

The Secretary  
Department of Planning and Environment  
L16, 4 Parramatta Square,  
Parramatta, NSW

25<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Dear Wayne,

**Subject: Update of Staging of Construction of the Project (SSD – 9255)**

Pursuant to Schedule 4, Item 3 of the New England Solar Development Consent, ACEN Australia is required to notify the Department of any strategies, plans or programs proposed to be submitted on a progressive basis.

ACEN Australia has approval from DPE (refer to **Addendum 3**) to stage its development into the following two stages:

- Stage 1: Construction of a 400 megawatt (MW) solar farm within the Northern Array
- Stage 2: Construction of a 320MW solar farm and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) within the balance of the Northern Array and Central Array. Stage 2 will commence approximately 12-18 months after the commencement of Stage 1

## Staging Update

With Stage 1 construction over 90% complete, and with approval of MOD2 by DPE, ACEN Australia is now commencing with pre-construction design works for Stage 2 of New England Solar and hence is providing DPE with an update on the proposed staging of the Project.

- Stage 1a: Construction of a 400 megawatt (MW) solar farm within the Northern Array
- Stage 1b: Operations of 400MW solar
- Stage 2a: Construction of a 320 megawatt (MW) solar farm within the Central Array
- Stage 2b: Operations of 320MW solar
- Stage 3a: Construction of 200MW/2hr BESS within the approved Substation/BESS area
- Stage 3b: Operations of 200MW/2hr BESS
- Stage 4a: Construction of 1200MW/2hr BESS within the approved Substation/BESS area
- Stage 4b: Operations of 1200MW/2hr BESS
- Stage 5: Decommissioning

Further details are provided in **Table 1** below.

*Table 1: Summary of Key Activities across Stages of the New England Project*

| Stage    | Description  | Key Activities*  | Timeframe          |
|----------|--|--|--------------------|
| Stage 1a | Construction of a 400 megawatt (MW) solar farm within the Northern Array | Site compound<br>Fencing works, including security fencing<br>Main Access Road construction<br>Internal Access Roads including drainage and rehabilitation<br><br>Solar array works that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General site wide cut and fill earthworks</li> <li>• Piling installation</li> <li>• Tracker installation</li> <li>• Above ground and below ground cable installation and termination</li> </ul> | Nearing completion |

| Stage    | Description   | Key Activities*   | Timeframe          |
|----------|---|---|--------------------|
|          |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module installation</li> </ul> <p>Substation, Switchyard and control buildings works that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earthworks</li> <li>• Structures and Footings</li> <li>• Gantries and HV Switchgear</li> <li>• Transformer installation and connection (Substation only)</li> <li>• Control building installations (both Substation and Switchyard)</li> </ul> <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations &amp; maintenance building</li> <li>• Cold Commissioning works</li> <li>• Hot Commissioning works including Hold Point testing for compliance to AEMO requirements</li> <li>• Site wide rehabilitation</li> <li>• All other associated infrastructure</li> </ul>   |                    |
| Stage 1b | Operation of 400MW solar Farm   | <p>Operation of the solar farm for indicatively 30 year, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar module maintenance including cleaning</li> <li>• Vegetation &amp; infrastructure maintenance</li> <li>• Electrical equipment maintenance, upgrade, repair and replacement, as required</li> </ul>  | Est: Oct '23 – '53 |
| Stage 2a | Construction of a 320MW solar farm within the Central Array                                     | <p>Fencing works, including security fencing<br/>Internal Access roads including drainage and rehabilitation</p> <p>Solar array works that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General site wide cut to fill earthworks</li> <li>• Piling installation</li> <li>• Tracker installation</li> <li>• Above ground and below ground cable installation and termination</li> <li>• Module installation</li> </ul> <p>Substation and control buildings works that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structures and Footings</li> <li>• HV Switchgear</li> <li>• Transformer installation and connection Substation only</li> <li>• Control building installation inside Substation</li> </ul> <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations &amp; maintenance building</li> <li>• Cold Commissioning works</li> <li>• Hot Commissioning works including Hold Point testing for compliance to AEMO requirements</li> <li>• Site wide rehabilitation</li> <li>• All other associated infrastructure</li> </ul> | October '23        |
| Stage 2b | Operation of 320MW Solar Farm   | <p>Operation of the solar farm for indicatively 30 year, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar module maintenance including cleaning</li> <li>• Vegetation &amp; infrastructure maintenance</li> <li>• Electrical equipment maintenance, upgrade, repair and replacement, as required</li> </ul>  | July '25 - '55#    |
| Stage 3a | 200MW/2hr BESS construction, commissioning, and operations including switchyard expansion works | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bulk earthworks</li> <li>• Internal Access Road works</li> <li>• Security fencing</li> <li>• Landscaping and rehabilitation</li> <li>• Earth grid installation</li> <li>• Stormwater drainage system</li> <li>• Spill oil drainage system</li> <li>• Above ground and below ground cable installation and termination</li> <li>• Electrical pit and conduit system installation</li> <li>• Equipment, structure and building foundations</li> <li>• All associated ancillary equipment</li> </ul>  | Est: April '24     |

| Stage    | Description  | Key Activities*  | Timeframe       |
|----------|--|--|-----------------|
|          |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery and landing of the battery units</li> <li>• Control and switchgear buildings installation</li> <li>• Mechanical and electrical installation of equipment inclusive of structural erection, cable reticulation and terminations</li> <li>• Substation expansion, as required</li> <li>• Switchyard expansion, as required</li> <li>• Testing and commissioning, specifically energisation of the battery units and hold point testing of the BESS.</li> </ul>   |                 |
| Stage 3b | Operations of 200MW/2hr BESS   | Operation of the BESS for indicatively 30 year, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar module maintenance including cleaning</li> <li>• Vegetation &amp; infrastructure maintenance</li> <li>• Electrical equipment maintenance, upgrade, repair and replacement, as required</li> </ul>  | '26 – '46       |
| Stage 4a | 1200MW/2hr BESS construction, commissioning, and operations including switchyard expansion works | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bulk earthworks</li> <li>• Internal Access Road works</li> <li>• Security fencing</li> <li>• Landscaping and rehabilitation</li> <li>• Earth grid installation</li> <li>• Stormwater drainage system</li> <li>• Spill oil drainage system</li> <li>• Above ground and below ground cable installation and termination</li> <li>• Electrical pit and conduit system installation</li> <li>• Equipment, structure and building foundations</li> <li>• All associated ancillary equipment</li> <li>• Delivery and landing of the battery units</li> <li>• Control and switchgear buildings installation</li> <li>• Mechanical and electrical installation of equipment inclusive of structural erection, cable reticulation and terminations</li> <li>• Substation expansion, as required</li> <li>• Switchyard expansion, as required</li> <li>• Testing and commissioning, specifically energisation of the battery units and hold point testing of the BESS.</li> </ul> | Est: '30        |
| Stage 4b | Operations of 1200MW/2hr BESS  | Operation of the BESS for indicatively 20 year, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar module maintenance including cleaning</li> <li>• Vegetation &amp; infrastructure maintenance</li> <li>• Electrical equipment maintenance, upgrade, repair and replacement, as required</li> </ul>  | '35 – '55       |
| Stage 5  | Decommissioning at end of life   | Full decommissioning of the site including removal and appropriate disposal of all components.   | Est: '55 – '58# |

\*Included Key Activities, but not limited to the listed items

# The operational lifespan of the project would be approximately 30 years, unless the facility is re-powered at the end of the photovoltaic modules' and/or BESS infrastructure operational life

### Commencement of Staging

ACEN Australia proposes to commence with Stages 1 – 3 (refer to **Addendum 2**), with Stage 4 proposed to commence at a later date. As part of the approved MOD2 there is a provision for a 1200W/2hr Battery Energy Storage System. As per the MOD2 report, the timing on construction of this larger battery is dependent on construction of new transmission infrastructure as part of the New England Renewable Energy Zone (developed by Energy Co). We will keep the Department informed on timing of these plans for the site as they develop.

## Management Plans

In **Addendum 1** below, please find the summary of the Management Plans associated with each stage of the works.

In consultation with DPE, the Management Plans/ Strategies requiring Secretary approval will be developed to cover all stages of NES for both construction and operational activities for the life of the project. These plans will get updated as required and as the various stages reach completion.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Kind regards,

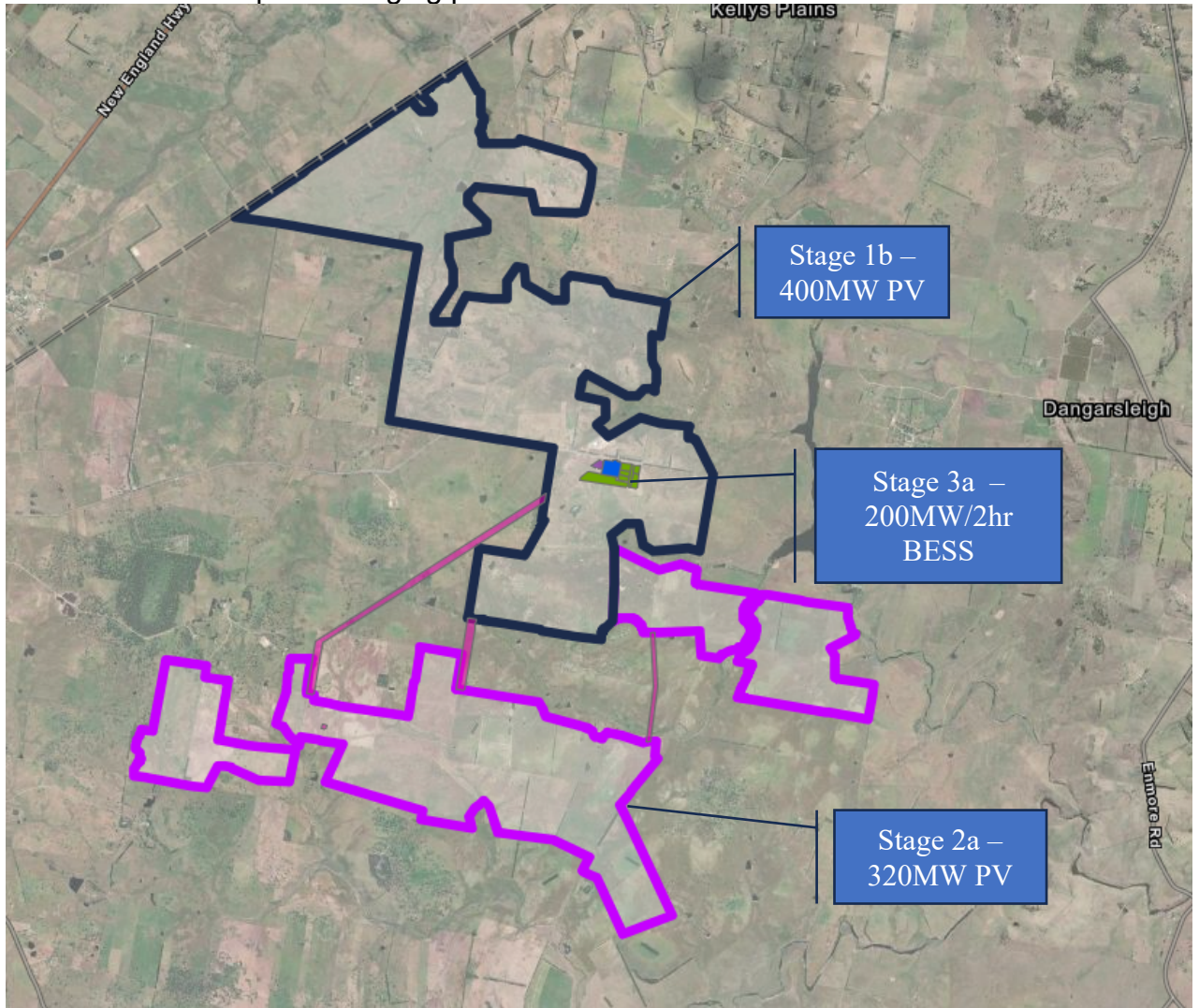
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**Sarah Donnan**  
Project Manager – NES  
**ACEN Australia**

Addendum 1 – Management Plan summary

| Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) V5, 17 Feb 23 – Covers all Stages of works. Updated as needed. |  |                                |  |                                |                             |
|--|--|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| CEMP Stage 1a – V3 dated 14 April '23  | OEMP Stage 1b – In preparation                       | CEMP Stage 2a – In preparation | OEMP Stage 2b – Future Plan  | CEMP Stage 3a – In preparation | OEMP Stage 3b – Future Plan |
| Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan (AHMP) - V8.   | Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan (AHMP) – From V9 |                                |  |                                |                             |
| Traffic Management plan (TMP) - Rev7. 23 Dec '22   | Traffic Management plan (TMP) – From Rev8            |                                |  |                                |                             |
| Fire and Emergency Response Plan (FERP)  | Fire and Emergency Response Plan (FERP)              |                                | BESS = Fire Safety Study   Fire and Emergency Response Plan (FERP) |                                |                             |
| Historical Heritage Management Plan (HHMP) - Ver5. 25 Nov '22  | Historical Heritage Management Plan (HHMP) – From V6 |                                |  |                                |                             |
| Accommodation and Employment Strategy - Ver3, 19   | Accommodation and Employment Strategy – From Ver 4   |                                |  |                                |                             |
| Biodiversity Management Plan – Rev8. 19 Dec '22  | Biodiversity Management Plan – From Rev 9            |                                |  |                                |                             |
| Water Supply Strategy – Rev 3 19 Feb '21   | Water Supply Strategy – From Rev 4                   |                                |  |                                |                             |

Addendum 2 – Proposed staging plan



Addendum 3 – Approval from DPE New England Solar Farm (SSD – 9255 - PA - 11)  
Staging of Construction dated 11/02/2021.



Tim Kirk  
Project Develop Manager  
UPCVAC Renewables Australia  
Level 14 77 King Street  
SYDNEY, NSW 2000

11/02/2021

Dear Mr Kirk

**New England Solar Farm (SSD-9255-PA-11)  
Staging of Construction**

I refer to your letter dated 15 January 2021 proposing to submit any strategy, plan or program required by the development consent for the New England Solar Farm (SSD-9255) on a progressive basis.

The Department has carefully considered the proposed staging and notes that construction will be undertaken in two stages:

- Stage 1: Construction of a 400 megawatt (MW) solar farm within the Northern Array;
- Stage 2: Construction of a 320MW solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS) within the balance of the Northern Array and Central Array. Stage 2 will commence approximately 12-18 months after the commencement of Stage 1.

The Department notes that you intend to lodge the following plans and strategies on a progressive basis:

Stage 1

- Traffic Management Plan (Stage 1);
- Accommodation and Employment Strategy (Stage 1);
- Historic Heritage Management Plan;
- Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan;
- Biodiversity Management Plan; and
- Environmental Management Strategy.

Stage 2

- Traffic Management Plan (Stage 2); and
- Accommodation and Employment Strategy (Stage 2).

Accordingly, under condition 3 of Schedule 4 of the development consent SSD-9255 the Planning Secretary approves the staging of the development and the submission of the relevant strategies, plans or programs required by the development consent (and detailed above) on a progressive basis.

If you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact Wayne Jones on (02) 6575 3406 or [wayne.jones@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wayne.jones@planning.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'NB', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nicole Brewer  
Director  
Energy Assessments

As nominee of the Planning Secretary