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Contact: Senior Firefighter Lachlan Haar

7 March 2022

Lander Robinson
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 5022

Dear Lander Robinson

Re: Advice on Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – Wallerawang Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (SSD-14540514)

Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) acknowledge correspondence received on the 8 February 2022, requesting advice on the EIS for Wallerawang BESS (SSD-14540514).

FRNSW have reviewed the EIS along with the Preliminary Hazards Analysis (PHA) and make the following comments:

FRNSW note the regional location of the project site, and it is our experience that water supplies for firefighting are challenging to source and access in these locations.

Due to the unique challenges of combating a BESS fire in a regional location FRNSW make the following recommendations:

1. To ensure that the fire prevention, detection, protection and firefighting measures are appropriate to the specific fire hazards and adequate to meet the extent of potential fires, a comprehensive Fire Safety Study (FSS) is recommended to be undertaken.
2. That the FSS is developed in accordance with the requirements of Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Paper No.2 (HIPAP No.2).
3. That the FSS is required to be developed to the satisfaction of the operational requirements of FRNSW. FRNSW recommend that the development of a FSS be a condition of consent.
4. That the development of the FSS considers the operational capability of local fire agencies and the need for the facility to achieve an adequate level of on-site fire and life safety independence.

Should a fire or hazardous material incident occur, it is important that first responders have ready access to information which enables effective hazard control measures to be quickly implemented. Without limiting the scope of the Emergency Response Plan (ERP), the following matters are recommended to be addressed:

5. That a comprehensive ERP is developed for the site.
6. That the ERP specifically addresses foreseeable on-site and off-site fire events and other emergency incidents, (e.g. fires involving the BESS or solar panels, bushfires in the immediate vicinity or potential hazardous material incidents).
7. That the ERP detail the appropriate risk control measures that would need to be implemented in order to safely mitigate potential risks to the health and safety of firefighters and other first responders (including electrical hazards). Such measures would include the level of personal protective clothing required to be worn, the minimum level of respiratory protection required, decontamination procedures, minimum evacuation zone distances and a safe method of shutting down and isolating the BESS (either in its entirety or partially, as determined by risk assessment).
8. Other risk control measures that may need to be implemented in a fire emergency due to any unique hazards specific to the site should also be included in the ERP.
9. That two copies of the ERP are stored in a prominent 'Emergency Information Cabinet' which is located in a position directly adjacent to the site's main entry point/s.
10. An Emergency Services Information Package be prepared and located in the Emergency Information Cabinet.¹

For further information please contact the Operational Liaison and Special Hazards Unit, referencing FRNSW file number BFS22/441. Please ensure that all correspondence in relation to this matter is submitted electronically to firesafety@fire.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,



Superintendent John Hawes
Manager
Operational Liaison Special Hazards Unit

Cc: lander.robinson@planning.nsw.gov.au

¹ https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/gallery/files/pdf/guidelines/guidelines_ESIP_and_TFP.pdf