

05 November 2019

Attention: Caroline Evans

**VISUAL SPECIALIST OPINION: AMENDMENT FOR THE APPROVED MOTHERWELL WIND ENERGY FACILITY NEAR UITENHAGE, EASTERN CAPE**

In 2010, CES was appointed by Innowind (Pty) Ltd. as independent environmental assessment practitioners (EAP) to conduct the Full Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (S&EIA) for the proposed Coega Wind Energy Facility (WEF), near Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape Province (EIA Ref No: 12/12/20/2085). The project was granted Environmental Authorisation (EA) in August 2011.

As a result of the DoE's 140 MW cap on renewable energy projects, the EA was subsequently split and amended (in 2013) into three EA's, namely Grassridge, Grassridge 2 and Ukomeleza WEF. In 2016, The Grassridge 2 (now Motherwell) and Ukomeleza WEFs were further amended.

The Motherwell Wind Energy Facility (WEF) is currently authorised to consist of 22 wind turbines, each with a hub height of 137m, and a rotor diameter of 132m (12/12/20/2085/2). Motherwell Wind Power (Pty) Ltd. now wishes to reduce the number of turbines to 14, each with a hub height of up to 137m and a rotor diameter of up to 132m. The purpose of this letter is to provide input on any significant land-use changes that may have occurred and whether these would have any significant impacts in the context of the former Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) and subsequent amendment reports.

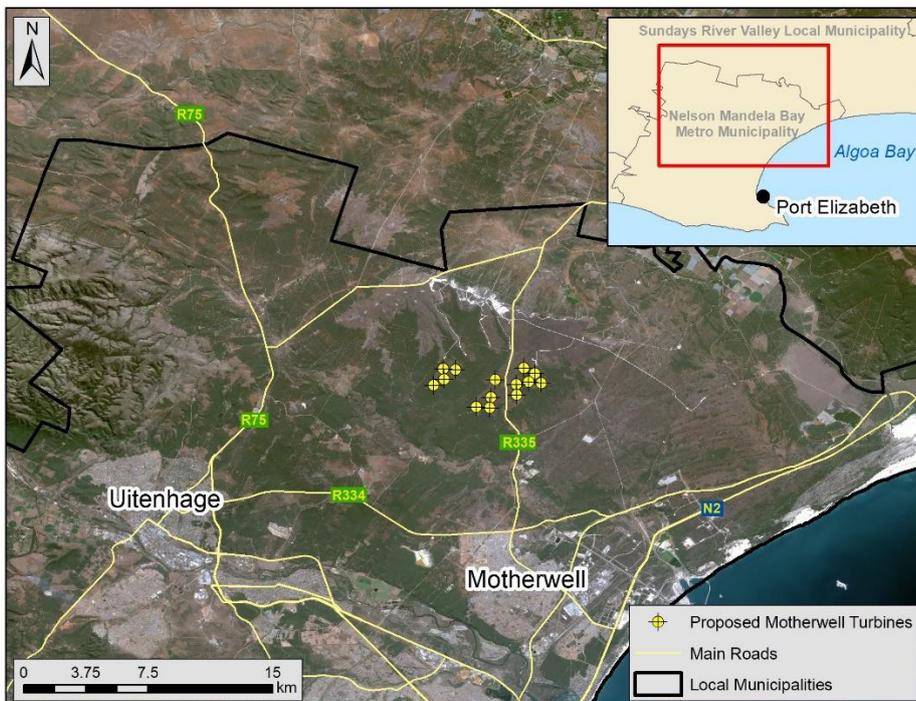


Figure 1: Location of Motherwell WEF

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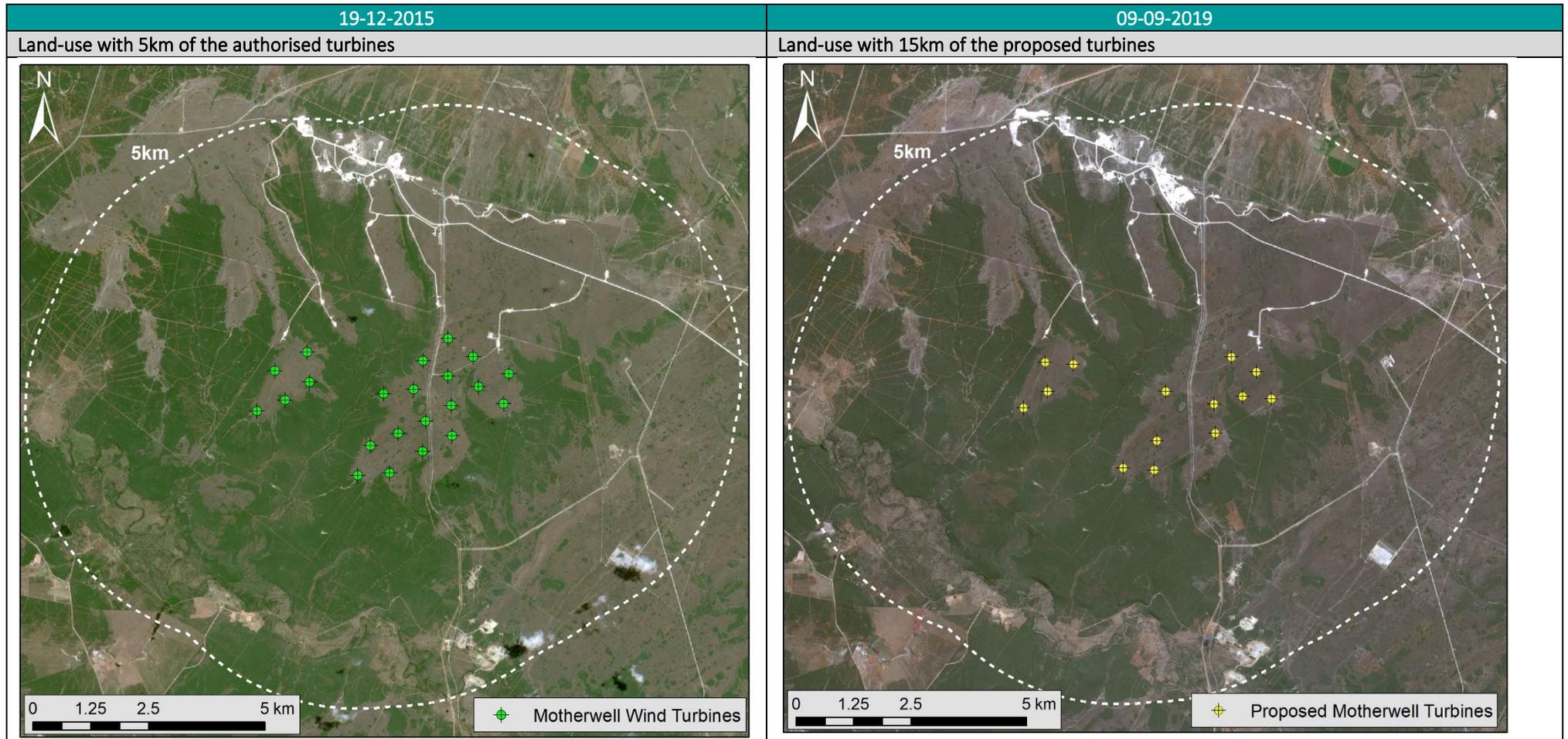
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Directors: AM Avis.

### Land-use Changes

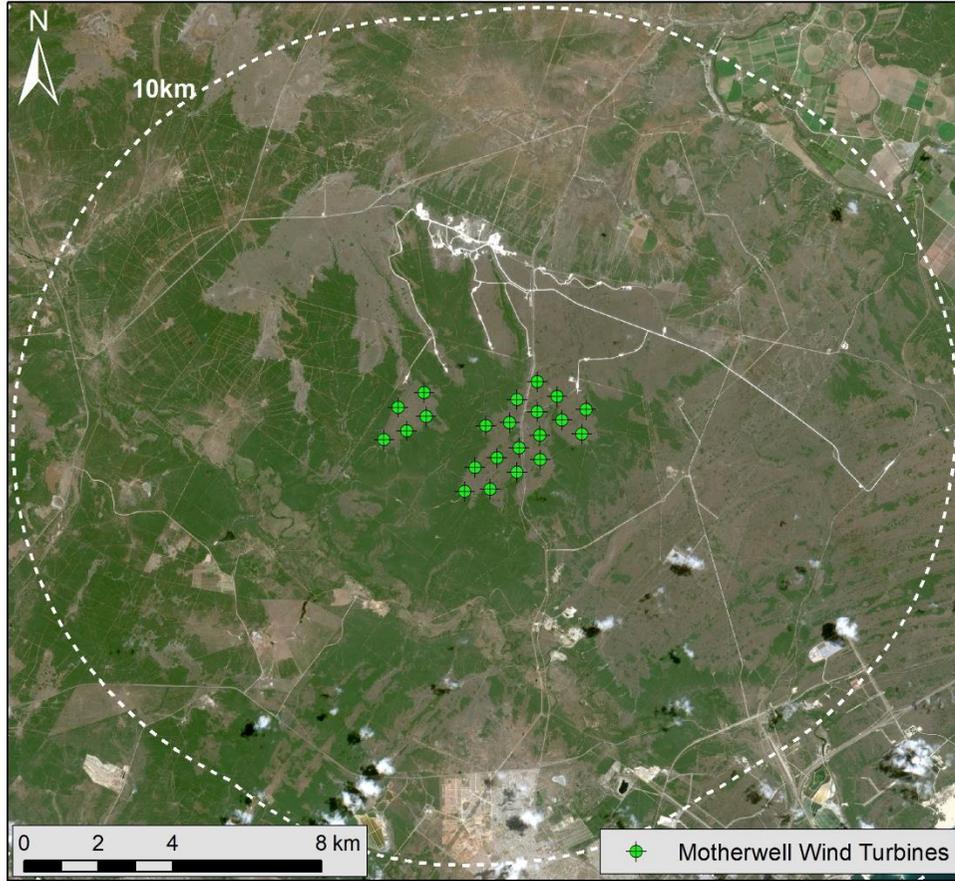
The table below contains Sentinel-2 satellite imagery for 2015 and 2019. As can be seen, no significant changes in land-use have occurred during this time.

Table 1: Land-use changes



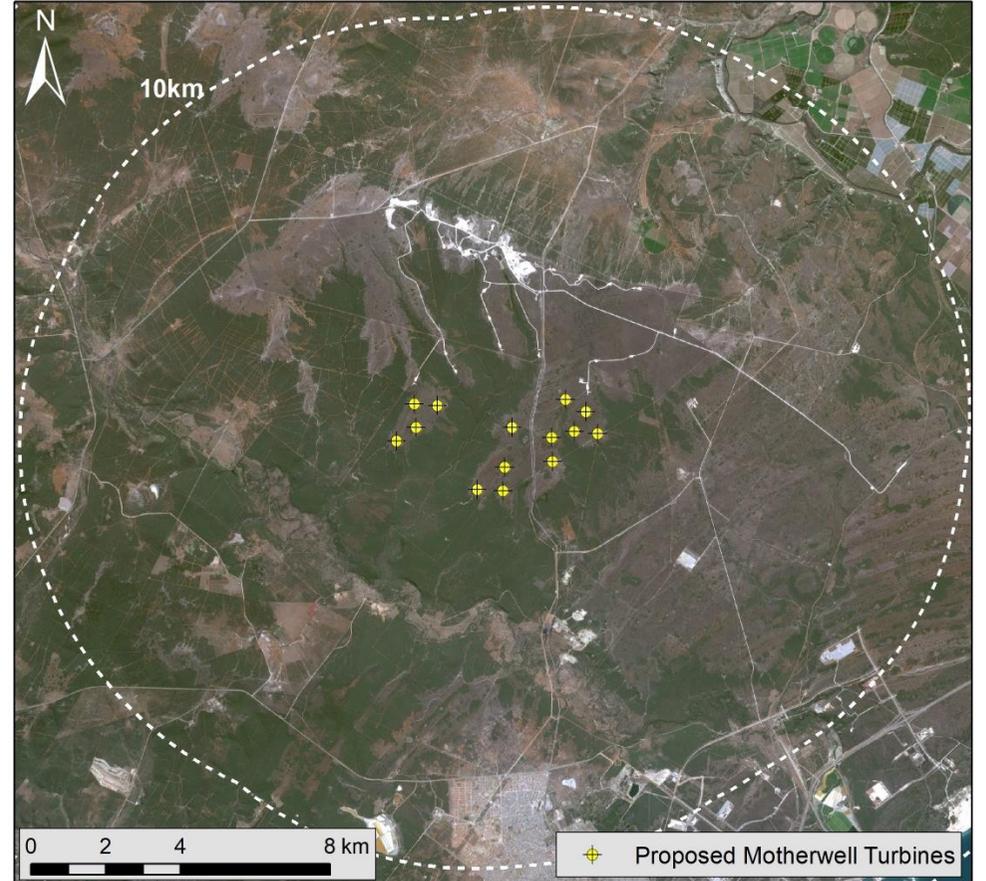
19-12-2015

Land-use with 10km of the authorised turbines



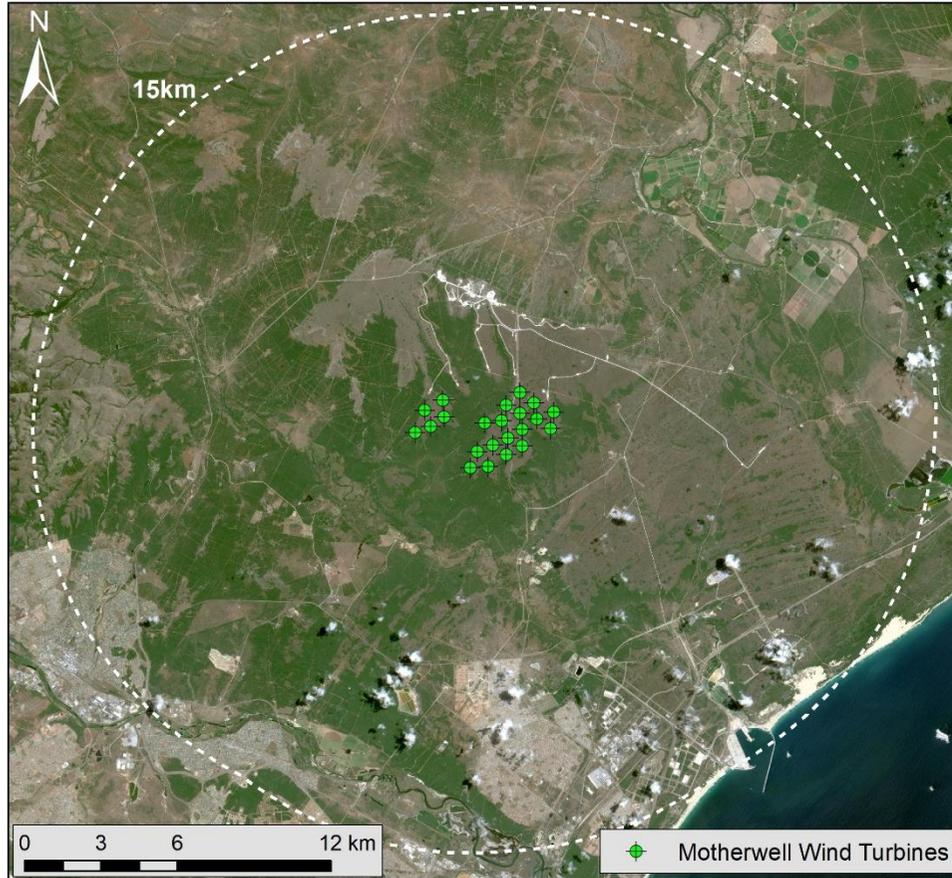
09-09-2019

Land-use with 15km of the proposed turbines



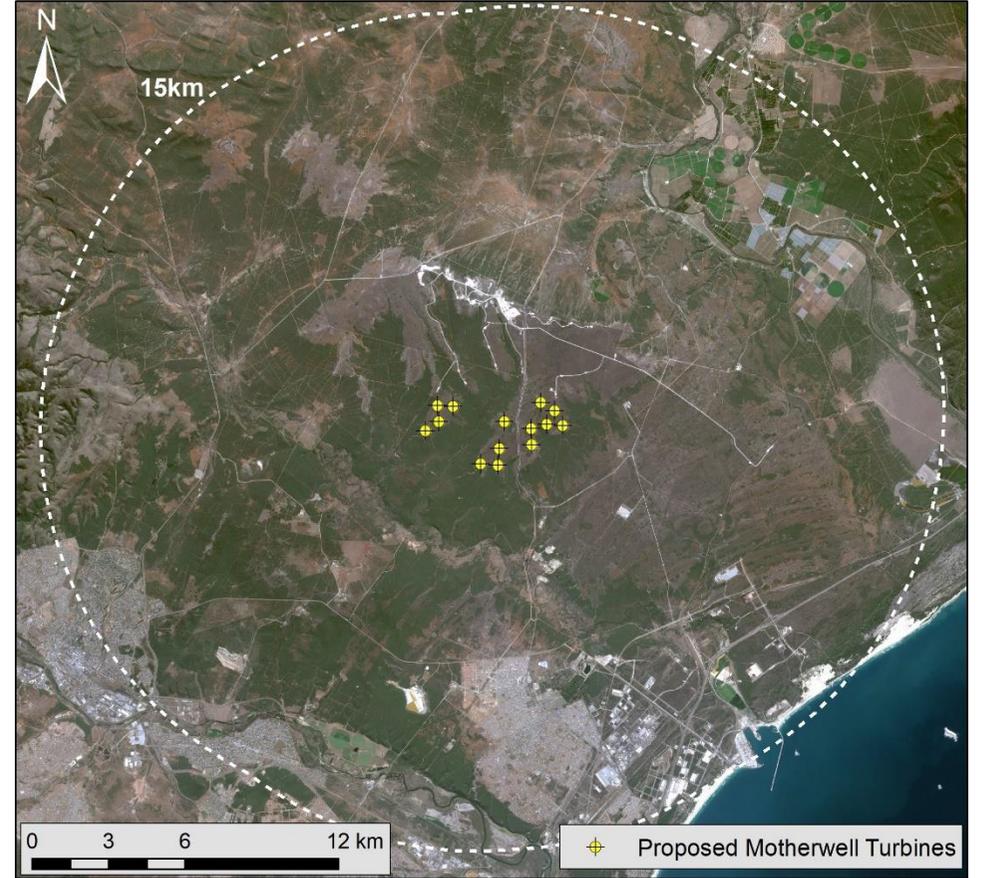
19-12-2015

Land-use with 15km of the authorised turbines



09-09-2019

Land-use with 15km of the proposed turbines





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### Considerations from former visual assessments

The VIA for the original Coega Wind Farm, made the following points and conclusions:

- The landscape character of the region is a mixture of industrial and urban development, and agricultural land. The proposed wind farm is located in a low landscape character sensitivity area and surrounded by landscapes of low to moderate sensitivity to change brought on by the introduction of a wind farm. (Page i).
- There are no recognised viewpoints protected for their scenic quality in the region. (Page i).
- Residents of a couple of nearby settlements such as Motherwell and Wells Estate will have a high visual exposure to the development due to their proximity to the wind farm. (Page i).
- High visual exposure is expected for the Swartkops Valley Local Nature Reserve. The GAENP and three islands off Coega River mouth will have a low visual exposure (Page i).
- The landscape into which the wind farm will be introduced is in close proximity to large industrial and urban centres. Wind turbines will not be out of place in such a metropolitan setting. (Page i).

During the amendment process in 2016, the following was noted:

- The turbines proposed are 23 metres taller (blade tip height) than those approved for the original Coega Wind Farm.
- Due to the original Coega WEF being split, the Motherwell turbines are, on average:
  - 12 kilometres from the centre of Motherwell;
  - 14 kilometres from the Swartkops Valley Local Nature Reserve;
  - 16 kilometres from the centre of Wells Estate.
- At these distances, the visual exposure of these sensitive receptors will be low.

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**Visual specialist comments:**

For this amendment, there are no proposed changes in maximum turbine height. The following visual comments are therefore applicable:

*Table 2: Comments on the proposed Motherwell WEF*

Proposed new specifications	Effect on mitigation measures	Effect on current EA conditions	Effect on cumulative impacts	Notes on land-use changes
Reduction in the number of turbines from 22 to 14	<p>All mitigation measures identified in the former VIA and subsequent amendment reports are still valid for this amendment.</p> <p>There are no additional mitigation measures proposed for this amendment.</p>	<p>All conditions listed in the EA are still valid for this amendment.</p> <p>There are no additional conditions proposed for this amendment.</p>	<p>The proposed change will have no additional cumulative impact on the visual landscape and therefore no additional cumulative issues were identified.</p> <p>The cumulative impact statement in the former Visual Impact Assessment and subsequent amendment reports are therefore still relevant.</p>	<p>There has been no significant change in land-use. Therefore, the impacts and severity thereof remains unchanged.</p>

**Concluding remarks:**

No additional visual sensitive receptors were identified.

All issues identified in the original Visual Impact Assessment and any changes to these identified subsequent amendment reports remain valid. All recommended mitigation measures listed must still be implemented for all phases of the wind farm.

There has been no substantial change in land-use and therefore the impacts and severity thereof remain unchanged.

This Letter of Opinion is not a standalone document and the conclusions made must be read in conjunction with the findings of the former Visual Impact Assessment and subsequent amendment reports.

Yours faithfully

Mr Michael Johnson *M.Sc. (GIS & Remote Sensing)*  
 Visual Specialist

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