Department of Sustainability and Environment

State Government Offices
Cnr Fenwick & Little Malop Streets
PO BOX 103
GEELONG VIC 3220
Telephone: 03 5226 4667
Facsimile: 03 5226 4725
ABN 90 719 052 204

Our ref: SP437994
Your ref: Moyne C47

14 January 2011

Ms Cathie McRobert
Panel Chair – Moyne Planning Scheme Amendment C47
Planning Panels Victoria
PO Box 500
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Ms McRobert

Planning Scheme Amendment C47 to the Moyne Planning Scheme
Proposed Tarrone Gas-fired Power Station

I refer to your Directions in this matter dated 26 November 2010, and my emails to Adrian Williams Planning Panels Victoria of 15 and 31 December 2010, specifically in relation to point 11 in the Directions.

I again apologise for the delay, and forward comments prepared by the Department of Sustainability and Environment's (the department) specialist officer in respect of brolga in two enclosures in this letter.

If you have any queries regarding this matter, please contact me on telephone (03) 5226 4693.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Brooks

GEOFF BROOKS
Manager Statutory Planning Services

cc DPCD
EPA
Moyne Shire
AGL

Encls

Potential project impacts of the proposed Tarrone Gas-fired power station on the threatened Brolga

Brolgas are a threatened species in Victoria listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988). The state population is estimated to be c 650 birds of which the majority occurs in south-west Victoria. A key threat to the Brolga is the loss of ephemeral wetland breeding and foraging areas (DSE 2003).

The proposed project is near the southern extent of the Brolga's range in Victoria and is within an area of extensive ephemeral wetlands. Brolgas tend to nest in one of a small number of traditional nest sites each year, depending on seasonal conditions. Brolgas tend to nest at low densities, with nests rarely closer than 1km from each other. The nearest known Brolga nest site to the proposed plant site is approximately 3km to the north-west.

Nonetheless the proposed plant site contains low-lying areas which may provide potential foraging and nesting wetlands for Brolgas, one of which was flooded during the assessment done by Biosis in spring 2008. Thus it is possible that up to one pair of Brolgas may irregularly (not annually) use the ephemeral wetlands on the site for breeding or for foraging while breeding. Breeding Brolgas will fly up to 3km from nest sites to forage.

The main potential impact of this proposal on Brolgas are direct impacts of destruction and/or degradation of wetlands within the proposed plant site. Brolgas are also vulnerable to collision and disturbance. There doesn't appear to be any new collision risk posed by this project and Brolgas can become quite tolerant of ongoing disturbance such as vehicles. However Brolgas are much more disturbed by people and tend to be intolerant of people on foot within about 150m.

Avoiding and mitigating any impact of this proposal on Brolgas should thus be about avoiding and mitigating impacts on the wetlands within the proposed plant site. This should include avoiding physical disturbance of these areas as much as possible, and the management of storm water flows to mimic natural annual flooding and drying of these wetlands. If Brolgas do use the site during or after construction we recommend that the proponent manage disturbance by excluding people on foot from 150m of wetland areas being used by the birds.

In summary the impact of this potential project on the Brolga is inferred from the presence of suitable habitat rather than direct knowledge that Brolgas do use the site. This proposed project may reduce the breeding success of one pair of Brolgas from time-to-time (not annually) by reducing access to breeding or foraging wetlands. This effect can be largely avoided by appropriate avoidance and mitigation of impacts on the wetland areas within the proposed plant site. This relatively small hypothesised impact is considered by DSE to be not of significant concern for the conservation of the Brolga in Victoria.

DSE 2003. Brolga *Grus rubicunda* Action Statement No. 119. Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Legend

Atlas Victorian Wildlife 2009

D Sighting

G Reported breeding

D

G

G

51

Old Dunmore Rd

Old Dunmore Rd

Landers Lane

Tarrone North Rd

Woolsthorpe - Heywood Rd

Nagorckas Rd

Hopcrafts Rd

Poyntons Rd

Coomete Rd

Riordans Rd

M Riordans Rd

McGaths Rd

Porters Rd

Proposed plant site

Known breeding and flocking records for Brolgas in relation to the proposed Tarrone Power Station.

Ü

0 0.3 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4 Kilometers

Department of Sustainability and Environment