

24 September 2026
Reference: 2324-068

Max Kitchell
Chairperson of the Development Assessment Panel
Level 3, 144 Macquarie Street
Hobart Tasmania

By email: tpc@planning.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Kitchell,

**Whaleback Ridge Renewable Energy Project
Progress update**

Further to your letter dated 11 November 2025 seeking six monthly progress updates, we are pleased to provide a second update on the Whaleback Ridge Renewable Energy Project Major Project (the Project).

The Project was declared a major project on 1 March 2024 and final Assessment Criteria were determined on 21 August 2024. In February 2026 Westcoast Renewable Energy (WRE) sought and was granted an extension to the submission date to 31 March 2027. This extension was sought to accommodate seasonally dependent ecological studies, refine the project layout, and complete the technical studies required to inform the assessment process.

Since our last update and receiving the extension of time, specialist studies have continued to progress through 2026. These include a range of ecological surveys that build on studies undertaken in previous years, such as eagle nest surveys and collision risk modelling, vegetation mapping and fauna habitat assessments, and a ground dwelling mammals camera trapping survey. A significant body of work regarding the orange-bellied parrot and blue-winged parrot is also underway. Final rounds of targeted flora surveys are scheduled at appropriate flowering times in 2026 and early 2027.

Other specialised studies including, but not limited to, the following have commenced; visual impact assessment, noise surveys, green house gas assessment, traffic management and socio-economic analysis.

The Project's design has continued to evolve as findings from the specialist studies have become available. Survey results and technical assessments are being used to refine the indicative development areas, location of turbines, access roads and other infrastructure, with the aim of avoiding or minimising impacts on identified environmental, cultural, visual and other site constraints. This iterative process will continue as the remaining studies are completed, with their outcomes informing the final layout, mitigation measures and impact assessment presented in the MPIS.

WRE has now established a local office in Zeehan, and community engagement has continued, with a project 'drop-in' information session held in Zeehan in June 2026. This session was well attended and

provided opportunity for the local community to ask questions and engage directly with WRE. Work is also underway to establish a Community Reference Group to provide input to the design of the project's benefit sharing program. Further drop-in sessions will be held in November 2026, along with WRE's attendance at local events throughout the remainder of the year.

In relation to other regulatory and assessment processes, referral of the project under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) was made in July 2026. The project has since been determined to be a Controlled Action, requiring assessment by Environmental Impact Statement.

In the coming months the various specialist studies required to inform the MPIS will be completed, including reporting and impact assessment.

We trust this update provides a suitable overview of the current project status. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned to discuss.

Yours sincerely,

Suki Hopgood
Principal Environmental Consultant