



# Project FAQs

## What's a Renewable Energy Park?

A Renewable Energy Park is a facility with a range of energy generating and storage technologies.

Wind turbines will be the main energy generation source at both Jim's Plain and Robbins Island Renewable Energy Parks.

We're looking at how we could use batteries at Jim's Plain Renewable Energy Park to store excess electricity for use at peak times. We're also exploring the possibility of a small-scale solar installation at Jim's Plain, pending an economic assessment.

## What planning approvals are required?

The Renewable Energy Parks will need approval from the Circular Head Council, the Tasmanian Environmental Protection Authority and the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment.

Jim's Plain received final planning approval in July 2020.

We lodged documentation for Robbins Island in the second half of 2020.

## Are there other secondary approvals required before starting construction?

Once approved, the Renewable Energy Parks will have a range of permit conditions. Some will require the submission of design reports and management plans. These need to be approved by the Circular Head Council, the Tasmanian Environmental Protection Authority and the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment before the start of construction.

## When will construction start?

Once the design reports have been approved, construction will start on a rolling basis. Construction of the Renewable Energy Parks is expected to start in the first half of 2023.

## Will renewable energy lead to lower power prices?

Large-scale renewable energy is the cheapest form of generation when you look to build new electricity generation infrastructure.

Household electricity costs have risen due to number of issues including:

- Replacing ageing poles and wires
- Retiring coal-fired power stations
- Rising gas prices

As cheaper energy supply enters the market, simple economics suggest prices should decrease.

## How can local businesses and communities get involved?

The Renewable Energy Parks are an up to \$1.5 billion investment in Circular Head and Tasmania. There'll be many opportunities for local businesses and the community to get involved.

These projects will create employment opportunities, with up to 400 people needed during the peak of construction. At full development, an operational workforce of up to 65 people will be needed. Goods and services that are likely to be sourced locally during construction and operation of the projects include:

- Accommodation and catering
- Engineering
- Construction materials and equipment
- Labour
- Earthworks
- Fencing and landscaping
- Freight

## What will the view be like for those who live and spend time nearby?

We know communities are concerned about how the infrastructure will look and become part of the local landscape. Visual impacts are unavoidable in any project like this. We're working closely with local communities to share information and consider how to minimise these impacts.

That starts with assessing the potential visual impacts as part of our planning studies for both projects. We develop photomontages



showing the wind turbines from surrounding viewpoints.

The natural landscape around the project sites has already changed over time due to land clearing, farming and forestry operations, and the construction of the nearby **Woolnorth Wind Farms**.

### **Do you consider the potential impacts on plants and animals?**

Any development project like this has impacts on local wildlife, but we are working to minimise these impacts as much as possible. We'll be following Tasmanian Government and Australian Government permit conditions to ensure potential impacts to threatened species and other environmental matters are considered in our design and construction planning.

Flora and fauna assessments have previously been undertaken at both project sites. Over the past 2 years we've undertaken our own surveys. The data from all the surveys has been incorporated in the assessment documentation. This provides a more comprehensive understanding of the potential impacts to flora and fauna at each site to help us plan how to avoid and minimise impacts.

Some of the strategies we'll use to minimise impacts include:

- Assessing the on-ground conditions and locating wind turbines and other infrastructure to avoid native vegetation and fauna habitat
- Developing detailed construction and operations Environmental Management Plans

### **Can wind turbine noise affect local residents?**

It's unlikely noise from wind turbines on either the Robbins Island or Jim's Plain sites will have any impact on people who live nearby.

We've conducted **noise assessments** as part of the planning process. Neither Renewable Energy Park will exceed the wind farm noise standard according to these assessments.

We'll be required to demonstrate during operation that noise levels from the turbines actually meet the strict noise standard as predicted. The standard has been designed to ensure the noise from a wind farm is not intrusive for the average person.

### **Who will own the Renewable Energy Parks?**

Tasmanians own around 25% of the Robbins Island and Jim's Plain Renewable Energy Parks development company (UPC Robbins Island Pty Ltd). The remainder is owned by UPC\AC Renewables Australia a JV between UPC Renewables and AC Energy. Ownership of UPC Renewables and AC Energy is spread between US, UK, Dutch, Canadian and Philippines interests.

UPC\AC Renewables Australia's head office is in Hobart where the CEO and COO are based. The development team and the decision makers live in Tasmania.

UPC\AC Renewables Australia will be the long-term operator of the Renewable Energy Parks, meaning it has a long-term interest in ensuring they are successful.

### **Will Robbins Passage remain open for recreational boat and other uses?**

Yes. The bridge height and span width has been determined through discussions with Marine and Safety Tasmania and regular users so that there is no impediment to boating.

Based on specialist modelling, feedback from the community and innovative design, we've developed an all-bridge solution (earlier designs which were a combination of causeway and bridge).

The bridge will:

- Be approximately 1.2 kilometres long
- Concrete and rock ramps will connect the bridge to the land on either side of Robbins Passage
- Have piles approximately 15 metres apart to allow the free flow of water through the Passage
- Be low in profile on the West Montagu side of the Passage and will rise up on the Robbins Island side to allow vessels up to 5 metres in height to pass through the channel at high tide
- Be a single lane wide and be constructed from steel and pre-cast concrete

The bridge will not stop recreational vehicles and pedestrians accessing Robbins Passage from Robbins Island Road. The concrete and rock ramp at the end of Robbins Island Road will be low in profile to allow vehicles to drive east or west at low tide.

### **What kind of transmission line will the project require and where will it go?**

A transmission line will connect the Renewable Energy Parks to the Tasmanian electricity network.

Our current plan for the transmission line includes:

- Cables laid in the bridge from Robbins Island to mainland Tasmania
- Cables connect to an overhead transmission line that continues to Hampshire via Jim's Plain

The transmission route is being determined through studies and consultation with affected landowners, stakeholders and planning authorities.

The final route will be subject to ongoing consultation, a review of environmental impacts and planning approvals.

**How many wind turbines are included in each site?**

We'll be using the latest and most efficient technology available.

Technology is evolving rapidly. Larger turbines are now being used which substantially reduces the number of turbines needed on a site.

We're considering a range of wind turbine sizes; the final number will be determined by the technology available, the wind resource, and environmental and social factors arising from our engagement with communities and our planning studies.

Current expectation is Jim's Plain will host up to 31 turbines and Robbins Island will host up to 122 turbines.

**Will the projects impact on the Wedge-tailed eagles and other raptors on Robbins Island?**

Our assessment over the past 2 years has shown the Wedge-tailed eagle and White-bellied sea eagle are at risk of impact; however, the impact will be mitigated through a series of strategies that are detailed in the assessment documentation. The strategies have been developed with input from the Tasmanian Environmental Protection Authority and the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment. One of the strategies is the use of technology to detect eagles and shut-down turbines.

**Will the wind turbines be visually distracting due to reflectivity or strobing?**

When wind turbine blades rotate they can cause changes in light levels to create the appearance of a flicker to people looking at them from close proximity. This is called shadow flicker.

As part of our assessment documentation, we've considered the potential shadow flicker for wind turbines at the sites. This is done using relative positions of the sun throughout the year, the wind turbines at the site, and the viewer.

All major wind turbine blade manufacturers finish their blades with a low-reflectivity treatment. This prevents a potentially annoying reflective glint and the possibility of a strobing reflection when the blades are spinning.

**[Read more about visual impacts.](#)****Will the projects still go ahead without a second Bass Strait interconnector?**

We'll proceed with the first stage of the projects without the second Bass Strait interconnector.

**Marinus Link** - the proposed second Bass Strait interconnector - is crucial to deliver the energy generated from Hydro Tasmania's **Battery of the Nation** project to the National Electricity Market; as well as from other renewable energy developers in Tasmania. Marinus Link is necessary for full

development of Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park.

**How much money will be contributed to the Community Benefits Fund?**

For every 1 megawatt, we're proposing to contribute \$750 a year to a Community Partnership Fund and up to \$250 a year to a UPC Managed Fund. At full development the contribution to the Community Partnership Fund will be up to \$675,000 a year and the contribution to the UPC Managed Fund will be up to \$225,000 a year (based on 900 megawatts of installed capacity).