

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Neoen Community Relations Plan**



## THUNDERBOLT ENERGY HUB COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

|                |                                |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Version        | V1 – public                    |
| Released       | 21/10/2020                     |
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## Document Control

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| History           |                                     |
| Version:          | V1.0 – public                       |
| Nature of change: |                                     |
| Author:           |                                     |
| Date:             | 21/10/2020                          |

## PURPOSE

This Community Relations Plan (CRP) was developed during the feasibility phase by Joanna Murphy with oversight from the Community Relations Manager Lisa Stiebel in October 2020.

This document identifies the community relations approach and objectives for the Thunderbolt Energy Hub and surrounding communities. It outlines the overall framework across the phases of the project lifecycle (from development through construction to operations) and proposed plans. It also provides a summary of the key stakeholders including landholders, neighbours, local community and local government.

Neoen understands that the success of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub is dependent to a large extent on the development of genuine, open and ongoing relationships with key stakeholders and members of the local community. We recognise the importance of ensuring a “no surprises” dynamic with the local community and are committed to developing and nurturing long-term relationships between our team and the various project stakeholders.

This template was developed in accordance with the best practice guidelines from the ACT and VRET auction schemes in order to position this project well for any appropriate government or corporate tenders.

The CRP is a key element of the Community Relations Toolkit depicted in Table 1. It is one of the three tools, along with the stakeholder register and the project website, that will accompany the project from early feasibility stage to decommissioning.

This is an external CRP for public access.

## Safety First

Neoen have a policy of safety first across all our projects and activities. Staff and community safety is a baseline essential to ensure engagement can proceed. Wherever there is a conflict between the approach and guidelines outlined in this Community Relations Plan and the safety of our staff or the general public then appropriate safe practices will take priority.

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## 1. COMMUNITY RELATIONS APPROACH

### 1.1 Our approach

Stakeholder and community relations are led by Neoen's project managers with support from community relations specialists. We consider it important that trusting relationships are developed between the people on the ground who know the project the best, and the stakeholders that are part of and connected to their region and local community. Due to the rural nature of the community, our overall approach to consultation for the Thunderbolt Energy Hub will be open, relaxed, flexible and responsive.

Neoen have a vertically integrated business model, meaning that we 'develop to own' our projects. This model is unusual in the industry, affording us a clear advantage over our competitors in respect to community relations – our starting point is the clear understanding that we will be long term neighbours and participants in the local community for the lifetime of the project. As such we are able to establish and nurture relationships, embrace partnerships and innovation, confident that we will be there to see projects and benefits to fruition.

### 1.2 Our values

As a company Neoen has a clear set of values that underpin and guide our work. How these internal values translate into our external approach to building relationships with communities is described in Table 2.



#### Integrity

We operate with integrity, whatever we do, whenever and wherever we do it. We work with partners who abide by the same rules.



#### Commitment

We uphold all our commitments, internal and external. We believe in hard work and take pleasure in seeing a good job well done.



#### Audacity

We believe we can become a world leader in renewable energy. We have the audacity to operate globally, imagining, designing and implementing competitive, effective energy solutions.



#### Esprit de corps

We are loyal to each other and form a close-knit team. We are proud of our company, our goals and our accomplishments.

Table 1: Principles and practice

| Value & Principle            | In practice   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Integrity<br>Mutual Respect  | - We provide a space for genuine dialogue where people can participate in respectful discussions.   |
| Integrity<br>Transparency    | - We demystify the development process for local stakeholders and clearly communicate which points, when and to what extent they are able to influence decisions.<br>- We are transparent about how and why decisions are made.                                   |
| Integrity<br>Inclusiveness   | - We reach out to involve key stakeholders and the local community so they can play a part in decisions that affect them.<br>- We provide a range of opportunities and avenues for ongoing and meaningful dialogue, allowing for detailed and timely discussions. |
| Commitment<br>Responsiveness | - We communicate well and are responsive to emerging issues, concerns and ideas.  |

| Value & Principle                        | In practice  |
|--|--|
|  | - We provide timely information and ensure people have time to digest information, understand the project and make informed decisions.   |
| Commitment<br>Mutual Benefit             | - We seek shared outcomes of mutual benefit for the local host community over the long term.   |
| Audacity<br>Innovation                   | - We deliver engagement beyond regulatory conditions and compliance<br>- We are open to and pursue bold and creative ideas and solutions tailored to and driven by the local context of the project. |
| Esprit de corps<br>Relationship building | - We build and nurture long term local relationships and make meaningful links with local leaders and organisations.<br>- We provide many avenues for interaction across the project lifecycle.      |
| Esprit de corps<br>Celebration           | - We value and celebrate community; our own and those of the communities we work with.<br>- We enjoy celebrating our successes together.   |

## 1.3 Industry Best Practice

Our approach to engaging stakeholders is informed by the Public Participation Spectrum developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) and widely adopted as a framework for structuring consultation by the renewables industry<sup>1</sup>. The approaches and spectrum are represented in the Table 3.

*Table 2: Spectrums of engagement*

| Spectrum                       | Inform  | Consult   | Involve   | Collaborate  | Empower  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| Community engagement objective | - Provide balanced and objective information<br>- Assist the community in understanding all aspects of the project, including possible problems/ issues | - Obtain feedback from the community on plans, options and/or decisions | - Work directly with the community throughout all stages of the project<br>- Ensure community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered | - Partner with the community in each aspect of planning, development and decision-making<br>- Include the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution | - Community leads the development of the renewable energy project<br>- Place decision-making in the hands of the community |

<sup>1</sup> Lane, T. and J. Hicks (2017) Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development: A Guide for Applicants to the Victorian Renewable Energy Target Auction. Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Victorian Government, Melbourne.

| Spectrum                      | Inform   | Consult   | Involve  | Collaborate   | Empower   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| Promise to community          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep the community informed through all stages of development, including issues and delays</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep the community informed</li> <li>- Listen and acknowledge suggestions and concerns</li> <li>- Provide feedback on how input influenced the decision</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with the community to ensure concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed</li> <li>- Provide feedback on how input influenced the decision</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look to the community for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions</li> <li>- Incorporate advice and recommendations into decisions to the maximum extent possible</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement what the community decides</li> </ul>  |
| Community engagement outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Securing a good site to install the renewable energy facility</li> <li>- Gaining planning permission</li> <li>- Meeting compliance regulations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimising objections</li> <li>- Effectively managing complaints</li> <li>- Good stakeholder relations</li> <li>- A level of community awareness and trust in the project</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long-term broad local social acceptance and knowledge of the project</li> <li>- Strengthened local relationships and trust</li> <li>- Local advocates for renewable energy</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broad community participation, support and awareness</li> <li>- Some sense of local ownership</li> <li>- Greater community benefit and strong local relationships and trust</li> <li>- Timely development and easier planning approval</li> <li>- Some sharing of benefits beyond investors</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Benefit sharing program tailored to the local context</li> <li>- Harness the skills and capital of the community</li> <li>- Upskill community members to manage the project</li> <li>- Largely community owned and controlled</li> </ul> |

This CRP aims to move our engagement activities and benefit sharing approach along the spectrum listed above so that across our project portfolio we are:

- **Involving** the community in the development, construction and operation of the wind farm, solar farm and battery farm
- **Collaborating** with the community to ensure that local advice and insights are shaping our approach to engagement and benefit sharing
- **Empowering** the community to shape key elements of the project, such as co-designing the long-term framework of the shared benefits program



## 1.4 Emerging trends

Table 3 in the prior section shows that differing levels of participation are legitimate, depending on the goals, timeframes, resources and levels of interest/concern in the decision to be made. At all levels of engagement, it is fundamental to define the promise and ensure it is clearly understood by both the decision makers and the stakeholders to be engaged. The following figure<sup>2</sup> shows the emergent key elements of best practice as at 2018.



Stakeholders groups are likely to have differing communication and engagement needs. A level of engagement is therefore necessarily assigned to each stakeholder identified. It is possible for the level of engagement to alter at different milestones of the project; as a consequence, some stakeholders will be assigned more than one level of engagement. Each level of engagement is a valid one, provided it is delivered in a meaningful way and to a group that expects to be engaged with at that level.

The project team will engage broadly but understands there are stakeholders seeking different levels of engagement in the project. Stakeholder level of interest will evolve over the duration of the project and this analysis will be updated regularly to reflect changes and emerging issues or opportunities. A detailed Stakeholder Register incorporating the stakeholders and communities affected and/or interested in the project is maintained by the manager responsible for the CRP.

<sup>2</sup> Lane, T., Wood, E. Hall, N., Webb, A. and Mey, F. Enhancing Social Outcomes from Wind Development in Australia: Evaluating Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing. Clean Energy Council, Melbourne.

## 1.5 Objectives

1. Foster a transparent and open approach to the development of Thunderbolt Energy Hub and ensure ‘no surprises’ for the local community.
2. Keep the community and stakeholders informed about Thunderbolt Energy Hub through the provision of accurate, timely and factual project information.
3. Identify and address community and stakeholder concerns and maintain transparency in the project design, implementation and ongoing operations
4. Involve stakeholders and community regarding key decisions.
5. Identify opportunities for local business involvement and local employment in the construction and operations of Thunderbolt Energy Hub.
6. If relevant, identify opportunities for Indigenous Participation and employment in the construction and operations of Thunderbolt Energy Hub and where appropriate co-develop and implement an Indigenous Participation Plan.
7. Co-design, develop and deliver a benefit sharing program in collaboration with the community, and in partnership with local stakeholders where possible.
8. Develop long-term relationships and partnerships with community and stakeholders.

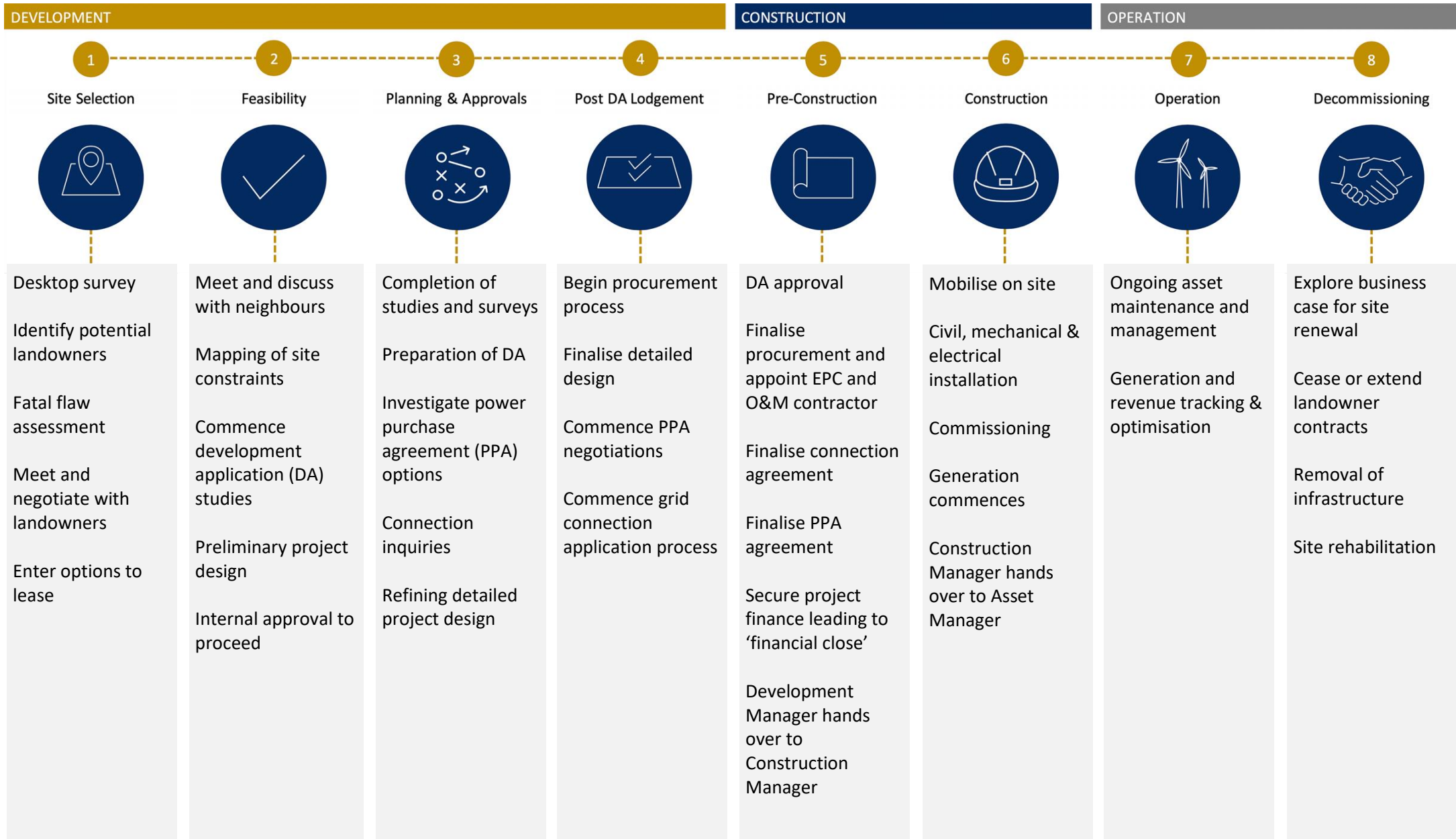
## 1.6 Community Relations Framework

An eight-phased approach will guide the implementation of community relations strategy in alignment with each of the project stages.

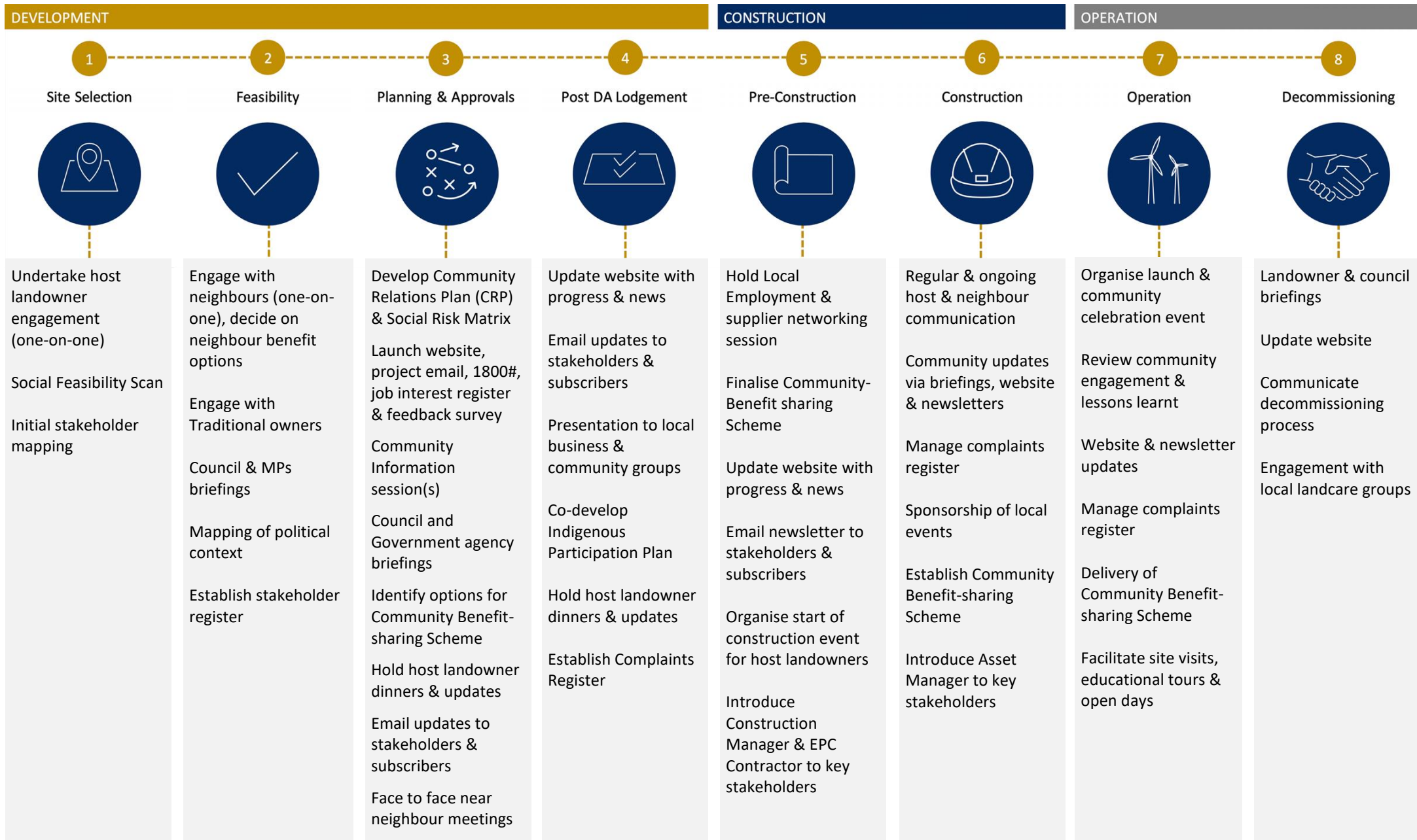
Key project activities and milestones are outlined on the page below, with the associated community relations activities on the following page.

Section 3 provides detailed project-specific information on the community relations approach and strategy for Thunderbolt Energy Hub.

## 1.7 Project Activities and Milestones by Stage



## 1.8 Community Relations Activities by Stage



## 2. PROJECT CONTEXT

### 2.1 Context narrative

Thunderbolt Energy Hub is a hybrid renewable energy project with the ability to provide affordable, reliable power to New South Wales consumers. The project will combine around 380MW of wind, 120MW of solar generation combined with 400MW battery storage, giving the project the ability to store and dispatch energy to the grid during times of peak demand throughout the day and night.

The project location was chosen as it meets several criteria that will allow it to become a competitively priced project for NSW consumers. Some of the criteria taken into account include:

- Strong wind & solar resource;
- Suitable site topography;
- Low population and thus distances to involved and neighbouring dwellings; and
- Located within a strong part of the electricity network (ability to connect to one or both of the existing 330kV transmission lines crossing the project).

### 2.2 Background and development to date

The project site was first identified in mid-2018 and engagement with landholders commencing soon thereafter. The project is now in the stage of early feasibility works with contract negotiations underway with landholders. These are expected to be finalised in Q4, 2020.

Initial feasibility studies have occurred up to and throughout 2020, including:

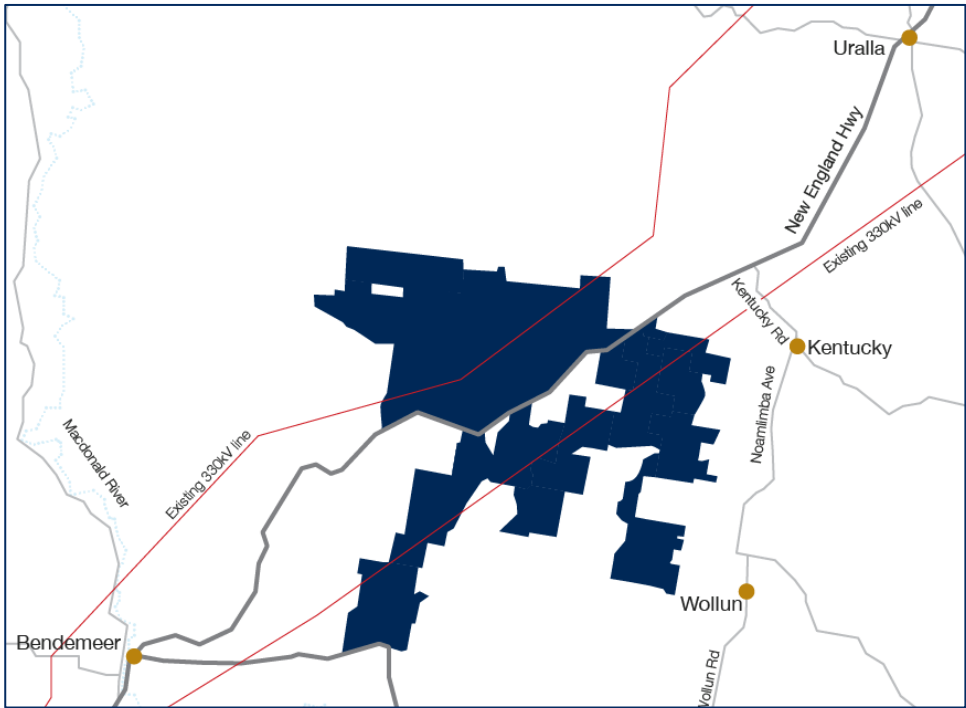
- Installation of a SODAR machine to monitor the wind resource in September 2018;
- Installation of an 80m wind monitoring mast in February 2020;
- A fatal flaw assessment;
- Development of a preliminary wind turbine layout based on SODAR wind data in February 2020;
- A preliminary on-site ecological assessment to confirm some of the flora and fauna species present within the project site;
- A seasonal specific ecological survey in August 2020;
- Commencement of one-on-one neighbour engagement in September 2020;
- The first community information session on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020; and
- A presentation introducing the Thunderbolt Energy Hub project to Uralla Shire Council in early October 2020.

The project is now in the early Planning & Approvals phase with the submission of the Scoping Report targeted for October 2020.

### 2.3 Site location

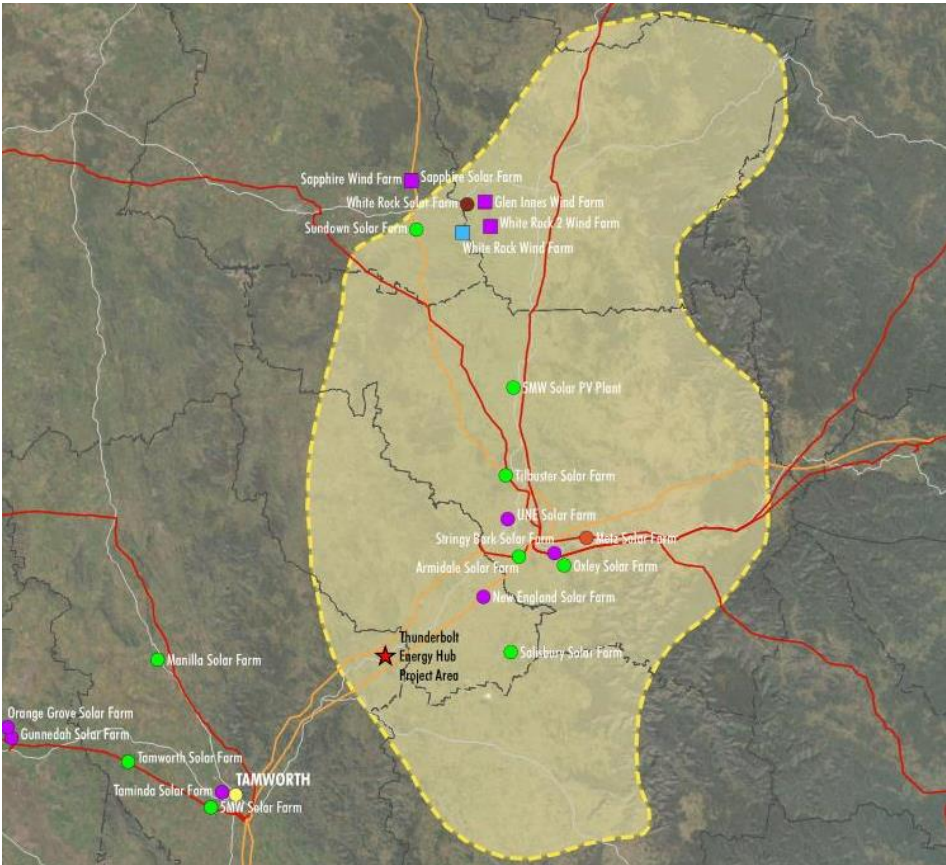
Thunderbolt Energy Hub is located in Kentucky and Bendemeer, NSW. The southern end of the project is located approximately 40km north-east of Tamworth (population ~63,000) and the northern end of the project is located approximately 40km south-west of Armidale (population ~30,000). Host landholder properties span across a north-south length of approximately 18km shown on Figure 1.

Figure 1 Thunderbolt Energy Hub Project Map



The Thunderbolt Energy Hub is located within the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), announced by the New South Wales Government in July 2020.

Figure 2 New England REZ





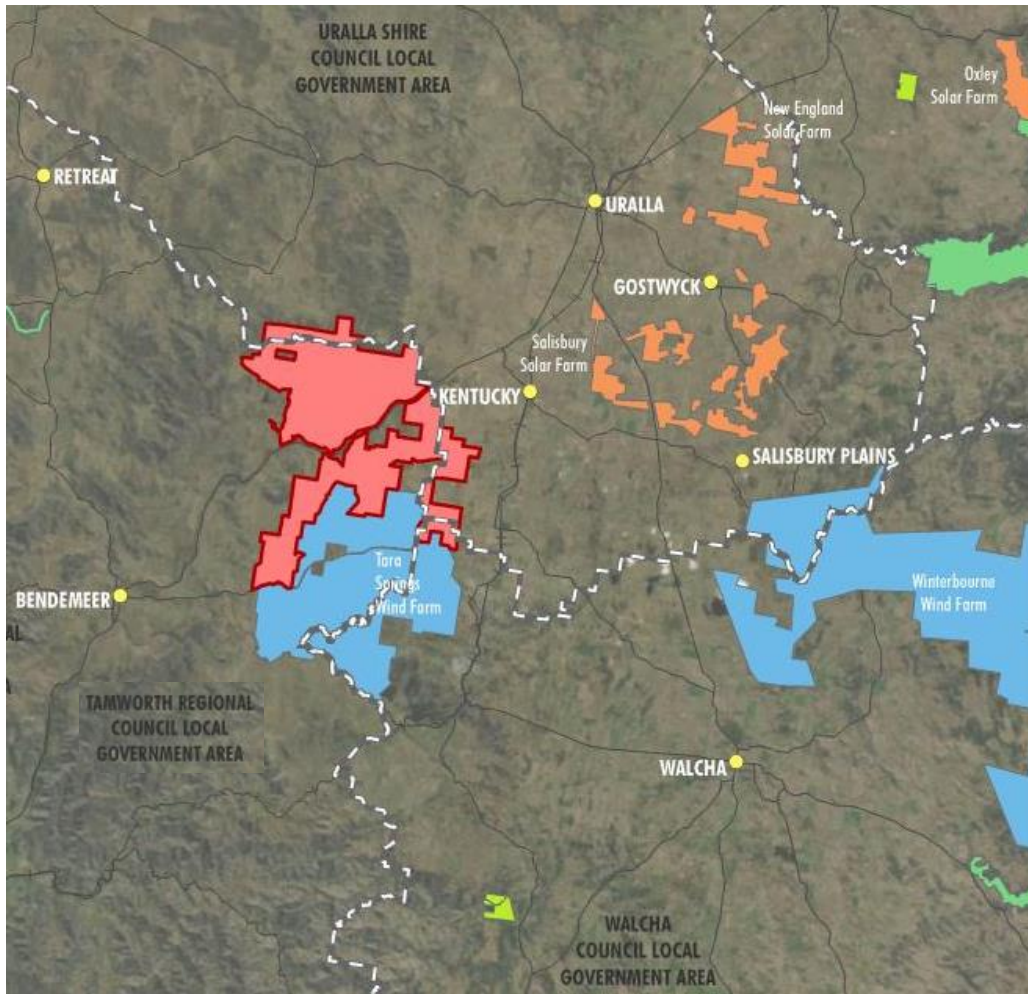
A number of other State Significant Developments (SSD) are proposed near the Thunderbolt Energy Hub. These projects are various stages of development, as detailed in Table 3 below.

*Table 3 SSD Projects planned near Thunderbolt Energy Hub*

| SSD Name               | Technology         | Proposed Size               | Project Stage                                       | Proponent                        | Distance to Thunderbolt Energy Hub                            |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Oxley Solar Farm       | Solar Battery      | 300 MW solar; 30 MW battery | Development; Prepare EIS                            | Solar Megawatt Holdings Pty Ltd  | Approximately 42km north-east of Thunderbolt Energy Hub       |
| New England Solar Farm | Solar Farm Battery | 720 MW solar; 50 MW battery | In Construction                                     | UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd | Approximately 25km north-north-east of Thunderbolt Energy Hub |
| Salisbury Solar Farm   | Solar Farm         | 700 MW                      | Development; Prepare EIS                            | Walcha Energy Pty Ltd            | Approximately 9km north-east of Thunderbolt Energy Hub        |
| Winterbourne Wind Farm | Wind Farm          | 700 MW                      | Development; Request for SEARs                      | Vestas                           | Approximately 20km east of Thunderbolt Energy Hub             |
| Tara Springs Wind Farm | Wind Farm          | 400 MW                      | Early Development; Scoping Report not yet submitted | Renewable Energy Systems (RES)   | Adjacent to Thunderbolt Energy Hub                            |

The location of these projects in relation to the Thunderbolt Energy Hub project are shown on Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 Thunderbolt Energy Hub and other SSD projects within the New England REZ



## 2.4 Community Overview

The broad community around the proposed Thunderbolt Energy Hub is centred in the towns of Kentucky and Bendemeer. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics<sup>3</sup> 2016 Census Tables 4 and 5 are representative of the area.

Table 4: Total Population Study Map – Kentucky and Kentucky South

| Demographics                   | Kentucky | Kentucky South |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| Estimated Population           | 158      | 125            |
| Median Age                     | 49       | 46             |
| Median Weekly household Income | \$1,187  | \$1,274        |
| Total Dwellings                | 80       | 58             |
| Education                      | Kentucky | Kentucky South |

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats>



|                                    |                 |                       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Bachelor Degree level and above    | 26              | 16                    |
| Advanced Diploma and Diploma level | 11              | 17                    |
| Certificate level III              | 18              | 14                    |
| Year 12                            | 19              | 6                     |
| <b>Occupation</b>                  | <b>Kentucky</b> | <b>Kentucky South</b> |
| Managers                           | 24              | 15                    |
| Professionals                      | 11              | 10                    |
| Labourers                          | 13              | 11                    |
| Technicians and Trades Workers     | 8               | 5                     |
| <b>Industry</b>                    | <b>Kentucky</b> | <b>Kentucky South</b> |
| Sheep-Beef Cattle Farming          | 8               | 3                     |
| Shearing Services                  | 5               | 0                     |
| Sheep Farming (Specialised)        | 3               | 5                     |
| Beef Cattle Farming (Specialised)  | 3               | 4                     |
| Other Grocery Wholesaling          | 0               | 4                     |
| Veterinary Services                | 0               | 3                     |
| Meat Processing                    | 3               | 0                     |
| <b>Home Ownership</b>              | <b>Kentucky</b> | <b>Kentucky South</b> |
| Owned outright                     | 23              | 22                    |
| Owned with a mortgage              | 24              | 15                    |
| Rented                             | 13              | 10                    |

*Table 5: Total Population Study Map – Wollun and Bendemeer*

|                                    |               |                  |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>Demographics</b>                | <b>Wollun</b> | <b>Bendemeer</b> |
| Estimated Population               | 67            | 492              |
| Median Age                         | 37            | 49               |
| Median Weekly household Income     | \$1,291       | \$905            |
| Total Dwellings                    | 27            | 230              |
| <b>Education</b>                   | <b>Wollun</b> | <b>Bendemeer</b> |
| Bachelor Degree level and above    | -             | 46               |
| Advanced Diploma and Diploma level | -             | 22               |
| Certificate level III              | -             | 62               |
| Year 12                            | -             | 35               |

| Occupation                               | Wollun | Bendemeer |
|--|--------|-----------|
| Managers                                 | -      | 47        |
| Professionals                            | -      | 29        |
| Labourers                                | -      | 44        |
| Technicians and Trades Workers           | -      | 28        |
| Industry                                 | Wollun | Bendemeer |
| Beef Cattle Farming (Specialised)        | -      | 16        |
| Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals) | -      | 14        |
| Sheep Farming (Specialised)              | -      | 12        |
| Sheep-Beef Cattle Farming                | -      | 11        |
| Pubs, Taverns and Bars                   | -      | 7         |
| Home Ownership                           | Wollun | Bendemeer |
| Owned outright                           | -      | 84        |
| Owned with a mortgage                    | -      | 57        |
| Rented                                   | -      | 38        |

## 3. COMMUNITY RELATIONS STRATEGY

### 3.1 Needs-based approach

Each key stakeholder has a different need across each phase of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub lifecycle. To address this nuance, a needs-based approach is described for each of the key stakeholders to this project in Table 5.

*Table 6: Key stakeholders*

| Stakeholder Group  | Overview   | Objectives –<br>Needs based approach  | Activities –<br>per development phase  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Host Landowners  | Residents who are hosting wind turbines, part of the solar farm and/or a battery on their land.  | Ongoing communication and discussions as project progresses.<br>Contribution to the project's progress, ability to provide local knowledge, advice and input.<br>Involvement in development and delivery of Community Benefit-sharing Scheme  | One-on-one meetings<br>Landowner updates & dinners<br>Letterbox drops (or email) with updates<br>Invitations & involvement in community events   |
| Adjacent neighbours of wind turbine host landholders that were involved in the landholder group from its inception or shortly thereafter | Adjacent neighbours who were involved in the initial landholder group discussions, but cannot host wind turbines, solar or battery technologies due to the smaller size of their property.                   | Ongoing communication and discussions as project progresses.<br>Contribution to the project's progress, ability to provide local knowledge, advice and input.<br>Involvement in development and delivery of Community Benefit-sharing Scheme  | Benefit-sharing: minimum payment throughout operations of the project<br>One-on-one engagement<br>Invitation to be provided a private photomontage<br>Letterbox drop (or email) with updates<br>Community Information Sessions<br>Invitation to community events |
| Solar near neighbours: 0 – 4km   | Residents owning land adjacent to the project site have the potential to be affected by the visual impact of the solar farm and the noise from heavy vehicle traffic associated with the construction phase. | To create and maintain a close connection with direct adjacent neighbours of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub.<br>To keep neighbours informed about the project from early in the project planning process and provide opportunities to raise issues and provide feedback.<br>To ensure that neighbours share in the benefits of the project. | Benefit-sharing based on visual impact or proximity of wind turbine generators to the respective neighbours' dwellings<br>One-on-one engagement<br>Letterbox drop (or email) with updates<br>Community Information Sessions<br>Invitation to community events    |

| Stakeholder Group                                 | Overview  | Objectives –<br>Needs based approach  | Activities –<br>per development phase  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Wind near neighbours:<br>2 – 4km                  | Residents owning land adjacent to the project site have the potential to be affected by the visual impact of the wind farm and/or battery and the noise from heavy vehicle traffic associated with the construction phase.              | To create and maintain a close connection with direct adjacent neighbours of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub.<br>To keep neighbours informed about the project from early in the project planning process and provide opportunities to raise issues and provide feedback.<br>To ensure that neighbours share in the benefits of the project. | Benefit-sharing based on visual impact or proximity of wind turbine generators to the respective neighbours' dwellings<br>One-on-one engagement<br>Invitation to be provided a private photomontage depending on the distance and aspect of their dwelling<br>Letterbox drop (or email) with updates<br>Community Information Sessions<br>Invitation to community events |
| Wind near neighbours:<br>4 – 8km                  | Residents owning land adjacent to the project site have the potential to be affected to some extent by the visual impact of the wind farm and potentially some noise from heavy vehicle traffic associated with the construction phase. | To keep neighbours informed about the project from early in the project planning phase<br>To provide opportunities to raise issues and provide feedback   | One-on-one engagement<br>Letterbox drop (or email) with updates<br>Community Information Sessions<br>Invitation to community events  |
| Neighbourhood<br>(Kentucky, Wollun and Bendemeer) | The local people living within the Kentucky, Wollun and Bendemeer townships adjacent to the project.  | To keep the local community informed about the project from early in the project planning phase<br>To provide opportunities to raise issues and provide feedback<br>To involve in development and delivery of benefit-sharing strategy that will support the local neighbourhood  | Benefit-sharing<br>Newspaper advertisements<br>Community Information Sessions<br>Invitation to community events  |
| Councils  | We will work with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council and Walcha Council to shape the Community Engagement Strategy and Benefit Sharing Program.  | To ensure a positive and collaborative relationship with the LGA that can support the long-term goals of the community.   | One-on-one engagement<br>Project briefings & updates<br>Community Information Sessions<br>Pre-DA meeting   |
| State MPs   | The Hon. Kevin Anderson MP (Tamworth)   | To ensure the local member is kept updated  | Project briefing in person by Head of Development  |

| Stakeholder Group                                    | Overview  | Objectives –<br>Needs based approach   | Activities –<br>per development phase   |
|--|---|--|---|
|  | The Hon. Adam Marshall<br>MP (Northern Tablelands)  | about the project and its<br>progress  | Invitation to community<br>events   |
| Federal MP   | The Hon. Barnaby Joyce,<br>MP (New England)   | To ensure the local<br>member is kept updated<br>about the project and its<br>progress   | Project update in person by<br>head of Development<br>Invitation to community<br>events   |
| Traditional Owners<br>– Indigenous<br>community      | We will seek to engage and<br>understand what elements<br>of the project are culturally<br>relevant and/or sensitive.   | Engaging with local<br>Aboriginal groups beyond<br>planning requirements,<br>such as Cultural Heritage<br>Management Plans.  | Invitation to co-design<br>Indigenous Participation<br>Plan<br>Site Visit<br>Invitation to community<br>events  |
| Rural Fire Service<br>(RFS)                          | Representatives from the<br>New England RFS district  | To ensure project activities<br>abide by safety and<br>regulatory requirements   | Provide indicative design<br>plans and updates on the<br>project to prepare for any<br>local fire and emergency<br>safety requirements                      |
| Schools, TAFEs and<br>Universities                   | Kentucky Public School<br>Bendemeer Public School<br>Woolbrook Public School<br>Rocky River Public School<br>Uralla Central School<br>St. Joseph's Primary<br>School, Uralla<br>Walcha Central School<br>St. Patrick's School Walcha<br>TAFE NSW Tamworth<br>TAFE NSW Armidale<br>University of New England<br>(Armidale) | To ensure organisations are<br>updated on education and<br>vocational opportunities<br>associated with the project.<br>To use the opportunity of a<br>local renewable project to<br>dovetail relevant &<br>practical educational<br>content into the syllabus. | Information and project<br>updates provided and<br>invitation to future<br>networking engagement<br><br>Opportunities for site visits<br>for local schools. |
| Business groups /<br>industry<br>stakeholders        | We will seek to engage and<br>collaborate with local<br>businesses and business<br>networks around what<br>opportunities may be<br>available such as sourcing<br>for the wind farm, solar<br>farm and/or battery<br>development.  | To ensure Neoen is<br>creating of local renewable<br>energy projects.  | To ensure project activities<br>abide by safety and<br>regulatory requirements  |
| Wind farm, solar<br>farm and/or<br>battery opponents | Friends of Kentucky Action<br>Group   | To be accessible, help to<br>address concerns<br>proactively, and to have a<br>best practice complaints<br>system in place.  | Complaints process<br>implementation<br>Letterbox drop (or email)<br>with updates   |
| Advocacy groups                                      | Sustainability groups<br>Community energy groups  | Discussion on community<br>energy and zero emissions<br>targets  | Update / presentation on<br>project   |

| Stakeholder Group       | Overview  | Objectives –<br>Needs based approach   | Activities –<br>per development phase                             |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|
|                         |   | Potential for partnerships   | Invitations to community events                                   |
| Community organisations | Z-Net Uralla<br>The Rotary Club of Uralla<br>Walcha Rotary Club<br>Uralla Lions Club<br>Walcha Lions Club | To understand a project and be able to update their members<br>To participate in / benefit from Community Benefit-sharing Scheme | Update/presentation on project<br>Invitations to community events |

## 3.2 Facilitating opportunities for involvement

### 3.2.1 Local Participation

One of our key areas of focus for the broader local community is facilitating the involvement of local jobseekers and businesses in the construction and operation of the wind farm, solar farm and battery to ensure a strong regional economic benefit.

During feasibility & planning/approvals phases expressions of Interest for work are invited and received through adverts, information days and the project website. A job interest register for internal use is created to ensure reference during construction and operation phases can be made to list of interested workers.

In the pre-construction phase a Local Employment & Supplier Networking Session will be held locally, with invitations going out to those on the job interest register and local employment agencies, ensuring they have the opportunity to meet with the appointed construction contractors.

### 3.2.2 Indigenous Participation

During the development stage we engage with traditional owners and, depending on local context and requirements, we co-develop a Cultural Heritage Management Plan or a Cultural Heritage Arrangement.

### 3.2.3 Education

We explore opportunities to work with local schools and colleges, both at primary and secondary, to support education in renewable energy generation, the electricity grid and electricity market.

During operations we offer opportunities for site visits from local schools, and will be developing more specific educational content, materials and visitor packs in 2021.

## 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

### 4.1 Host landholder group consultation

The Thunderbolt Energy Hub project presents a unique approach to the engagement of host- and near-neighbour landholders. Following the engagement of Kyabra Station as host landholder to the north of the New England Highway, Neoen has been working together with a landholder group to the north and south of the New England Highway. The aim of working with a group of landholders in the Kentucky and Bendemeer region rather than individually was to:

- Enable transparent discussions;
- Provide all landholders with fair financial compensation;
- Provide an avenue to ask questions and share early feedback in a group setting, including concerns, preferences and questions; and
- Be inclusive of all landholders within the group, including those that would not be able to host infrastructure on their properties.

#### 4.1.1 Background

Prior to Neoen's first engagement with the landholders in the Kentucky and Bendemeer regions, a group of landholders on the southern-side of the New England Highway had formed as a result of discussions with another renewable energy developer. This group consisted of landholders that the previous developer considered to host wind turbines on their properties and smaller landholders with adjacent landholdings that were not considered as suitable hosts by this developer.

In the preliminary stages of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub development (late 2018 and early 2019), the project involved only Kyabra Station as a host landholder. When Neoen engaged with the southern-side landholder group in early 2019 this was to inform and consult with them early as immediate project neighbours. The group showed a keen interest in the project and later expressed their wish to also participate as host landholders based on Neoen's transparent and long-term approach to development. Neoen welcomed the landholder group participation, thus increasing the size of the proposed project. In the invitation extended to this landholder group, Neoen provided all landholders in the group an opportunity to participate in hosting the project regardless of the size of their land holdings.

#### 4.1.2 Working with the landholder group

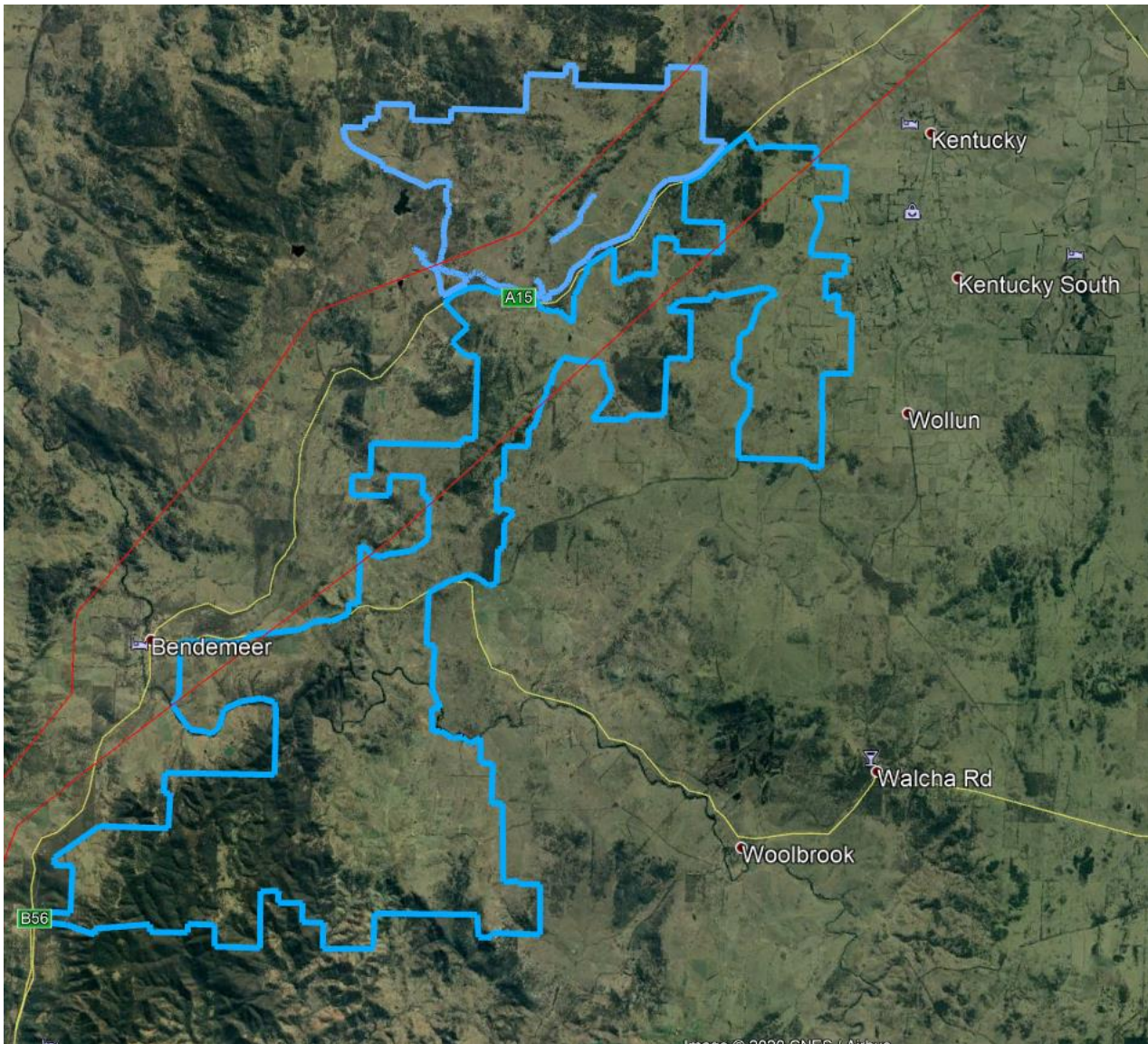
Neoen views working with a landholder group, including those that will not be able to host infrastructure, as advantageous as:

- The group feels a sense of ownership towards the project;
- All landholders receive the same information at the same time;
- Open and transparent discussions can be held within the group and with Neoen;
- Group workshops could be conducted, considering everyone's preferences within the group;
- Smaller, non-host landholders, are also included in early discussion and are able to provide their feedback, which feeds into the early wind farm and solar farm design; and
- Smaller, non-host landholders do not feel as though they are "missing out" as they will also receive financial compensation throughout the operational phase of the project.

The original landholder group boundary is shown on Figure 4 below.



Figure 4 Original host landholder group boundary



A number of landholders to the east of the New England Highway, which were not part of the initial landholder group, either did not wish to join the group or had already signed contracts with other renewable energy developers and thus could not join the group.

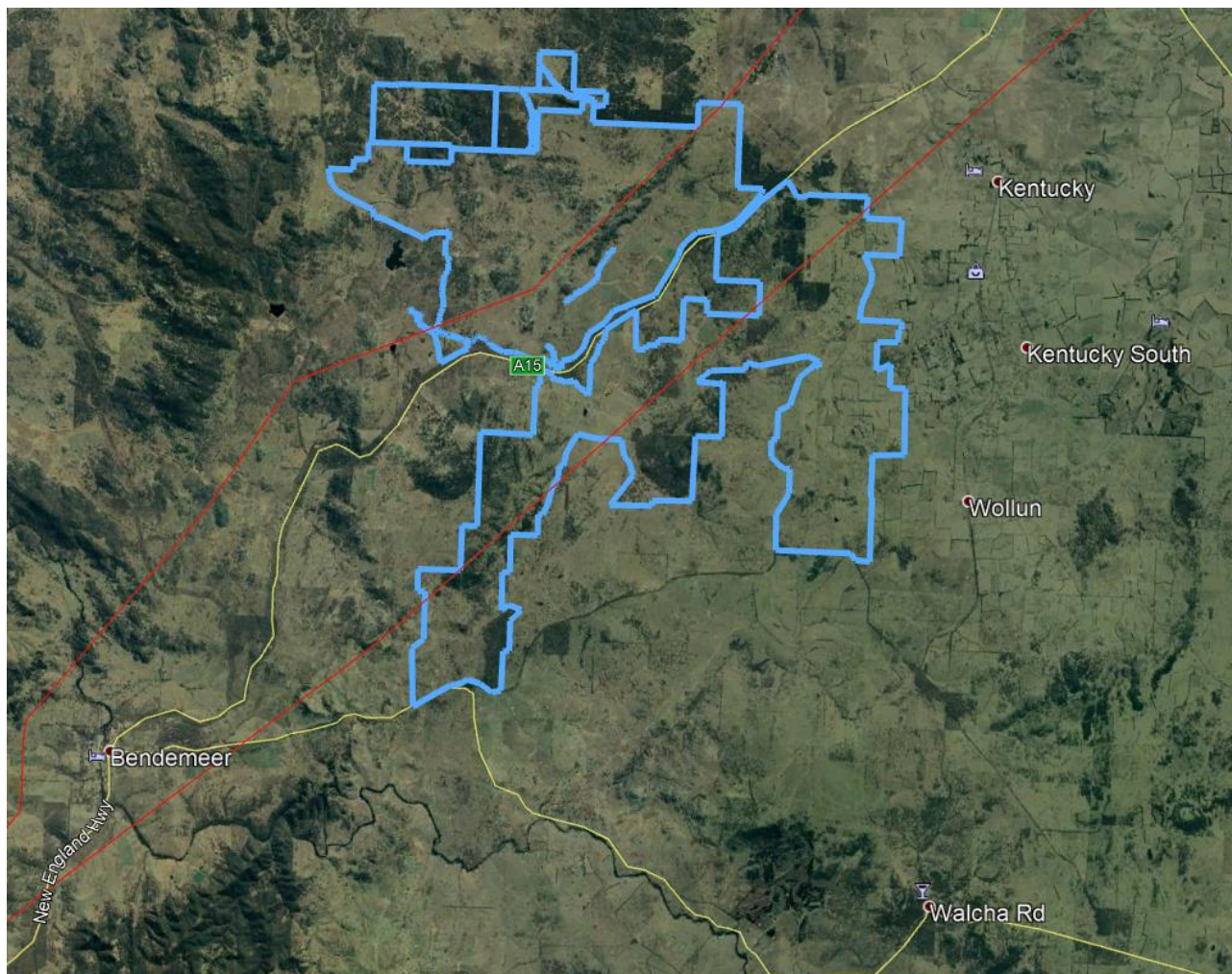
Neoen hosted a number of landholder group workshops in 2019 and 2020 to explain the development process of a wind and solar farm, including the specialist studies that would be undertaken, community consultation, approvals required as well as estimated timeframes for each phase up until the operations phase. Preliminary wind resource maps, wind turbine layout and solar farm layouts were shown to the group and feedback was sought regarding the early designs. This allowed Neoen to understand and address landholder preferences early regarding potential access track routes, distances from wind turbines to houses and sheds as well as exclusion zones on properties.

To ensure effective and clear communication could be maintained within the large landholder group, Neoen created a landholder only webpage as a separate section within the main project website. This page is only accessible by Neoen and host landholders and allows Neoen to easily share documents, maps, answers to commonly asked questions, meeting minutes, a summary of next steps in the development phase, and updates and news with the group. Uploading this information to the landholder only section of the website ensures that all host landholders have access to the latest information at the same time and to ensure that information can be easily accessed and referred to if and when required.



Following several months of discussions and negotiations between the landholder group and Neoen, a final landholder group was formed. This final landholder group is shown on Figure 5 below. Landholders, who were primarily to the southern side of the Oxley Highway, chose not to progress with Neoen's landholder group and instead commenced discussions with a different renewable energy developer.

Figure 5 Final host landholder land outline



As the boundary of the final host landholder group is now finalised, Neoen is able to determine which of the smaller landholders, who were part of the landholder group discussions, would be adjacent neighbours of the wind farm host landholders. Although the properties of these neighbours are too small to host renewable energy infrastructure, these neighbours are invited to remain as part of the landholder group and are also offered financial compensation. These landholders' properties are located on the New England Highway.

#### 4.1.3 Consultation with near neighbours along the New England Highway

There are six neighbouring properties along the New England Highway that are located in the centre of the proposed wind farm development (dwellings 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 41). These properties are relatively small and not suitable to host wind turbine infrastructure.

Neoen has engaged with these six near neighbours from early 2020 by inviting them along to landholder group workshops and facilitating a separate group meeting at which these neighbours (and other residents within the Kentucky community) could discuss their concerns about the proposed wind and solar farm. Neoen recognises the importance of engaging with these particular neighbours very early on in the development process due to the proximity of their dwellings to the proposed wind farm and possible higher visual impact. One-on-one meetings were also offered to these neighbours to discuss their feedback.

and concerns. Two of the six neighbours have taken up the offer for a one-on-one meeting to date. One of the six neighbours expressed during the one-on-one meeting that he was very supportive of the project and would enjoy the view onto the proposed wind turbines. The other five neighbours on the other hand are concerned about the development, with the primary concerns being visual impact, potential noise impact and potential loss of property value. One of these concerned neighbours also founded the Friends of Kentucky Action Group (FOKAG), in opposition of the development.

Neoen is currently working with each of these neighbours to ensure that their feedback and concerns are considered in the upcoming specialist assessments and further development of the wind farm layout. Neoen has also offered that photomontages could be created from each of these neighbouring houses such that they may have a better understanding of what the proposed wind farm may look like from their dwellings.

## 4.2 Neighbour consultation

As the Thunderbolt Energy Hub has now reached the early stages of the Planning & Approvals phase within development, initial neighbour consultations have been undertaken. This involved contacting 57 neighbours within a 0-8km distance to the wind farm via phone to inform them of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub project and offer one-on-one in-person meetings if they wished to do so. This number does not include those neighbours who were originally part of the landholder group, but chose not to proceed with Neoen's project. These neighbours will also continue to be informed about Neoen's project and invited to attend community information sessions. Of the 57 neighbours contacted, 27 were met in person throughout late July to early October 2020. Further neighbours will be contacted in the upcoming months.

The majority of the in-person meetings were held in private homes, while some were held in public locations such as cafes. Three neighbours talked to Neoen at the community drop-in session in September 2020. Neighbours that have not been met in person to date either could not schedule a meeting yet, did not want to meet as they did not feel the project would affect them, or felt that their questions could be captured through a phone conversation and by Neoen sending an information in the mail. Preliminary project information booklets were mailed to those neighbours that could not meet and requested further information. The figures for each are as follows:

- Neighbours that did not want to meet and did not want to receive information in the mail or via email: 5
- Neighbours that did not want to meet, but wished to receive information in the mail or via email: 11
- Neighbours that would like to meet, but could not schedule a meeting to date: 14

The main questions and concerns that were raised during these meetings and how these were addressed by Neoen are summarised in Table 8. A number of these questions are also outlined in the FAQ section of Neoen's community information booklet and on the project website which was provided during neighbour meetings and at the first Community Information Day. The percentage of people concerned about each of these issues is summarised in Table 7 below.

*Table 7 One-on-one neighbour meeting outcomes - key concerns about the proposed wind farm*

| Description of concern  | Percentage of responses |
|---|-------------------------|
| Decreasing or increasing land values of neighbouring properties | 33 %                    |
| Visual Impact   | 33 %                    |
| Construction disruption (dust, noise, traffic, etc)             | 22 %                    |
| Noise impact  | 33 %                    |
| Impact on the local environment and/or land use                 | 19 %                    |
| Decommissioning   | 4 %                     |

| Description of concern | Percentage of responses |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Other concerns         | 22 %                    |
| No concerns            | 33 %                    |

The 'other' concerns that were raised about the wind farm included:

- Potential health impacts – 1 person;
- Whether all proposed wind farms would be able to connect to the existing 330kV transmission lines – 1 person who is signed on with another renewable energy developer;
- Disruption to their phone and/or internet service – 1 person; and
- Potential impact on local water resources during construction (in particular the Kentucky Creek), which is relied upon by many within the community, particularly throughout the drought – 1 person.

## 4.2.1 NSW Visual Impact Assessment Bulletin

As part of the one-on-one conversations held from early October 2020 onwards, specific questions regarding potential visual impact were asked in line with the NSW Visual Assessment Bulletin. These included:

- What are some of the key landscape features, areas of scenic quality and key public viewpoints valued by you?
- Are there any landscape features in the area that you particularly value and why?
- Are there any specific viewing locations or landscape features in the area surrounding the Project that you value highly or believe may require conservation or protection?
- Are you concerned about a particular view from your property or visual impacts to the area in general?

The responses received to date indicate that there are no key landscape features, areas of scenic quality or key public viewpoints in the local region surrounding the proposed Thunderbolt Energy Hub project. Some neighbours living in Kentucky and Kentucky South mentioned that they very much enjoyed the views onto the hill to the north-east of Kentucky called Harnham Hill; however as the Thunderbolt Energy Hub is proposed to the west of Kentucky, this would not present an issue in their views. The neighbours that are concerned about visual impact of the wind farm are concerned about the visual impact from their homes only. The concern relates to how the wind turbines may impact the view from their homes over the hills and fields generally, rather than disrupting their view of a particular landscape feature or key viewpoint.

No concerns were raised to date about the solar farm component. A number of neighbours asked whether the solar farm would take up the whole property and whether it can still be used for farming purposes. Neoen explained that solar panel rows are typically 5-7m apart, which means that Merino sheep are able to graze between the solar array. Information on Neoen's operating solar farms was also shared, all of which have sheep grazing amongst the rows of solar panels.

A local community liaison consultant has been engaged by Neoen in late September 2020, who lives within 5km from the proposed project in Kentucky. Her role will be to assist Neoen with the one-on-one neighbour engagement meetings and other community liaison activities during the development phase.

## 4.2.2 Priority concerns identified by neighbours

Table 8 Key neighbour concerns and Neoen's response

| Description of concern  | Neoen's response to concern  |
|---|--|
| Decreasing or increasing land values of neighbouring properties | Neoen shared information about a study commissioned by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and published by planning consultancy Urbis in July 2016, which suggests that renewable energy infrastructure, including both wind and |

| Description of concern                              | Neoen's response to concern   |
|---|---|
|   | <p>solar farms do not impact the land value of adjacent properties extensively.</p> <p>Neoen furthermore responded that further investigations into other studies would be undertaken to determine if any changes in land values of properties surrounding other existing renewable energy projects have been observed.</p>   |
| Visual Impact                                       | <p>Neoen responded by noting that the visual impact from the nearest receivers (and others with a particular concern) would be studied during the development phase through a visual impact assessment in line with the NSW Visual Impact Assessment Bulletin.</p> <p>Photomontages could be provided to near neighbours and those that are particularly concerned about visual impact to receive an impression of how the wind turbines may look from their dwellings. The wind farm layout may be adjusted if any adverse visual impacts are identified.</p> <p>Additionally, Neoen asked neighbours specific questions regarding potential visual impact in line with the NSW Visual Assessment Bulletin during the meetings to identify if there are any key landscape features, scenic quality and/or key public viewpoints that are valued by the individuals. This is outlined in Section 4.2.2.1.</p> |
| Proximity to houses                                 | <p>Appropriate distances to neighbouring houses will be determined based on both the visual impact study as well as the noise study. These studies will assess the visual and noise impacts to near neighbours and allow Neoen to modify the wind turbine layout to prevent adverse impacts to neighbours. Further consultation would occur with neighbours throughout these studies.</p>   |
| Construction disruption (dust, noise, traffic, etc) | <p>Neoen responded by noting that, where possible, existing roads would be utilised as much as possible. Roads will need to be upgraded and maintained by Neoen throughout the project's lifecycle, which may be of benefit to neighbours where current roads are in poorer condition.</p> <p>Neoen would additionally determine the impacts of construction activities on near neighbours as part of its traffic and transport specialist assessment to determine the most efficient transport routes to site, while minimising disruption to neighbours. Compensation for near neighbours who are most affected throughout construction may also be considered.</p>   |
| Noise impact  | <p>Specialist noise studies will be undertaken to determine the noise of turbines at various receiver points, including the dwellings of near neighbours. Outcomes of this study will inform changes required to the wind farm layout such that wind turbines meet the NSW legislated noise guidelines.</p>   |
| Impact on the local environment                     | <p>Neoen responded by outlining that detailed ecological studies would be undertaken during multiple seasons throughout the year to determine how the wind farm and solar farm may impact flora and fauna species. The wind farm and solar farm layout can subsequently be revised to minimise and avoid</p>  |



| Description of concern  | Neoen's response to concern   |
|---|---|
|   | adverse impacts to species, particularly those that are considered to be threatened or vulnerable.  |
| Unfair sharing of financial benefits  | <p>Neoen will assess the impact of the wind farm and solar farm on near neighbours, both from a visual impact and from a construction disruption point of view.</p> <p>Near neighbours, who were part of the landholder group, are considered to be involved in the project and receive annual compensation agreed with Neoen.</p> <p>Other near neighbours may also receive financial compensation depending on the impact of the project on their property.</p> <p>Additionally, Neoen aims to further support the wider community by involving as many local contractors and suppliers from the local community throughout the construction phase. A construction job register is established and a local contractor and supplier information session will be held prior to construction commencing.</p> <p>Finally, a Community Benefit-Sharing Program be established by Neoen, which is intended to benefit initiatives and projects within the community throughout the 25-30 years of operations.</p> |
| Potential health impacts  | Neoen referred concerned neighbours and members of the community to research literature on this topic. To date 17 reviews have been undertaken by leading health and research organisations, who concluded that there is no evidence linking wind turbines with health effects. Such organisations include the World Health Organisation, Australia's National Health and Medical Research Centre, the UK Health Protection Agency and the US National Research Council.  |
| Decommissioning, lack of clear Government regulation around clean-up of sites | Neoen is a long-term owner and operator of all of its wind farms, solar farms and batteries. Neoen is responsible for decommissioning the renewable energy infrastructure. This is also built into the agreements with the host landholders.  |

Some neighbours felt that after the in-person discussion with Neoen and learning about the project in further detail, they were less concerned than prior to the meeting. Some neighbours remained concerned and are not in favour of the project.

## 4.3 Community-wide consultation

In February 2020, prior to one-on-one neighbour meetings commencing, a meeting was held with a concerned group within the community to discuss some of the key concerns by these residents. The group consisted mainly of adjacent neighbours and some community members who live a few kilometres from the project. The key concerns were sent to Neoen prior to the meeting, such that Neoen could present as much information as possible in response. Some questions and responses included:

- Grid connection – how will it work and is there sufficient capacity?
- Does Neoen receive Government subsidies?
- Can aerial firefighting occur around wind turbines?
- Will Neoen decommission the wind and solar farm at its own cost?
- Will roads be improved?
- Do wind farms cause property values to decrease?
- Can wind be accurately measured throughout a drought with different weather patterns than usual?

The concerns were addressed in detail at the meeting and further information shared about the development process. Key issues, as per Table 8, were also discussed. The outcome was that some attendees felt less concerned following the meeting, while others preferred to discuss particular items further during one-on-one meetings.

A wider Community Information Day was hosted in mid-September 2020. The wider community was invited to attend this meeting through advertising in local newspapers and the Thunderbolt Energy Hub project website. Community members that Neoen had previously spoken to and who had expressed an interest in being kept informed of the project were informed directly about the Community Information Day through sending a flyer by email or mail. Neoen displayed project information posters in a local cafe for members of the public to learn more about the proposal and provided feedback verbally and/or through a feedback survey. This allowed Neoen to collect further information about the main concerns of the community regarding the project as well as to seek feedback on which local community projects and initiatives could be sponsored by the project's Community Benefit Fund.

Concerns raised and responses provided by Neoen are per Table 8. Feedback surveys were submitted by neighbours to the proposed Thunderbolt Energy Hub project before, during and following the Community Information Day. A total of 38 feedback surveys have been received to date. The views of neighbours and members of the public are summarised below.

Overall level of support for the Thunderbolt Energy Hub project: **7.8** out of 10 (where 0 means full opposition to the project and 10 means full support of the project).

Table 9 Survey Response: What are the main concerns about the wind farm?

| Description of concern                             | Percentage of responses |
|--|-------------------------|
| Visual Impact                                      | 35.1 %                  |
| Noise  | 8.1 %                   |
| Disturbances (such as traffic) during construction | 37.8 %                  |
| Effects on land use or land values                 | 48.6 %                  |
| Effects on natural areas and habitats              | 45.9 %                  |
| No concerns  | 29.7 %                  |
| Other  | 13.5 %                  |

The respondents who selected 'other' in response to this question, raised the following other main concerns about the wind farm proposal:

- Impact of land values based on the proximity to the project;
- Social tensions/conflict within the community;
- Decommissioning; and
- Lack of clear Government regulation around decommissioning of sites.

## 4.4 Agency consultation

### 4.4.1 Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE)

Neoen and Umwelt met with representatives of DPIE on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to discuss the proposal.

DPIE raised the following main concerns:

- **Visual Impact:** DPIE is concerned about the visual impact of the wind farm on adjacent neighbours due to the large number of near neighbours within a 4km radius of the proposal. Visual impact studies must clearly assess the visual impact from receivers within a 4km and a 8km radius of the wind turbines in line with requirements of the Visual Bulletin.
- **Cumulative Impact:** DPIE is concerned of the cumulative impact of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub and other renewable energy projects that are proposed in the region. Impacts include visual, noise,

traffic and construction disruption. A detailed map was requested showing the distances of Thunderbolt Energy Hub relative to the other renewable energy projects.

#### 4.4.2 Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD)

Neoen and Umwelt had discussions with members of both the North West BCD Office and the North East BCD Office on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to discuss the project and request further information about particular requirements that BCD may have in regards to the seasonal ecological studies. Due to the project covering two BCD regions, BCD informed us that Neoen's point of contact for future correspondence would be the North West Office, who would then share this information with the North East Office.

BCD also provided advice in regards to the installation of anabats on wind monitoring masts to record bat calls during ecological surveying. The preference is for three anabats to be installed on an 80m wind monitoring mast: one at ground level and two at height. This will allow sufficient information to be gathered about the heights at which bats typically fly in the project region and therefore to determine if and to what extent the proposed wind farm may impact bats.

#### 4.4.3 Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW)

Neoen informed TfNSW northern region of the proposed development. A preliminary information booklet was shared as well as information about the Community Information Day in September 2020. Further consultation will occur with TfNSW representatives during the EIS phase once the traffic and transport assessment commences. This will then involve discussions with TfNSW with regards to key haulage and delivery routes, traffic volume and proposed site access points. TfNSW have also requested to review the Traffic Impact Assessment and Construction Traffic Management Plan once these become available.

#### 4.4.4 TransGrid

Neoen commenced discussions with TransGrid in late 2019 through the submission of a connection enquiry. In September 2020 a follow-up meeting was conducted to further discuss the preliminary project connection proposed by Neoen; i.e. to connect the Thunderbolt Energy Hub to both existing 330kV transmission lines. Neoen will continue discussions with TransGrid throughout the EIS phase and as further information becomes available on the New England Renewable Energy Zone.

#### 4.4.5 State and Federal Ministers

The Thunderbolt Energy Hub is located within the State electorates of Tamworth and Northern Tablelands and within the Federal electorate of New England. Letters were sent to the respective MPs for each electorate, informing them of the proposed Thunderbolt Energy Hub proposal along with a preliminary project information booklet. Ministers were also informed about the first Community Information Day held in September 2020 in Uralla.

#### 4.4.6 Local Councils

The Thunderbolt Energy Hub is located within the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Tamworth Regional Council and Uralla Shire Council. The project is also very close to the border of the Walcha Council.

Neoen made contact with all three Councils in early July 2020, informing them of the proposed project and that further information would be shared as it becomes available. Information was also sent to each respective Council to inform them about the Community Information Day in September. Neoen offered to give a presentation to Tamworth Regional Council and Uralla Shire Council about the project development to date and to seek the Councils' feedback and questions. While Uralla Shire Council requested a meeting, Tamworth Regional Council preferred to be kept updated via email.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020, Neoen met with representatives of the Uralla Shire Council to discuss the proposed project, including development activities undertaken to date, indicative timelines, proposed numbers of jobs for the community and learning about the proposed community benefits fund. The Council did not raise any particular concerns and is interested to be kept informed and to be involved throughout the project, for example as part of a Community Reference Group if possible. One of the Councillors is currently part of the New England Solar Farm Community Reference Group and another Councillor is their Project Officer. Due to a number of other renewable energy projects being proposed in the region, such as the New England Solar Farm, Uralla Shire Council is generally familiar with renewable energy projects.



## 5. COMMUNITY BENEFIT SHARING

To ensure both short and long-term benefits flow through to the community as a result of the establishment and operation of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub, we establish a Community Benefit Sharing Program (CBSP).

The CBSP will be designed to deliver benefits to key stakeholders in the community in a way that aims to meet their needs and aspirations. Specifically, our objectives are to:

- deliver significant and meaningful improvements to the community surrounding Thunderbolt Energy Hub;
- ensure a wide range of different stakeholder groups benefit from Thunderbolt Energy Hub;
- empower the community to shape the design and implementation of the different initiatives;
- build support for renewable energy in the Kentucky, Bendemeer and Uralla area.

The majority of initiatives will be delivered during the construction and operations phase.

In alignment with Neoen’s organisational vision, it is important that the benefit be a true benefit and be tailored to meet each distinct communities’ need.

From an industry best practice standpoint, several principles are seen as being helpful guides in developing or assessing a benefit sharing strategy, as outlined in Table 10 below<sup>4</sup>:

Table 10: Benefit sharing principles

| Principle   | Description  |
|-------------|--|
| Appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Benefit sharing is tailored to local circumstances, culture and need, helping to address (not create or reinforce) patterns of conflict or inequality. It makes sense and is appropriate in the local context.</li> <li>– The local community provides guidance on how benefit sharing can create a positive, lasting and meaningful impact for their local community. We work with the local community to develop specific benefit sharing strategies that respond to their unique local context and need.</li> </ul>  |
| Flexible    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Benefit sharing is an aspect of project development that will greatly benefit from being open to community involvement, influence and negotiation. Having the flexibility to respond to local context will ensure benefit sharing has the best and biggest local impact.</li> <li>– The lifecycle of renewable energy developments is significant (25 years or more), a lot can change in a community during that period of time. Therefore, it is important to build in flexibility so that benefit sharing can evolve as the community needs do.</li> </ul> |
| Transparent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The benefit sharing strategy is transparently available to the community and provides a clear and understandable rationale for the various programs and who is eligible to participate.</li> <li>– Benefits are freely given for the sake of sharing the proceeds of the project and building relationships. Benefit sharing must not come with conditions of silence or consent.</li> </ul>  |
| Integrated  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Benefit sharing seeks to integrate the project owner/operators as valuable community members by building links and relationships into the community.</li> <li>– The benefit sharing approach is integrated with Neoen’s broader approach to community engagement and project development.</li> </ul>  |

<sup>4</sup> Lane, T & Hicks, J, (forthcoming) Benefit Sharing Options for Renewable Energy, 2019, Clean Energy Council

| Principle           | Description   |
|---------------------|---|
| Mutually Beneficial | – The approach is designed to bring mutual benefit to local communities and the project.  |
| Proportionate       | – The benefits are perceived as being proportionate to the scale of the project and the level of change or disturbance experienced by local people. Given community members living closest to projects experience greater impacts, they should receive a proportionate benefit. |
| Strategic           | – Create a positive legacy in the local community. Look to bring ongoing and lasting value to the local area. Integrate benefit sharing opportunities with broader strategies by building local partnerships.   |
| Accountable         | – Systems and processes are deployed to ensure the credibility and reputation of the benefit sharing program.<br>– Benefit sharing is managed in a transparent and accountable way that involves local stakeholders.  |

## 5.1 Scope of the CBSP

This CBSP does not include:

- required activities under our permit conditions such as for visual screening
- annual council rates payments or fire levies (where applicable)
- host landowner payments;
- the value of local jobs and investment.

However, it is worth noting that these activities will all deliver significant value to the community. \$200,000 is the total amount for Thunderbolt Energy Hub CBSP annually based on the current size of the project.

Neoen have a number of mechanisms to enable benefits to be shared in a meaningful and equitable way. Community input will be sought into these options (and any other local ideas) at the community information sessions held in the lead up to planning permit submission and via the community feedback survey. As there are a number of other renewable energy projects being developed in the region, Neoen plans to coordinate with these projects to identify common opportunities for the community benefit funds and ensure that funding is provided to a range of initiatives within the local communities.

The final program is likely be a mix of 3-4 benefit-sharing mechanisms from the following list:

- Near Neighbour payments or similar
- Community Benefit Fund
- Lower energy bills – through solar and/or storage subsidies
- Lower energy bills - through partnership with an energy retailer
- Community co-investment
- Investment to address specific local issue – e.g. poor mobile coverage, electricity blackouts