

Media Release

22nd August 2023

CATTLE HILL WIND FARM ADDS ADDITIONAL TALLER IDENTIFLIGHT TOWER

Cattle Hill Wind Farm and IdentiFlight have recently installed a taller 30m IdentiFlight tower in order to significantly reduce 'blind spots' through a heavily forested section of the wind farm. The additional mast will further reduce eagle mortalities and continues Cattle Hill Wind Farm's commitment to proactively managing the environment at the Tasmanian wind farm.

The Cattle Hill Wind Farm has been continuously operating the IdentiFlight (IDF) system to reduce eagle impacts for nearly four years. The Identiflight system uses tower mounted optical units and artificial intelligence to identify eagles and distinguish these from other birds. Following the development of an additional white bellied sea eagle (WBSE) neural network to complement the existing wedge tailed eagle (WTE) network developed as part of the IDF technology trial, the IDF system can now classify the species of eagle as either WTE or WBSE, and will shut down any of the 48 wind turbines as necessary to reduce risk of a collision with either species.

Pre-construction collision risk modelling undertaken in 2010 found that the project would result in 14 eagle mortalities after four years. Since installation of Identiflight in November 2019, a total of eight wedge tailed eagle mortalities have occurred (with an increased rate in the last year) within the wind farm but zero white bellied sea eagle mortalities. IdentiFlight data has revealed that between June to early September, wedge tailed eagles fly much lower due to an absence of thermals and due to the topography of the site and height of the forest canopy, some of these flights are not visible to existing IDF stations.

The 16 IDF stations originally installed as part of the technology trial consist of fifteen 7m towers, with one IDF station subsequently modified to a 10m tower. While these IDF stations work very effectively for birds in the air, they can not adequately track all eagle flights within the forest section of the wind farm due to a uniform canopy height of 30m, which resulted in a number of eagle mortalities in this forest section. The new 30m tall tower is designed to improve visual coverage of the system and further reduce eagle mortalities in this section of the wind farm.

Identiflight has shown a considerable increase in the population of eagles utilising the site, compared with pre-construction data, which has been verified by two years of post-commissioning eagle utilisation monitoring undertaken by Wildspot Consulting. Additional eagle nests have been established within the wind farm and immediate surrounds, at least two of which have successfully fledged, and WBSE are also now utilising the site in increased numbers. Despite the increase in utilisation of the site by both WTE and WBSE, the project remains beneath the number of eagle mortalities predicted prior to construction.

Simon Williams, Operations and Maintenance Manager, Wild Cattle Hill Pty Ltd said "Cattle Hill Wind Farm has worked closely with IdentiFlight and local suppliers Ingal who designed the tower over the last year to install the new 30m IDF station and we are pleased to successfully install the additional Station, which is currently being commissioned. The new IDF station has been sited within the forest,

in the area where visibility is currently poorest, and will significantly improve coverage of the area mortalities have occurred and reduce impacts on the expanded eagle population.”

Simon Williams, Operations and Maintenance Manager, Wild Cattle Hill Pty Ltd said “Our team has worked hard to successfully implement the Identiflight system with Identiflight and Tasmanian EPA during nearly four years of operation. A number of eagle mortalities occurred in a heavily forested section of the wind farm where it was discovered that the lower portions of several turbines are not visible to surrounding Identiflight stations. Cattle Hill Wind Farm’s decision to install a new 30m tower following significant data analysis and design work with the aim to further mitigate impacts on eagles. The knowledge and lessons learnt from the application of IDF at Cattle Hill Wind Farm will benefit the application of Identiflight at future wind farm sites in Tasmania.”

About Cattle Hill Wind Farm

Cattle Hill Wind Farm is located on the eastern shore of Lake Echo in the southern side of the Central Plateau of Tasmania and connects into TasNetwork’s transmission network at the adjacent Waddamana Substation.

Construction was completed in 2020 with installation of 48 Goldwind GW140 3MW turbines, each standing at 170 metres in height.

The site is fully operating with a local team of 9 undertaking site management, operation and maintenance work. The project output of 144MW is equivalent to the consumption of approximately 63,500 Tasmanian homes.

For further information please contact:

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Picture below: 30m Identiflight tower recently installed at Cattle Hill Wind Farm

CATTLE HILL Wind Farm

