

Comment on the Tarong West wind farm Referral EPBC 2023/09643

Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the EPBC referral of the Tarong West wind farm (EPBC 2023/09643). QCC is the peak environment body in Queensland, currently representing 51 member groups and has been supporting communities to protect our natural environment since 1969.

We recognise the need to reduce our emissions as soon as possible to protect unique and irreplaceable Queensland ecosystems including the Great Barrier Reef, Gondwana and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas.

Renewable energy is one of the best and fastest ways we can reduce emissions. However, building the renewable energy we need cannot come directly at the expense of the species and habitats we are attempting to save and protect.

We recognise the reductions in size and design changes that the Tarong West design team has undertaken so far to reduce impact on native vegetation and threatened species habitat. However, we still urge the Government to declare this a controlled action, with a detailed environmental assessment due to the significant impacts on threatened and migratory species.

We note for instance that the flora surveys were undertaken in 2018 and 2019, at the end of a prolonged drought period and should be refreshed.

The Tarong West wind farm would impact 186 hectares of critical koala and grey headed flying fox habitat. There will also be clearing of just under 17 hectares of greater glider, white throated needletail and glossy black cockatoo habitat. The cockatoos and needletail would also be potentially significantly impacted by the operation of the wind farm.

We appreciate the assessment of connectivity of koala habitat in the region but urge the same consideration of habitat connectivity for other species especially greater gliders which have lower mobility. The detailed environmental assessment should also consider the cumulative impact of Coopers Gap and other proposed wind farms.

We also urge the proponent to specify their proposed transport route and include consideration of any impacts along this route particularly given the prevalence of greater glider sightings along the Kingaroy Burrandowan Road.

Kind regards

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