

Our ref: OUT23/20339

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13 December 2023

Subject: Calala Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (SSD-52786213) - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Dear Pragya Mathema

I refer to your request for advice sent on 14 November 2023 to the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) Water about the above matter.

The proposal is for a battery energy storage system (BESS) with storage capacity up to 300MW and 1200MWh discharge capacity (the Project).

DPE Water has reviewed the EIS and provides recommendations regarding water supply (including dam water), controlled activities on waterfront land and groundwater interception (licencing and exemption). These recommendations are detailed in Attachment A.

Should you have any further queries in relation to this submission please do not hesitate to contact DPE Water Assessments water.assessments@dpie.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Tim Baker
Senior Project Officer, Assessments, Knowledge Division
Department of Planning and Environment: Water

Attachment A

Advice to DPE Planning & Assessment regarding the Calala BESS - EIS

1.0 Water supply

1.1 Recommendation – prior to determination

The proponent should provide clarification on the ability to obtain a secure water supply for the project.

Explanation

Based on the information provided in the project's EIS, the water supply for the project is proposed to be sourced from Tamworth Regional Council and or bore and farm dams. However, none of these water supply options have been confirmed. The project needs to confirm a secure water supply prior to determination. This is to include relevant agreements where required and to demonstrate sufficient water entitlements can be acquired where necessary. Where the water is to be sourced from a currently unauthorised source and/or where additional water take infrastructure is required e.g., a bore, an impact assessment of this infrastructure development and water take will be required.

1.2 Recommendation – prior to determination

If water captured by a dam will be utilised as a water supply option for the project's dust suppression, the proponent needs to review the dam to ensure that it is located on a minor stream and is either:

- consistent with the Maximum Harvestable Rights Dam Capacity of the property,
- satisfies an exclusion under Schedule 1 of the Water Management Regulation 2018, or
- is to be considered for water licensing.

Explanation

A farm dam has been mentioned as a water supply option for the project. If a farm dam will be utilised as a water supply option for the project, its status within the water regulatory framework needs to be established.

2.0 Controlled activities on waterfront land

2.1 Recommendation – prior to determination

The proponent should review works proposed within waterfront land (40m of a watercourse) to demonstrate consistency with the Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land.

Explanation

The Water Management Report for the project states that once the project is approved, the stamped plans will need be submitted as part of a Controlled Activity Approval application to DPE-Water. This is not supported because the impact of works on waterfront land needs to be considered as part the project's SSD assessment.

If approved, the project will be exempt from the need to acquire a Controlled Activity Approval from DPE-Water under Section 4.41(1)(g) of *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. However, for the exemption to apply to the Project, the proponent needs to consider the Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land for all works that occur on waterfront land (including minor watercourses), prior to determination.

The Guidelines are available at: <https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/licensing-and-trade/controlled-activity-approvals/guidelines>

3.0 Groundwater interception and licencing

3.1 Recommendation – prior to determination

The proponent should clarify whether groundwater will be intercepted due to the project's excavations.

Explanation

The project will require excavations to provide suitable pad areas to accommodate the BESS infrastructure, however, there has been no assessment of whether groundwater will be intercepted by the project's excavations. If groundwater interception will occur due to the project's excavations, the maximum volume will need to be quantified and a Water Access Licence with sufficient entitlement to account for the groundwater take must be obtained, unless an exemption applies.

End Attachment A
