

13 October 2021

Dear Nicole,

I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with a brief update on how the Thunderbolt Energy Hub has been progressing since your review of the SEARs in November/December 2020.

### Project Update

Based on the feedback received from the local community, Councils and MPs, we have decided to make some changes to the Thunderbolt Energy Hub project. The Thunderbolt Energy Hub was proposed to consist of a 380MW wind farm, 120 MW solar farm and a 400MW battery in the Scoping Reports submitted to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) in November 2020. We are now proposing to instead deliver the project in two stages as illustrated by Figure 1 below.

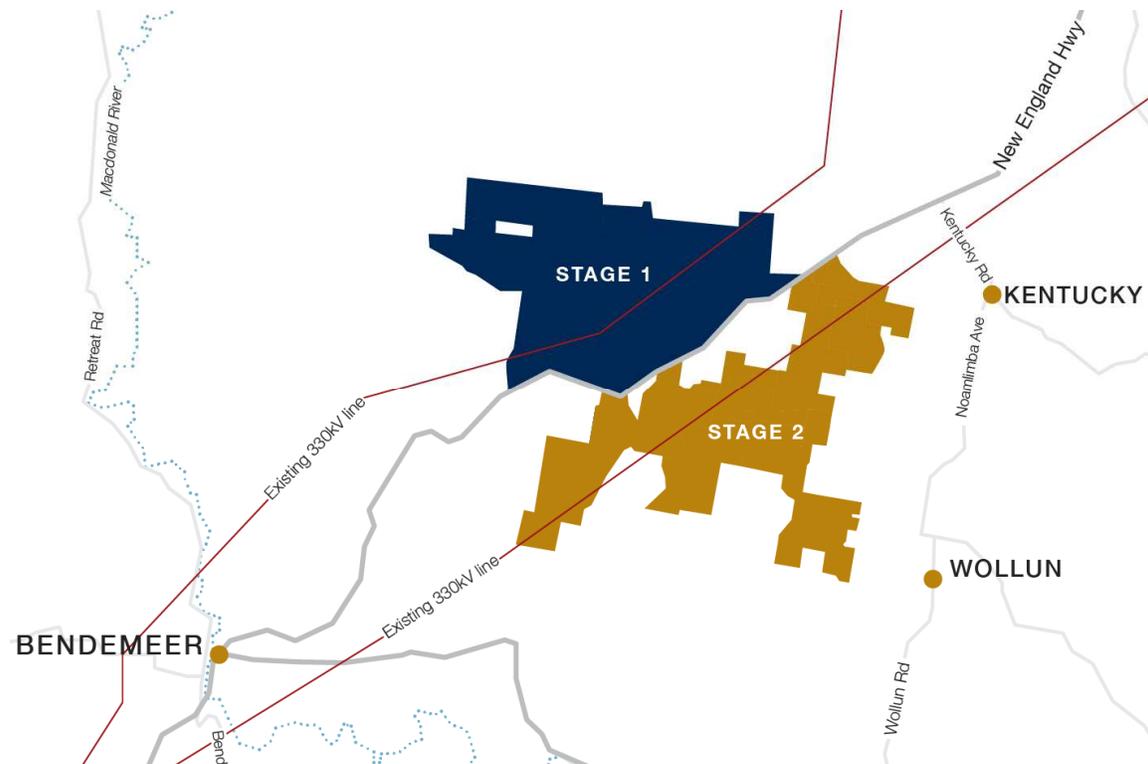


Figure 1 – Thunderbolt Energy Hub Stage 1 and Stage 2



Stage 1 will include properties to the north-west of the New England Hwy. The size of stage 1 is proposed to be 192 MW of wind energy, equivalent to 32 wind turbines. Each wind turbine is proposed to have a capacity of 6 MW with a maximum tip height of 260m. Neoen is planning to submit the Development Application (DA) for stage 1 to NSW DPIE in early November 2021.

Stage 2 is proposed to include properties to the south-east of the New England Hwy. The size of stage 2 is proposed to be 150 MW of wind energy, equivalent to 25 wind turbines. The wind turbines are proposed to be of a similar size to the wind turbines proposed in stage 1. Stage 2 may also include the 120 MW solar farm. Separate DAs will be submitted to NSW DPIE for the stage 2 wind farm and solar farm respectively in 2022.

Neoen would like to prove its professionalism, gain the community's trust and prove our contribution socially & economically through the development of stage 1. Stage 2 will be based on the success of stage 1.

Neoen is committed to early, ongoing, participatory and responsive community engagement. Neoen will continue further in-depth community consultation throughout 2021 and 2022 to further address questions and concerns raised by neighbours and community members. Over 70 neighbours and community members have been met either in a group setting or a one-on-one setting to date. This has been supported by Neoen's local community liaison representative Anne-Marie Ward. The level of support for the project is 74% based on 58 feedback survey responses received to date.

### **Community Benefits Fund**

Neoen has announced a community benefits fund of \$100,000 per annum for stage 1 of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub. This fund will be administered throughout the operations phase of the project and is designed to benefit the communities surrounding the project.

### **Neighbour Benefit Sharing**

Neoen has also recently publicly announced its neighbour benefits program<sup>1</sup>. This program is transparent, easy-to-understand and equitable and will provide neighbours up to 3.5km from wind turbines with annual payments throughout the operations phase of the project. Payments are made on a sliding-scale based on the distance of their dwelling to wind turbines. The total amounts paid to neighbours are meaningful and will allow them to diversify their income. It was described as a best-practice neighbour program.<sup>2</sup>

### **Community Consultative Committee (CCC)**

The CCC committee has been established in line with NSW DPIE's requirements. Two meetings have been held in August and September 2021 respectively. Meeting minutes are published on the Thunderbolt Energy Hub website<sup>3</sup>.

### **Community Information Sessions**

Neoen has hosted a number of community events throughout 2020 and 2021. The events we have hosted to date include:

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<sup>1</sup> Thunderbolt Energy Hub Neighbour Benefit Program: <https://thunderboltenergyhub.com.au/local-benefits/>

<sup>2</sup> RE-Alliance; 'Thunderbolt Energy Hub announces best-practice neighbour payment scheme': [https://www.re-alliance.org.au/thunderbolt\\_energy\\_hub\\_announces\\_new\\_neighbour\\_payment\\_scheme](https://www.re-alliance.org.au/thunderbolt_energy_hub_announces_new_neighbour_payment_scheme)

<sup>3</sup> Thunderbolt Energy Hub Community Consultative Committee: <https://thunderboltenergyhub.com.au/community-consultative-committee-2/>

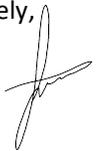
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- A concerned neighbour group meeting in Kentucky Hall in February 2020.
- A community drop-in session in Uralla in September 2020, where the community was invited to view project posters, maps and ask the Neoen team questions about the development.
- Meetings with over 70 community members in a one-on-one setting or at a community event to discuss their feedback, questions and concerns.
- A community information week in September 2021, comprising of a number of online and in-person events in Kentucky.
  - Information posters were displayed in the Kentucky Hall between Wednesday 15th September and Saturday 18th September at different times, allowing the community to browse posters in their own time, take an information booklet and submit a feedback survey. Anne-Marie Ward was present to answer questions and also had her laptop available if any community member wished to speak with me directly.
  - A virtual community day was also added to our website (which is still live) for those who could not attend in person.
  - Finally, two presentation and Q&A sessions were held online, where Neoen and five specialists presented information on the visual, noise, aviation, biodiversity and social impact assessments. A video recording as well as a copy of presentation slides and written Q&A are available on our website.<sup>4</sup>

We will continue to keep you informed as the project progresses. If you would like us to provide you with a briefing on the project updates prior to the EIS lodgement, please contact our project manager Joanna Murphy on 0423 976 590 or [Joanna.murphy@neoen.com](mailto:Joanna.murphy@neoen.com) to arrange a suitable time.

We look forward to hearing from you and keeping you informed of any developments regarding this project.

Sincerely,



Garth Heron  
Head of Development – Neoen Australia  
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<sup>4</sup> Thunderbolt Energy Hub Project Presentation and Q&A : <https://thunderboltenergyhub.com.au/project-presentation-and-ga-september-2021/>