

### **AGENCY COMMENTS**

---



## **APPENDIX C:**

### **NOTICE OF MODIFICATION**

---

**APPENDIX D:**  
**CONSOLIDATED APPROVAL**

---