

Frequently Asked Questions



Why were the Four Mile Creek and Mullion Creek sites chosen?

The Forestry Act 2012 (NSW) was amended in 2021, enabling permits to be issued to investigate the potential of renewable energy projects (and infrastructure) within State forest softwood plantations. Forestry Corporation of NSW subsequently ran a market process to shortlist regions and renewable energy developers that would investigate the feasibility and viability to host wind farms. Iberdrola were awarded a forest Permit to investigate the feasibility of wind farms in the Orange area.

Four Mile Creek and Mullion Creek are anticipated to have a strong wind resource. As part of the investigation process, a wind monitoring program will start in late 2024 to confirm the quality of the wind resource.

Wind turbines can operate in plantation forests without having long-term impacts on tree growth or plantation operations, as they sit above the tree canopy. Pine plantations are good locations for wind projects because they:

- are large areas, often in windy locations
- include access to powerlines
- have a good existing road and transmission network
- are away from homes.

Suitable renewable energy developments that complement ongoing timber production could provide benefits to regional communities and maximise the use of existing land assets.



What is the proposed size of the wind farms?

Detailed studies, surveys and community engagement are currently being undertaken to inform the size of the proposed wind farm and the number of turbines. The proposed wind farms will also require transmission lines and electrical substations.

The size of the wind farm prospects hasn't been determined yet and is subject to community feedback, stakeholder engagement, detailed studies and technical assessments that will be undertaken over the coming years.



When will construction start?

If the prospect is found to be viable, we expect the planning and approval phase to take between four and six years. Should the wind farm development application be approved by the NSW Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Housing, construction would start after this and take about two years.



When will operation start?

We expect planning, approval and construction to take about eight years (provided the wind farm prospects are approved by the NSW Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Housing). Operation would start after this.



Will I be able to see the turbines?

The project layout has not yet been determined and is subject to final detailed design based on results of studies, surveys and community feedback throughout the investigation process. It is anticipated that all turbines in the proposed Four Mile Creek and Mullion Creek Wind Farms would be located within Forestry Corporation softwood plantation land, at least 2 kilometres from any dwelling.

The turbines will be visible at this distance, but views from individual properties will depend on the final layout, turbine height and the local topography. Visual impacts to project neighbours and sensitive viewpoints will be considered when finalising the project layout.



Will I be able to hear the turbines?

As part of the planning and investigations process, Iberdrola will carry out detailed noise modelling which will help inform the wind farm layout and identify and mitigate potential noise impacts.

The NSW State noise limit, as outlined in the NSW wind energy guidelines, is 35dB(A). This limit aims to ensure noise levels do not significantly affect the experience of people living nearby.



How tall will the turbines be?

We are still early in the investigation process which will inform the final design. Turbine models and placement has not yet been determined. These won't be finalised until later in the investigation period. Modern wind turbines being considered for projects in Australia are between 240 and 280 metres high.



Will the public still have access to Four Mile Creek and Mullion Creek forests?

Yes. Access for forest users will still be possible during development, construction, and operation.

During construction there may be areas which are temporarily closed off to public access. This is to ensure the safety of the public. Temporary closures will be notified in advance, and Housing, construction would start after this and take about two years.

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How will the local environment be protected?

Iberdrola will go through the same assessment and approval processes as any major project proposed in NSW and considered State Significant Development (SSD) where rigorous Federal and State planning requirements will apply.

The project team will need to:

- Engage and consult with First Nations people, community and key stakeholders
- Complete wind, environmental and technical assessments (including noise, landscape and visual impact, water and soil, biodiversity, waste, traffic and transport, hazard and risk, Aboriginal and non-aboriginal heritage).
- Design the project.
- Negotiate grid connection.
- Seek NSW Government planning approval.

We expect the planning and approval phase to take up to six years. If the projects are approved, there will be strict conditions imposed by the NSW Government to minimise impacts to the environment and community. Refer to the NSW Government's renewable energy website for more information about the planning and approval process for potential projects.



Will the proposed projects pose a fire risk?

Wind farms are unlikely to cause bushfires and may even reduce the risk of lightning starting a bushfire. Wind turbines are fitted with lightning protection systems and fire suppression systems. The wind farm is equipped for 24/7 coordination of activities, including the ability to remote-stop turbines when required in emergency response conditions and provide alerts. This all leads to improved fire management in the area.

Iberdrola has considered a range of technology applications that could be used for wildfire detection, including CCTV and thermal cameras. Iberdrola will be involved in fire prevention, suppression and management initiatives.

We are committed to the local needs and values of the communities and environments in which we operate.

In developing the prospects, Iberdrola would need to develop Risk Management Plans to be reviewed once wind farm designs are progressed. This includes supporting Forestry Corporation in its bushfire prevention and firefighting capacity. We will also carry out detailed fire risk assessments as part of the NSW Government's planning approval process and will work closely with the NSW Rural Fire Service to manage any risks.



Will the project endanger local birds and bats?

We will carry out comprehensive biodiversity surveys including bird and bat studies as part of the robust and thorough Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This will guide the design of the prospective wind farms and minimise potential impacts.



What are the benefits to the community and local businesses?

If feasible and if approved, the Prospects might power over 200,000 homes and deliver significant economic investment across the region, including scholarships, traineeships, employment opportunities, sponsorship of First Nations and local community initiatives, and a Community Benefit-Sharing fund.

Iberdrola will establish a Community Benefit Fund to provide community benefits over the life of the project. This fund will be co-designed with community to support First Nations peoples, community organisations, residents, project neighbours, forest users and local businesses.

We have already started talking to local communities and businesses to understand how we can best tailor economic, social, and environmental outcomes. If you would like to provide your feedback, please contact the project team.



Will the insurance premiums for properties and businesses very close to the Prospects be impacted?

No. There is no evidence to support an increase in the premiums due to the proximity of wind farms. A variety of considerations go into the calculation of insurance premiums including claims history, business practices and cost of capital. In a statement to the ABC, the Insurance Council of Australia has said:

'The rising cost of cover has nothing to do with renewables. Premiums are rising because of escalating costs of natural disasters, the increasing value of homes and vehicles making them more expensive to replace, and inflation pushing up building and vehicle repair costs'

Contact Details



If you have any questions, initial feedback, local knowledge or suggestions, please reach out via the contact details below.



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