

Prepared for Blind Creek Solar Farm Pty Ltd

Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Blind Creek Solar Farm

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, NSW

July 2025

Project Number: 240557

Document verification

Project Title:	Blind Creek Solar Farm
Project Number:	240557
Project File Name:	Document1Final_V1.2

Revision	Date	Prepared by	Approved by
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Final V 1.0	7/03/2025	Ross Massie	Dr. Sangay Wangchuk
Final V1.1	30/05/2025	Dr Sangay Wangchuk	Tammy Vesely
Final V1.2	28/07/2025	Dr Sangay Wangchuk	Jane Love

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AES	Accommodation and Employment Strategy
APP	Aboriginal Participation Plan
BESS	Battery Energy Storage Systems
DPE	Department of Planning and Environment (NSW) (formerly DPIE)
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EP&A Act	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)
EPC	Engineering, Procurement and Construction
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GW	gigawatt
ha	hectare
HSE	Health, safety, and environment
IRSAD	Index of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage (ABS)
km	kilometres
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LGA	local government area
MW	megawatt
MWh	megawatt hour
NSW	New South Wales
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
QPRC	Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
SAL	Suburb and Locality
SEIFA	Socio-economic indexes for Australia (ABS)
SSD	State Significant Development
UCL	Urban Centre and Locality
WHS	Work Health and Safety

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Blind Creek Solar Farm Pty Ltd (the Applicant) received *Development Consent* for Blind Creek Solar Farm (the Project) (SSD-13166280) on 28 July 2023. The Applicant was founded and developed by local farmers and renewable energy experts to realise the potential of their land to host a farmer-led, utility-scale, solar and battery project: co-locating renewable energy and sheep production. The farmers have historical and ongoing personal connections to the Project site and local area and are the same family who have lived on and farmed the Project site for over 150 years.

1.1.1. Project Overview

The Project includes the construction, operation, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generation facility with an estimated capacity of up to 350MWAC (420MWDC). It also includes associated infrastructure, including grid connection and battery storage of nominally 300MW / 600MWh. The construction phase of the Project is expected to take approximately 12 to 18 months, and the Project would have an operational life of a nominal 35 years or more.

The Project would be located within the Queanbeyan-Palerang Local Government Area (LGA). The Queanbeyan-Palerang LGA is situated in the southeastern and Tablelands region of NSW and has close economic and social ties to the ACT located approximately 35km west of the Project. Queanbeyan is the nearest major regional centre to the Project (30km southwest).

The Project site can be accessed via Tarago Road, at the intersection of a private road known by landowners as Blind Creek Road. The Project would be connected to the national electricity grid via an existing 330kV transmission line that crosses the site. Nine associated receivers are with the Project. Eight of these are located within the 2km buffer of the development site, and one receiver is outside this buffer. Of the nine receivers, six will host infrastructure and three have interests in the Project and have entered into negotiated agreements.

1.2. Purpose

The Accommodation and Employment Strategy (AES) outlines the proposed approach and objectives for managing social impacts and opportunities for accommodation and employment associated with the construction and operation phases of the Project. This AES has been prepared to fulfil the requirements of section B32 (Accommodation and Employment Strategy) of the *Development Consent* outlined in *Schedule 2, Part B – Environmental Conditions* (DPE, 2023, pp. 13–14):

A compliance matrix for this AES Condition B32 is presented below in Table 1-1. A copy of this AES will be provided to the Planning Secretary prior to the commencement of construction and implemented throughout the construction as required by the *Development Consent*.

Table 1-1 Schedule 2, Condition B32 requirements (p.13)

Schedule	Condition	The relevant section of this AES
2	Prior to commencing construction, the Applicant must prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy for the development in consultation with Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council. This strategy must:	
	a) Propose measures to ensure there is sufficient accommodation for the workforce associated with the development;	4.2
	b) Consider the cumulative impacts associated with other State Significant Development projects in the area;	3.2
	c) Investigate options for prioritising the employment of local workers for the construction and operation of the development, where feasible; and	5.2
	d) Include a program to monitor and review the effectiveness of the strategy over the life of the development, including regular monitoring and review during construction.	6.0
	The Applicant must provide a copy of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy to the Planning Secretary prior to commencement of construction, and implement the plan throughout construction.	

1.3. Consultation

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the Project (NGH, 2022) identified constrained accommodation availability (p.318) as an impact and assigned significance to the impact level “Medium,” and then recommended the development of AES as mitigation measures. The EIS assessed the significance rating as “Low” after developing and implementing the AES.

Thus, the development of this AES is informed by the EIS of the Blind Creek Solar Farm and other relevant policies relating to the developer’s and contractors’ accommodation and employment strategies. Additionally, consultations with the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council members and the council’s accommodation and employment-providing industry, informed the development of AES.

This AES was updated after receiving detailed feedback from the Council on 23 May 2025. The consultation log is in [Appendix A](#).

1.4. Governance

The AES is intended as an iterative document to be utilised by Project Managers and site-based teams to ensure consistent and coordinated implementation. The AES and associated commitments will be embedded into the Applicant’s contracts with nominated engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) and operations and maintenance (O&M) contractors to ensure that the approach and requirements are consistent and coordinated and flow down through the tiers of subcontractors at all levels of the Project.

In accordance with *Development Consent*'s Condition A12 of Schedule 2, the Applicant will ensure “that all of its employees, contractors (and their subcontractors) are made aware of, and are instructed to comply with, the conditions of this consent relevant to activities they carry out in respect of the development” (p. 6).

1.5. Review

If the AES requires a revision, as outlined in Condition C2 of Schedule 2 of the *Development Consent* (p.15), the Applicant will update the AES to the satisfaction of the Planning Secretary prior to carrying out any upgrading or decommissioning activities on-site and review and, if necessary, revise the AES to the satisfaction of the Planning Secretary within one month of the:

- Submission of an incident report under Condition C10 of Schedule 2¹;
- Submission of an audit report under Condition C14, Schedule 2; or
- Any modification to the conditions of the development consent.

A periodic evaluation and review will be required to maintain the relevance of this AES to the changing circumstances and developments. The review process should be initiated with an approach to ensure that the strategy remains current and is updated to reflect changing circumstances, including changes resulting from upgrading or decommissioning, evolving opportunities, and ongoing improvements in the Applicant's approach, such as:

- Desired social procurement objectives are being achieved by the Applicant and its contractors
- There is positive evidence of delivery against social procurement objectives
- Social procurement methodology is at the leading edge of industry best practice.

If revisions to the AES are required, for example, to facilitate continuous improvement, respond to legislative changes, or address an actual or potential non-compliance, the Applicant's team will be responsible for revising the AES and submitting the updated AES to the Planning Secretary for approval. Following approval by the Planning Secretary, the revised AES will be published on the Project website.

2. Regional context

The Project would be located within the Lake George Suburbs and Localities (SAL) adjoining Tarago SAL in Queanbeyan-Palerang LGA. Queanbeyan-Palerang region is immediately adjacent to the Australian Capital Territory. The major population and administrative centre of the region is Queanbeyan, with Braidwood, Bungendore and Googong representing other significant towns in the region (NSW Government, 2023). Queanbeyan is the closest major regional centre to the Project (30km southwest). It includes several facilities, including hospitals, banks, churches, and primary and secondary education institutions.

Major centres and/or towns in the area (crow fly distance from the development site) are shown below in Table 2-1. For most residents, Queanbeyan is the main city providing access to social services and recreation. Bungendore, 7km south of the development footprint, also provides these services.

¹ The *Development Consent* refers to as “Condition C10 of Schedule 4.” However, there is no Schedule 4 in the *Development Consent*. Instead, incident and audit report are both in Schedule 2 of the *Development Consent*.

Table 2-1: Proximal localities, towns and cities, distance, and demographics (ABS 2021 Census)

Location (ABS geography)	Distance from the development site	Population	First Nations population	Median age (years)	SEIFA IRSAD ² decile
Bungendore (UCL)	7 km south	3,935	2.6%	37	8
Sutton (UCL)	19 km west	284	1.4%	36	NA
Currawang (SAL)	20 km north	167	2.4%	46	10
Tarago (SAL)	21 km northeast	510	2.0%	40	8
Collector (UCL)	29 km north	251	2.4%	37	NA
Queanbeyan Part (UCL)	30 km southwest	37,511	4.1%	37	Queanbeyan [6] Queanbeyan-East [6] Queanbeyan West [9] Queanbeyan Surrounds [9]
Jerrabomberra (SAL)	32 km southwest	9,601	1.8%	38	10
Canberra Part (UCL)	33 km southwest	452,670	2.0%	35	Canberra East [1] Canberra Airport [7]
Googong (UCL)	35 km southwest	6,224	2.3%	31	10
Braidwood (UCL)	42 km southeast	1,414	1.3%	48	6

2.1. Population

In 2021, the estimated population of the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional LGA was 63,304 (ABS, 2021). The LGA is part of the South East and Tablelands Region. The region's population is expected to grow by 1% annually and cater for more retirees as people relocate from neighbouring communities, including the ACT, for lifestyle and affordability reasons (NSW DPE, 2022). The draft regional plan estimated the population of the LGA to increase by 20,715 by 2041 (p. 11).

² Socio Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a suite of indexes that have been created by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) from social and economic Census indicators. Each index ranks geographic areas across Australia in terms of their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The SEIFA scores are ranked and divided into deciles; a decile of 1 represents the lowest 10% of scores and relatively greater disadvantage, while a decile of 10 represents relatively greater advantage.

The traditional owners of the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council area are the Ngunnawal/Ngunnawal and Ngambri people. In 2021, 2,190 (3.5%) of the LGA residents identified as having Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origins, slightly higher than the NSW average of 3.4% (ABS 2021).

Key differences between the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional LGA compared to NSW at the time of the ABS 2021 Census include:

- The LGA had a slightly younger population, with a median age of 38, compared to 39 for NSW
- Fewer residents in the LGA had a tertiary degree (23.3%, NSW 23.8%)
- A higher proportion of the LGA residents were born in Australia (76.7%, NSW 65.4%)
- More residents of the LGA lived in separate houses (73.9%, NSW 65.6%)
- The median household weekly income was higher in the LGA (\$2,295) than the state median (\$1,829).

2.2. Regional economy

According to the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2023 Update (NSW Government, 2023, p. 14), since 2018, the region's economic landscape has been significantly influenced by macroeconomic related to digitisation, climate and migration. The report remarked that the continuing spread of urbanisation has seen high levels of migration to the region, thereby increasing the demand for metro-competitive services and infrastructure.

The top three economic sectors in the Council are construction (\$303 million), public administration and safety (\$270 million) and health care and social assistance (\$125 million). These three sectors account for more than 40% of the Council's economy (QPRC, 2020).

The Queanbeyan-Palerang region's emerging industries are largely knowledge-intensive sectors such as information, media and communications (NSW Government, 2023). The sector has been growing at around 7 to 8% on average per year between 2011 and 2020. Thus, supporting growth in these sectors will be key to building a diverse and resilient economy which can support projected population growth while maintaining a high standard of liveability. Additionally, according to the QPRC (2020), the Council's proximity to the ACT is an opportunity, and the ACT employs over 63% of the Council's workforce.

Additionally, the tourism sector demonstrates growth potential, with an estimated visitor spend of \$93 million in 2021. Food & beverage services contributed 79% (\$49m) to the accommodation and food services sector Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2020 (NSW Government, 2023). The 'Strategic Pillar 2 – A prosperous Queanbeyan-Palerang' of the "Towards 2040 Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council Local Strategic Planning Statement" prioritises including tourism as a destination of choice (QPRC, 2020, p. 22).

Within arts and recreation services, Queanbeyan-Palerang has a specialisation in heritage, creative & performing arts. Furthermore, healthcare and social assistance demonstrate strong growth potential as an enabler of economic and population growth for the region, with an average annual growth of 6.1% between 2011 and 2020. Residential care represented 55% of total output (\$85m) in the sector in 2020.

2.2.1. Housing and accommodation

According to SQM Research, the residential vacancy rate of Central Tablelands was 1.8% in October 2024, a slight increase from September 2024's 1.6%. However, the rate did not increase beyond 2% (December 2023) since the lowest in recent years (0.6% in September 2020).

According to SuburbsFinder (2023), a residential vacancy rate of 3% is considered healthy, with vacancy rates of less than 2% indicating high rental demand and rates above 4% mean that there is more housing supply than demand. Bungendore UCL (postcode 2621) is closest to the Project location. Though the residential vacancy rate was healthy at 3.4% as of October 2024, it may have changed, considering the vacancy rate of 4.1% recorded in August 2024 (SQM Research, 2025).

Though Bungendore is closest to the Project location, and the Project workers may likely prefer commuting to the Project site from there, it is expected that the majority of the Project workers will have to arrange their accommodation in other adjoining SALs and UCLs, which are reflected in Table 2-1.

2.2.2. Workforce capacity

According to the QPRC (2020, p. 19), the proximity of the ACT is an opportunity for QPRC and provides employment for over 63% of the QPRC workforce. Conversely, approximately 40% of Queanbeyan's workforce comprises workers from the ACT (p.40).

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2023 Update (NSW Government, 2023) noted that despite the population growth, finding skilled workers remained a challenge for local businesses. Thus, building skills capacity within the population to support the availability of key workers was highlighted as a key priority for the region.

However, the region has a comparatively more primary working-age population, with 26% of the region's population over the age of 55 compared to the NSW benchmark of 28.3%. Furthermore, the unemployment rate of the Queanbeyan-Palerang region (3.1%) is lower than that of NSW (4.9%) and the national unemployment rate of 5.1% (ABS, 2021).

The Project is close to the more populated areas of Queanbeyan and Canberra. A large portion of the workforce is expected to be sourced locally, therefore minimising the requirement for accommodation and commuting directly from their homes. However, it is expected that some specialist construction workers will be unable to be sourced from the local workforce pool and will need to be sourced from other areas, and these non-resident workers will likely need accommodation closer to the development site: Bungendore UCL.

3. Workforce overview

It is anticipated that approximately 300-400 construction personnel will be required onsite during the peak construction period of approximately 8 to 12 months. Overall, the construction period could stretch between 18-24 months of commencing.

As per Schedule 2 Condition B15 and unless the Planning Secretary agrees otherwise, the Applicant may only undertake road upgrades, construction, upgrading or decommissioning activities on site between:

- 7.00 am - 6.00 pm Monday to Friday
- 8.00 am - 1.00 pm on Saturdays
- At no time on Sundays or NSW Public Holidays.

3.1. Workforce estimates

3.1.1. Construction

The main construction activities may include:

- Site establishment and preparation for construction: ground preparation, construction of the internal track system, upgrade of existing access points/intersections, preliminary civil works and drainage
- Installation of permanent O&M site office with staff amenities and vehicle parking
- Installation of steel post and framing system for the solar panels
- Installation of underground cabling (trenching) and installation of inverter stations
- Installation of PV panels
- Construction of operation and maintenance building and switch room
- Construction of the substation and connections
- Installation of BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems)
- Removal of temporary construction facilities and rehabilitation of disturbed areas.

Thus, considering the construction activities, some of the key jobs that will be created are approximately:

- 170-250 labourers
- 80-120 electricians and technicians, and
- 20-50 miscellaneous contractors such as construction managers and supervisors, WHS (Work Health and Safety) personnel, surveyors, security, and machinery operators.

Employment numbers could fluctuate, starting with about 20 to 30 workers on-site for one to two months. Then, the workforce will progressively increase to 400 personnel (Figure 3-1) at about the 65% completion stage for a couple of months before reducing the workforce toward completion and commissioning. About 5-10 staff will be employed after commissioning.

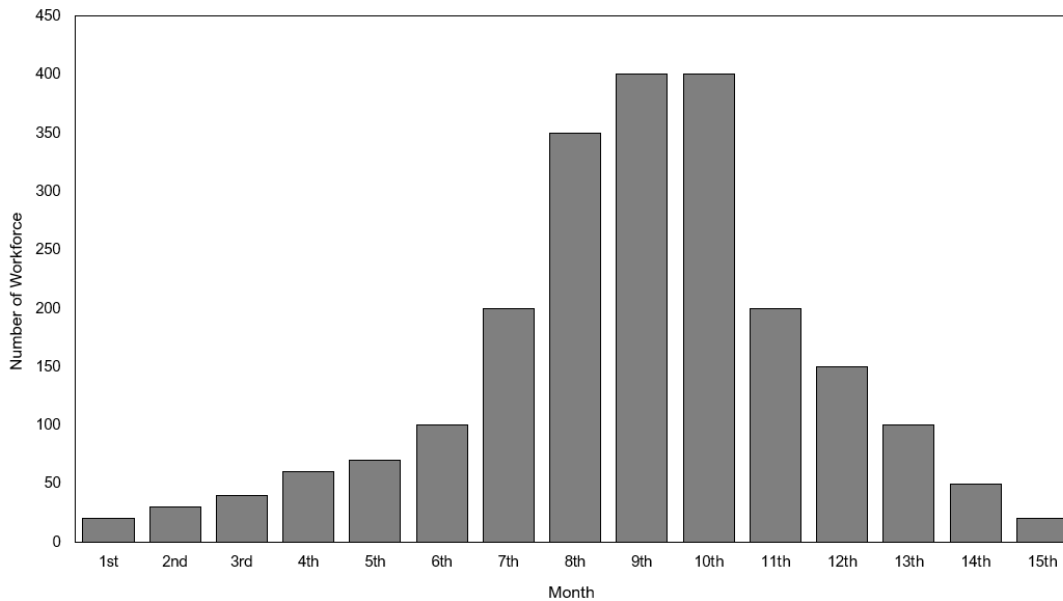


Figure 3-1: Workforce requirements during the construction phase

3.1.2. Operation

The solar farm is expected to remain operational for 35 years and will be monitored and operated by approximately 5 to 10 full-time equivalents (FTE). Some of the activities during the operational phase includes:

- Routine visual inspections, general maintenance and cleaning operations of the solar arrays as required
- Routine visual inspections, general maintenance and cleaning operations of the substation
- Vegetation management
- Site security response (24 hr) if required
- Site operational response (24 hr) if required
- Replacement of equipment and infrastructure as required
- Maintenance of landscaping and screening plantings as required
- Pest plant and animal control as required.

3.1.3. Decommissioning

The solar farm will be decommissioned at the end of its operational life. An effort will be made to reclaim the land back to its original state, and all materials will be recycled or re-used where possible. Some of the key elements of decommissioning will include:

- The solar arrays, including the foundation posts, will be removed. Materials will be sorted and packaged for removal from the site for recycling or reuse wherever possible
- All infrastructure would be removed apart from the substation, and materials recycled or reused wherever possible
- Posts and cabling will be removed and recycled
- Fencing will be removed, including small concrete footings
- Gravel pavement materials will be recovered and recycled as general fill in an appropriate location
- Areas subject to compaction will have the topsoil ripped to a depth suitable for seeding if appropriate
- Sodic soil will be treated as necessary with lime or gypsum.

3.1.4. Indirect employment

Aside from the direct employment opportunities outlined above, the employment benefits are anticipated to extend through local supply chains to include accommodation providers, catering and cleaning companies, fuel supply, tradespersons, tool and equipment suppliers, uniform suppliers, vehicle servicing and many other businesses.

3.2. Interaction with other projects

Development Consent condition B32(b) requires the consideration of the cumulative impacts associated with other State Significant Development projects in the area. Cumulative impacts may occur if construction periods for nearby major projects overlap with the current Project's construction period. This is particularly challenging when managing access to short-term accommodation and other services within the community, as well as managing local employment and service procurement.

However, overlapping or coordinated project timelines create opportunities to build a pipeline of projects that encourage resident skilled workers to stay in the area and encourage others to move to the area, either in the medium term or permanently, to work across consecutive projects. This is an opportunity for the Council to capture and retain skilled people by investing some time in planning the schedule of projects coming to the region.

Table 3-1 contains a list of major projects near the Blind Creek Solar Farm. The list was extracted from the NSW Major Project portal and ACT Major Project Portal.

Two nearby projects, Gundry Solar Farm (~400 FTE) and Merino Solar Farm (~200–330 FTE) are scheduled for construction from Q1 and Q2 2026 respectively. They could overlap the Project's construction phase potentially resulting in:

- Direct competition for skilled and semi-skilled labour, particularly construction workers, plant operators, and tradespeople.
- Pressure on local and regional contractors, driving up labour costs.

The Canyonleigh BESS project (~75–115 FTE) is less likely to contribute significantly to competition due to its smaller scale and uncertain development timeline.

Projects in the ACT (e.g. CIT Woden, Light Rail Stage 2A) are located ~39–40 km from Bungendore and already underway or scheduled earlier. These are unlikely to draw from the same labour pool, but depending on trade specialisations, indirect demand overlap cannot be ruled out.

Accommodation and Employment Strategy

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Table 3-1 Potential concurrent demand

Name	Location	Status (June 2025)	Development timeline (indicative only)	Potential concurrent demand
NSW				
Gundry Solar Farm	~ 66 km northwest of Bungendore	Response to Submissions	Q1 2026	Possible - ~400 FTE construction
Merino Solar Farm	~ 66 km north of Bungendore	Prepare EIS	Q2 2026	Possible – ~200-330 FTE construction
Canyonleigh BESS	~ 97 km northeast of Bundendore	Prepare EIS	NA	Unlikely – ~75-115 FTE construction
ACT				
CIT Woden Campus	~ 39 km west of Bungendore			Unlikely – Ongoing construction
Canberra Theatre Centre Transformation	~ 39 km west of Bungendore	Community Engagement	Q2 2025	Possible – NA
Canberra Hospital Extension				Unlikely - Scheduled to complete Q4 2024
Light Rail Stage 2A: City to Commonwealth Park	~ 40 km west of Bungendore	Contract Signed	Q1 2025	Possible - NA

3.2.1. Potential concurrent demand for workers

Based on the Project status and development timeline in Table 3-1, four major projects could lead to concurrent worker demand. Two projects are in the NSW and the other two located in Canberra, ACT. It is highly likely that projects deemed 'possible' could contribute to the cumulative impacts regarding accommodation and employment.

However, the total number of workers required simultaneously reflected in Table 3-2 only considers the scenario where the peak workers requirement for all projects happens concurrently, which is subject to the approval processes.

Table 3-2: Potential concurrent workers' demand

Name	Peak FTE	Tentative Peak Demand
Gundry Solar Farm	400	Q2 2026
Merino Solar Farm	300	Q3 2026
Canberra Theatre Centre Transformation	NA [200] ³	Q2 2025
Light Rail Stage 2A: City to Commonwealth Park	NA [200]	Q2 2025
Total Worker	1100	

Irrespective of having the peak worker demand almost at the same time for all the projects listed in Table 3-2, the existence of several projects in the region which are currently in the construction stage, planning or approval stage, it is expected that the region could be exposed to accommodation and employment pressure.

It must be noted that several smaller projects exist within the QPRC, Goulburn, and Canberra, which are not listed in the project list but could potentially have cumulative impacts. For instance, Woodlawn Zinc-Copper project, which is approximately 11km east of Bungendore started production in Q4 2018. The Woodlawn generates employment and is currently in the process of constructing temporary accommodation for their workers.

3.2.2. Potential concurrent demand for accommodation

With the construction duration typically spanning several months to over a year, it means construction of all projects listed in Table 3-1 are likely to overlap with seasonal festivals, long weekends, and civic events in Bungendore, Queanbeyan, and the ACT. For example, events such as the Bungendore Country Music

³ Conservative estimate of the peak FTE

Muster, regional markets, or ACT-based public celebrations may lead to temporary increases in visitation, placing added pressure on accommodation availability, traffic conditions, and local services.

Therefore, if multiple projects are under construction during the same period, these impacts could compound, particularly during peak activity windows, resulting in elevated cumulative effects across workforce housing, transport networks, and community infrastructure.

Accommodation competition is a key risk area. The Gundry and Merino projects alone could generate a combined 600–730 FTE construction workforce, likely requiring staggered or rotating accommodation across Bungendore, Tarago, Goulburn, and Queanbeyan.

Given Bungendore's limited short-term accommodation stock (estimated ~275–280 guests), there is potential for:

- Overflow into Queanbeyan, which is ~39 km away and has ~300 motel rooms
- Reduced availability and inflated pricing, impacting other workers, tourists, and event attendees
- Displacement of tourism or temporary residents during peak construction.

Therefore, this AES considers available temporary accommodation in the Queanbeyan and Canberra areas as part of the broader regional housing context. Strategies will be developed to facilitate the transport of workers to and from the Project location, helping to reduce pressure on local accommodation stock in Bungendore and manage cumulative workforce-related impacts.

4. Accommodation strategy

4.1. Scope

The “Mitigation and enhancement measures, and residual impacts” section of the Project’s EIS mentions a strategy that is relevant for this AES (NGH, 2022, p. 326):

- S3: The Employment and Accommodation Strategy will provide further detail on accommodation providers. The strategy will include engagement with accommodation providers to avoid negatively impacting on tourism opportunities and any vulnerable populations who are utilising temporary accommodation.

The maximum on-site workforce at any time is anticipated to peak at 400 workers for the Project. According to the Project’s EIS, with up to 50% of the employment would be generated from the local or regional area (p. 32). To achieve this level of local employment, the EIS states that “as part of the pre-construction phase, consultation to maximise local employment benefits would be undertaken” (p. 124).

If the target of employing 50% of the workforce from the local region is achieved in addition to some employed from Canberra, this AES assumes there would be an approximate maximum of 200 accommodation beds necessary at the peak of construction. The peak construction period could be about two months, falling approximately nine to ten months after construction starts.

4.2. Review of options

This accommodation profile has considered a variety of accommodation types:

- Worker’s temporary accommodation villages – this includes purpose-built worker’s sites designed to meet the needs of a single project or multiple proximal projects
- Short-term accommodation – this includes self-catering houses and units (typically listed on short stay services such as Airbnb and HomeAway), motels, hotels and camping/caravan parks – (most suitable would-be cabin style facilities) – with the availability of properties influenced by a strong visitor economy
- Longer term accommodation – this includes rental properties and properties that are available for purchase. The availability of these properties is influenced by the supply and future development of housing options in the target area.

4.2.1. Workers’ temporary accommodation

This category includes on-site or off-site accommodation utilising temporary accommodation. Although this has not been considered for the Project, converting any underutilised commercial and council buildings in a worst-case scenario could be explored as a viable option.

A consultation with the Council did not reveal the existence of any un-utilised or under-utilised buildings in Bungendore or Queanbeyan. However, pursuing inventory of any such buildings and their viability for residential, public housing, and short-term accommodation options in the council as well as in Canberra could be considered.

4.2.2. Short-term accommodation

During the consultation with the Council, it was made clear that the “accommodation strategy can’t look at Council as a whole, but really need to look at the villages that are located close to Bungendore.” A search in Microsoft Bing Travel reveals six temporary accommodation providers in Bungendore (Table 4-1), the closest settlement to the Project site.

A search on Airbnb (Airbnb, 2024) revealed 20 properties listed within the 20-30 minute driving distance from the Project location. Consistent with the data, a consultation with the council also reinforced that temporary accommodation in Bungendore and adjoining villages is very limited.

Table 4-1: List of temporary accommodations in Bungendore

Name of the accommodation	Capacity	Approximate distance from the Project site
Carrington Inn Rose Cottage Function Centre	29 rooms in total	~12 km
The Old Stone House	90 persons	~11 km
Lake George Hotel	7 motel rooms and 1 cabin	~11 km
Bungendore Motel	Temporarily closed for renovation: possibly re-open in 2026	~10 km
Royal Hotel Bungendore	19 persons	~11 km
Claddagh Lodge	7 rooms	~09 km
AirBnB	15-18 unique listing. [Although RentByOwner lists over 70 properties in the Bungendore region, the majority are duplicated from Airbnb and HomeAway/VRBO	Airbnb listings (~20) were sourced using the map search function on Airbnb.com.au to capture properties within the Bungendore region.
HomeAway / VRBO	or are alternative views of the same property (e.g. room vs. whole house). After careful deduplication and filtering to exclude out-of-range listings, the total number of unique, short-term rental properties within a 20–30 minute drive of	HomeAway (VRBO) listings (~18) were identified through direct searches on vrbo.com using “Bungendore, NSW” as the location, with filters applied for entire homes and short-term stays.
RentByOwner		RentByOwner listings (~77) were sourced from rentbyowner.com, using the Bungendore locality

	Bungendore is estimated to be 15–18.]	and surrounding regions to identify vacation rentals available within a 20–30 minute radius.
Motels in Queanbeyan	~300 rooms	Accommodation capacity estimate is based on consultations undertaken with accommodation providers in Queanbeyan and surrounding areas.
Total Estimate	~ 875-900 persons [The total accommodation capacity estimates are based on a combination of direct consultations with Queanbeyan-based providers and publicly available data for the Bungendore region. Duplicate listings across platforms (e.g. Airbnb, HomeAway, RentByOwner) were removed to avoid double-counting. In cases where only the number of rooms was provided and guest capacity was unspecified, a conservative estimate of 2 guests per room was used to calculate total capacity.	

The consultation with the Council revealed that Queanbeyan and Canberra could form a better option to accommodate workers for the Project. However, that could mean increasing the travel time for the workers to get to the Project site. Though the details of temporary accommodation providers and Airbnbs in the Queanbeyan area have not been explored, a preliminary consultation with three temporary accommodation providers in Queanbeyan indicated that there are about 13-14 motels in Queanbeyan with a capacity of about 300 rooms. The accommodation providers indicated that even after ear-marking some rooms for school camp programs, tourism and other activities, “...the Project could secure up to 100+ rooms” in Queanbeyan.

However, this could mean that the Project will need to arrange local transportation for their workforce, which could contribute to the increase in road traffic and may constrain the availability of accommodation for tourism, particularly if construction coincides with when tourism numbers peak, which occurs at times of local festivals and events.

According to the database maintained by the Visit Queanbeyan Palerang, there were seven caravan and camping grounds in Bungendore and surrounding fourteen in Braidwood and villages, and five in Queanbeyan (Visit QPRC, 2024).

4.2.3. Rental or purchased accommodation

According to the Council's economic development strategy - 2023 update, between June 2018 and June 2022, median house prices in the region increased by 39%, from \$645,000 to \$895,000 (NSW Government, 2023, p. 20).

This significant growth in house prices may constrain the region's ability to attract and retain workers. Table 4-2 contains a brief analysis of residential vacancy rates, which was extracted from the SQM Research: Residential Vacancy Rates (SQM Research, 2025). Similarly, median weekly rent data is from the ABS (2021).

Table 4-2: Residential vacancy rates of SAL and UCL that are near the Project location

Postcode	Location	Median Weekly Rent (as of May 2025) ⁴	Brief Analysis of Residential Vacancy Rates
2621	Bungendore	\$643.35	The lowest residential vacancy rate in recent years was 0.7% in July 2022. This rate rose sharply to 5.2% by December 2022 before dropping to 2.1% in January 2023. As of April 2025, the vacancy rate stands at 2.7% , which corresponds to just 07 available rental properties.
2580	Currawang Tarago Goulburn	\$503.96	In September 2021, the residential vacancy rate was 0.6%, the lowest in recent years. It gradually increased to 2.3% by August 2023. As of April 2025, the vacancy rate was 1.1% , corresponding to approximately 39 available rental properties.
2581	Collector	\$682.53	The residential vacancy rate for postcode 2581 is highly variable. For instance, it was 0.0% in July 2023, rising to 2.7% by September 2023. It peaked at 6.4% in April 2024 before declining to 1.9% in June 2024. As of April 2025, the vacancy rate stood at 1.0% , corresponding to just 01 available rental property.
2620	Googong Sutton Queanbeyan Tralee	\$560.70	The lowest residential vacancy rate in recent years was recorded in February 2022 at 0.2%, gradually increasing to 1.5% by December 2022. It then declined to 1.2% in October 2023 before rising again to 1.8% in December 2023. As of April 2025, the vacancy rate was 1.1% , corresponding to approximately 61 available rental properties.
2609	Canberra Airport, ACT	\$501.89	From June 2022 to March 2023, the residential vacancy rate remained at 0.0%. It rose to 0.9% in April 2023, dropped back to 0.0% in July 2024, and increased again to 1.7% in September 2024. As of April 2025, the vacancy rate stood at 0.8% , corresponding to approximately 2 available rental properties.
2619	Jerrabomberra	\$745.96	The lowest residential vacancy rate in recent years was 0.2% in April 2022. The rate increased quickly to 2.3% in February

⁴ For "Combined" in SQM Research. It refers to the average weekly asking rents across all residential property types, encompassing both houses and units.

Postcode	Location	Median Weekly Rent (as of May 2025) ⁴	Brief Analysis of Residential Vacancy Rates
			2023, dropped to 0.9% in October 2023, and rose again to 2.8% in December 2023. As of April 2025, the vacancy rate stood at 0.4% , corresponding to approximately 2 available rental properties.
2622	Braidwood	\$545.95	In August 2022, the residential vacancy rate was 0.0% and increased steadily to 4.0% by March 2023 before dropping to 2.0% in April 2023 and rising again to 5.0% in August 2023. The lowest rate after August 2022 was 0.4% in March 2024. As of April 2025, the vacancy rate stood at 2.0% , corresponding to approximately 4 available rental properties.
2600 and 2601	Canberra Canberra City		As of April 2025, Canberra suburb's rental vacancy rate was 2.8% with 29 available rental properties. Similarly, rental vacancy rate of Canberra City was 2.7% with 39 available rental properties.

The table clearly shows that, except for Bungendore and Braidwood, where the residential vacancy rates were comparatively healthy as of April 2025, all other locations experienced high rental demands. However, when evaluating the number of available rental vacancies as of April 2025, Postcode 2580 and 2620 has the highest at 39 and 61 available vacancies.

The median weekly rent ranged from \$501.89 to \$745.96 as of May 2025 (SQM Research, 2025), with the highest being in Jerrabomberra (Postcode 2619) and the lowest in Canberra Airport (Postcode 2609). Therefore, the weekly rent and the residential vacancy rates indicate a very limited housing supply in the locations near the Project location.

With respect to houses for sale as of 30 May 2025 listed on Domain (2025), there were approximately:

- 40 houses listed for sale in Bungendore (Postcode 2621)
- 136 houses listed for sale in Currawang, Tarago and Goulburn area (Postcode 2580)
- 17 houses listed for sale in Collector (Postcode 2581)
- 224 houses were listed for sale in Googong, Sutton, Queanbeyan and Tralee area (Postcode 2620)
- 02 houses were listed for sale in Canberra Airport (Postcode 2609)
- 22 houses were listed for sale in Jerrabomberra (Postcode 2619)
- 28 houses listed for sale in Braidwood (Postcode 2622)
- 835 houses were listed for sale in Canberra region.

4.3. Action plan and mitigation strategies

The Blind Creek Solar Farm's accommodation strategy action plan is presented in Table 5-1, which identifies proposed actions to accommodate workers during the Project cycle. It is assumed that other

SSDs in the area that are either approved or proposed (see Table 3-1) could impact the availability of short-term or rental accommodation. Assessing potential cumulative impacts will form part of the regular monitoring for this Strategy.

One strategy that the Applicant will adopt is to recruit local workers through recruiting local sub-contractors. The Applicant identified eighteen local contractors ([Appendix B](#)) who may have generated local employment and could potentially achieve the Project's target of generating 50% of local employment. While the Applicant continues to strategies the possibility of involving local contractors, six of the identified local contractors wrote a supportive submission to the Project.

Though local employment could be generated through employing local contractors, the Project would still need accommodation for specialised workers, project managers and supervisors. This could mean recruiting workers outside the region, leading to an influx of people. The following three accommodation strategies could be followed to accommodate the workers coming outside the region:

- Head-lease 10% of the temporary accommodations available in Queanbeyan, Bungendore and Googong for the entire duration of the Project construction phase. If required, temporary accommodations available in Canberra and Goulburn could also be explored. Head leasing will be prioritised outside the immediate vicinity of the project sites to reduce localised housing pressure
- As suggested by the Council, liaise with Woodlawn Zinc-Copper Project (Mining) to accommodate some of the Project's workforce in their accommodation facility. According to the Council, the Mining company is currently constructing an accommodation facility for its workers, and it would be worth exploring the option. For the Council, this is one of the preferred options. Following the suggestion of the Council, an enquiry was left on their webpage [[Contact Us - Develop](#)] on 3rd December. However, no response was received as of 30 June 2025
- Should the earlier two strategies fail to accommodate all the Project workers, the Applicant could explore the possibility of developing Centurian Accommodation and Modular Camps into the Project's accommodation, which could accommodate about 100 workers. The Council informed the availability of empty areas in Bungendore and adjoining villages where it could be developed.

5. Employment Strategy

5.1. Scope

The Project could generate a total of 1,040 jobs (400 direct jobs and 640 indirect jobs). The 640 jobs could be generated through the employment multiplier effect, which is 1.6 for the construction industry as reflected in the Project's EIS (p. 316). The EIS specifies that *"All stages of the Project may include specific employment opportunities for residents of Bungendore and surrounding areas, Aboriginal people, young people, apprentices, and trainees"* (p. 316).

The EIS of the Project states that the Local Industry Participation Plan will focus on maximising the involvement of local people and businesses in the Project. To achieve this, the EIS identifies three specific strategies (p. XVI):

- Include specific focus on people and businesses within the Queanbeyan-Palerang LGA, but also the ACT, and the wider regional area
- Consider specific opportunities for Aboriginal people and businesses, women, and young people
- Include culturally sensitive Aboriginal employment goals for workers and university graduates, and protocols and systems to ensure Aboriginal employment does not conflict with cultural obligations.

A strategy outlined in this document is to employ businesses and subcontractors registered in the Council or Canberra. These businesses and subcontractors would have already employed local people, contributing to local employment generation and minimising the accommodation pressure.

5.2. Action plan and mitigation strategies

Prior to construction, the Applicant will work with the EPC contractor to implement the employment components of this strategy. Further, the AES will undergo revision by seeking feedback and consulting with stakeholders to ensure the strategy remains relevant. This will include developing mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations organisations, networks, and businesses to identify joint initiatives supporting positive socioeconomic outcomes. The roles and responsibilities of relevant parties to successfully deliver this action plan are presented in Table 5-2.

The Blind Creek Solar Farm AES action plan (Table 5-1) presents proposed actions to engage, retain and accommodate workers during the Project cycle. It is assumed that the other State Significant Renewable Energy projects in the area that are either approved or proposed, as reflected in Table 3-1, would have an impact on the availability of workers and short-term and/or rental accommodation. Assessing potential cumulative impacts will form part of the regular monitoring for this Strategy.

Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Blind Creek Solar Farm



Table 5-1: Accommodation and Employment Strategy Action Plan

Measures	Responsible Party	Objective	Timing	Implementation Action	Compliance Record
Prepare & implement an AES in accordance with Schedule 2, Condition B32 of the Development Consent	Site Manager EPC Project Manager All employees and contractors.	Prioritise local content & opportunities for local businesses, services, & workers.	Prior to construction, ongoing.	This AES	This AES
Where feasible, head lease proximal rental properties in Queanbeyan, Canberra, Goulburn, Bungendore, and adjoining villages. Target head leasing of at least 10% of the total available accommodation to ensure minimal disruption to the local tourism industry and community activities. Head leasing will be prioritised outside the immediate vicinity of the project sites to reduce localised housing pressure.	EPC Project Manager	Minimise disruption to the local tourism industry.	Prior to construction.	Headlease up to 10% of the total available accommodation in the region: could start from Bungendore, Queanbeyan, Canberra and then Goulburn if required.	Records of head leasing arrangements.
Prioritise booking short-term accommodation in Bungendore, Queanbeyan and, if required, Canberra.	EPC Project Manager	To boost local rental market.	Prior to construction; Construction period.	Book short-term accommodation through priority arrangements with accommodation providers. Establish a monthly review process to monitor worker accommodation requirements throughout construction.	Monthly review documentation.

Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Blind Creek Solar Farm

Measures	Responsible Party	Objective	Timing	Implementation Action	Compliance Record
Prioritise and select sub-contractors that can demonstrate a high proportion of the workforce living in Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and Canberra.	EPC Project Manager	General local employment and to minimise accommodation requirements.	Prior to construction; Construction.	Embed selection criteria with a weighting of at least 10% to prioritise sub-contractors that employ workers from Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and Canberra. Embed selection criteria with a weighting of at least 20% to prioritise sub-contractors with businesses registered in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and Canberra.	Maintain a register of employees and sub contractors to report on: 1) proportion of jobs filled by residents of Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and Canberra and 2) proportion of sub-contractors appointed with businesses registered in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and Canberra.
Liaise with Woodlawn Zinc-Copper Project to accommodate some of the Project's workforce in their accommodation facility.	EPC Project Manager	Improve collaboration between different SSDs and also to remove accommodation pressure for the region.	Prior to construction	Schedule a meeting with the company to discuss the possibility of using their accommodation facility.	Maintain a communication record and keep the Council informed of the development and the Council suggests this.
Where booking accommodation from larger accommodation suppliers in Queanbeyan, Canberra and Goulburn are arranged, manage scheduling to allow for shuttle buses to the site.	Site Manager EPC Project Manager	Minimise impacts on local traffic.	Monthly review of worker accommodation requirements and shift timing.	Establish and maintain a register of forecasted worker accommodation requirements and options to prioritise accommodation sharing or clustering. Hire shuttle buses from local providers.	Register of workers and accommodation forecasts and location of accommodation for workers.

Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Blind Creek Solar Farm



Measures	Responsible Party	Objective	Timing	Implementation Action	Compliance Record
Contribute to temporary worker's housing supply in Bungendore.	EPC Project Manager	Contribution to local infrastructure, housing, or community housing grants.	Prior to project construction commencement.	Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council have indicated availability of plenty of empty lands to develop temporary accommodation in Bungendore. Work with the Council to investigate and/or co-deliver workforce camps in Bungendore.	Direct engagement with Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council to plan and contribute to access to affordable housing in Bungendore.
Require EPC and O&M contractors to support employment and training outcomes for apprentices, learning workers, and underrepresented groups through targets and tracking.	EPC Project Manager Community & Stakeholder Manager.	Prioritise local employment and skills development.	Prior to construction; ongoing.	Partner with local/regional employment agencies to recruit job seekers who face barriers & are from under-represented groups.	Maintain a register of employees & sub-contractors to report on the proportion of jobs filled by learning workers, apprentices & under-represented groups. A contractual mechanism including clear targets for local and First Nations employment, upskilling and training apprentices will be included in the EPC and O & M contracts, with targets informed by relevant State and Federal policies and benchmarks.

Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Blind Creek Solar Farm

Measures	Responsible Party	Objective	Timing	Implementation Action	Compliance Record
Partnerships with organisations working with local school(s) to identify opportunities to support students to consider pathways into renewables, including site tours & career talks.	Community & Stakeholder Engagement Manager EPC Project Manager.	Prioritise local employment and skills development.	Nearing construction - and ongoing.	Meet with education and training services to identify partnership opportunities. Actively participate in career development opportunities in the region.	Record of meetings and discussions and identified opportunities; and activities such as site tours & career talks.
Establish processes and selection criteria that prioritise Indigenous employment and procurement. Partner with key First Nations regional partners to access specialised procurement sourcing panels with Certified and Registered First Nations businesses. Require EPC and O&M contractors to support genuine employment and training outcomes for First Nations. Partner with a local Aboriginal organisation/s to identify at least one work package during construction that can be delivered by a First Nation business.	Community & Stakeholder Engagement Manager EPC Project Manager.	Prioritise First Nations participation.	Prior to construction Throughout construction.	Embed selection criteria to prioritise sub-contractors that are Certified & Registered First Nation businesses or are owned, managed, or staffed by First Nations people. Embed targets in contracts for the construction of a minimum of 2% First Nations workforce participation. Identify key representative First Nations regional partners. Re-establish & continue to develop mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations organisations, networks & businesses to identify joint initiatives that can support positive socioeconomic outcomes. Establish and maintain a register of local Certified &	Maintain a register of employees & sub-contractors to report on the proportion of subcontractors demonstrating First Nations ownership or employment.

Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Blind Creek Solar Farm

Measures	Responsible Party	Objective	Timing	Implementation Action	Compliance Record
				Registered First Nations businesses. Monthly review of workforce requirements & sub-contract requirements against forecast needs & targets outlined in this AES.	

5.3. Roles and responsibilities

The key roles and responsibilities for the design, delivery, and evaluation of the Project's AES are outlined below in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2: AES roles and responsibilities

Positions (EPC Provided)	Responsibility
Project Manager	- Designate appropriate, sustainable and strategic AES objectives for delivery in construction of the Project - Responsible for AES implementation during construction - Liaison with QPRC - Monitor the EPC Project Manager on the implementation of AES activities and targets - Reporting of AES outcomes to QPRC and other stakeholders.
Site Manager	- Ensure implementation and compliance with AES activities and targets on-site together with the EPC Site Manager - Liaison with QPRC, accommodation providers, employment agencies, local First Nations networks & suppliers, etc. - Monitoring, tracking, and reporting of AES outcomes against targets to the Project Manager.
Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Manager	- Support the Project Manager to implement the AES - Liaison with contractors and relevant stakeholders involved in the AES, including local First Nations networks & suppliers.
HSE Supervisor	- Support the Site Manager to implement the AES - Liaison with onsite contractors and relevant stakeholders involved in the AES, including local First Nations networks & suppliers.
Community & Stakeholder Manager	Ensure the Project is implemented with an appropriate level of social license and that the best endeavours are made by the Project developer and its contractors to maximise local employment, procurement and accommodation.
Community & Stakeholder Engagement Officer	- Facilitate a strong working relationship with the QPRC, local accommodation providers, employment and procurement agencies, local businesses, contractors, and the rest of the relevant stakeholders involved in the Project to establish and implement industry and aboriginal participation outcomes - Support the Project and Site Managers in implementing the AES.
Operations Project Manager	- Responsible for AES fulfilment during the operation phase - Monitor O&M Contractor on the fulfilment of AES activities and targets

Positions (EPC Provided)	Responsibility
	Liaison with QPRC and reporting of AES outcomes.
EPC Project Manager	- Ensure implementation and compliance of AES activities and targets on-site - Liaison with QPRC, accommodation providers, employment agencies, local First Nations networks & suppliers, etc - Reporting of AES outcomes to the Project Manager.
EPC Site manager	- Support implementation and compliance with AES activities and targets on-site - Identifying opportunities and ensuring buy-in through the tiers of EPC sub-contractors - Liaison with DRC, accommodation providers, employment agencies, local First Nations networks & suppliers, etc - Monitoring, tracking, and reporting of AES outcomes against targets to the EPC Project Manager.
EPC Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Coordinator	- Support the EPC Project and Site Managers in implementing the AES - Liaison with EPC sub-contractors and relevant stakeholders involved in the AES, including local First Nations networks & suppliers.
O&M Project Manager	- Support the Project in fulfilling the AES during the operation phase - Liaison with O&M subcontractors and relevant stakeholders involved in the AES, including local First Nations networks & suppliers - Reporting of AES outcomes to the Operations Project Manager.

6. Monitoring and reporting

The AES considers multiple opportunities for consultation and feedback through initiatives such as enquiries and complaints registers and personal meetings with near neighbours, community groups, and key stakeholders. The outcomes of these activities must be recorded in the stakeholder register, which could then be used as a data source for monitoring and reporting.

The following metrics and strategies should underpin the monitoring and reporting of the Project. The objectives of monitoring and evaluation should be to do the following:

- Local employment target of 50% and targets for employing apprentices and trainees, and First Nations people, informed by relevant State and Federal policies and benchmarks
- Communicate and provide accountability for the objectives of the employment strategy
- Communicate and provide accountability for the objectives of the accommodation strategy
- Gather and integrate learnings for application to this and future projects
- Establish and maintain a complaint and feedback system.

The EPC Contractor will be required to report on the metrics (written into their contract) and the Project Manager will evaluate and oversee that the targets are achieved (Table 6-1). If needed, the Project Manager will work with the Community & Stakeholder Engagement Officer to reevaluate strategies to get back on track to meet goals.

Where relevant, Blind Creek Solar Farm will include AES commitments and obligations within both the EPC Construction and O&M contracts to ensure all procurement and subcontracting activities are carried out in accordance with the AES. Under the terms of the EPC contracts, the minimum contents of monthly reports may be defined, ensuring strict reporting rules. This could mean that the Project can track, monitor and address the compliance of the head EPC contractor (and its subcontractors). It is expected that the Project and the head EPC contractor meet at least once a week in accordance with the EPC contract to ensure close communication between the management teams.

The EPC contractor will be required to report on the AES metrics monthly, while Project's reporting to external bodies, such as the QPRC, will be quarterly during construction and annually during operations (unless otherwise specified). The Community & Stakeholder Engagement Officer will implement consultation during construction in collaboration with the EPC Contractor.

Table 6-1: Targets for monitoring AES

Objective	Target	Measurement Method	Timing	Responsible
Local employment target of 50% and targets for employing	At least 50% of the construction workforce are residents of the Queanbeyan-Palerang LGA or Canberra region	Employment records and monthly contractor reports	Monthly during construction	EPC Project Manager

Objective	Target	Measurement Method	Timing	Responsible
- apprentices and trainees, and First Nations people, informed by relevant State and Federal policies and benchmarks - Communicate and provide accountability for the objectives of the employment strategy	Minimum 2% of total workforce identifies as First Nations people	Workforce register and self-identification survey	Quarterly reporting	EPC Project Manager; Community & Stakeholder Engagement Manager
	Minimum 10% of workforce includes apprentices, trainees, or early career workers	Training and HR records from subcontractors	Annually and at project completion	EPC Project Manager
	A least 30% of subcontractors are business registered in Queanbeyan-Palerang LGA or Canberra	Subcontractor registry and business registration checks	Pre-construction and annually	EPC Project Manager
Communicate and provide accountability for the objectives of the accommodation strategy	Secure head leases for at least 10% of identified accommodation capacity in Bungendore, Queanbeyan, and surrounding areas	Leasing agreements and occupancy records	Prior to and during construction	EPC Project Manager
- Community feedback and issue resolution - Gather and integrate learnings for application to this and future projects - Establish and maintain a complaint and feedback system.	All complaints addressed within 10 working days	Stakeholders register and complaints log	Ongoing; reviewed monthly	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Officer

7. References

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Appendix A

List of stakeholders consulted to develop this AES

Stakeholder	Date	Remarks
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council	21-11-2024	Interviewed Manager, Land-use Planning
Coordinator, Economic and Tourism	21-11-2024	Emailed
Hamilton Queanbeyan Motel	22-11-2024	Telephone consultation and Email
Crest Motor Inn	22-11-2024	Telephone consultation and Email
Canberra Ave Villas	22-11-2024	Telephone consultation and Email
Woodlawn Zinc-Copper Project	3-12-2024	Enquiry submitted
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council	23-05-2025	Comments on AES received from the Council

Appendix B

List of potential local sub-contractors

Supplier	Specialisation	Remarks
Divalls/Denrith Pty Ltd	Civil Contractors Earthmoving	Wrote a supportive submission. Experience of having worked in two wind farms.
Ecowise Services	Electrical Services	Wrote a supportive submission
EPC Solar	Renewable Energy Expert	
Solar Hub	Renewable Energy Experts	
Cleanseeds	Irrigation & Ag supplies	Wrote a supportive submission
Bungendore Rural	Ag supplies, water pumps and hardware	Wrote a supportive submission
Taylor's Transport	Transport 8-35 tonnes	
Ellendon Pty Ltd	Fence removal & local transport (less than 8 tonnes)	
Taylor's Engineering	General engineering	
Paragalli Sands	Adjacent sand quarry & bulk earthworks & heavy haulage	
Vacvator vacuum trucks	Vacuum trucks	
Fencing	Fencing contractor	
Electrician	Electrical	There are two suppliers
Plumber	Plumbing	There are two suppliers
Ecology and Heritage Partners	Independent auditors	
Dept of Regional NSW	Upskilling and Accom for renewable projects	

Treeworks Pty Ltd	Tree removal and planting contractor	
Regenerative Landscapes Australia	Tree planting contractor	

Appendix C – Correspondence with the Council for consultation

Sangay Wangchuk

From: Haydon Murdoch <Haydon.Murdoch@qprc.nsw.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 2 December 2024 12:00 PM
To: Sangay Wangchuk
Subject: RE: Blind Creek Solar Farm

10am tomorrow will be fine.

Haydon Murdoch
Manager, Land-use Planning

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
Tel: 1300 735 025
Web: www.qprc.nsw.gov.au
Mail: PO Box 90 Queanbeyan NSW 2620



From: Sangay Wangchuk <sangay.w@nghconsulting.com.au>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 11:58 AM
To: Haydon Murdoch <Haydon.Murdoch@qprc.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Blind Creek Solar Farm

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organisation. Please do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know that the content is safe.

Hi Haydon,

What time tomorrow or Wednesday works for you? I will send a teams invite.

Regards,
Sangay

Sangay Wangchuk
NSW Regional Lead - Communities

m: 0475 243 384
e: sangay.w@nghconsulting.com.au
a: 35 Kincaid Street (PO Box 5464), Wagga Wagga, NSW 2560
w: nghconsulting.com.au | [Our commitment to reconciliation](#)
Monday - Friday



m: 0475 243 384
e: sangay.w@nghconsulting.com.au
a: 35 Kincaid Street (PO Box 5464), Wagga Wagga, NSW 2560
w: nghconsulting.com.au | [Our commitment to reconciliation](#)
Monday - Friday



From: Haydon Murdoch <Haydon.Murdoch@qprc.nsw.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 28 November 2024 12:58 PM
To: Sangay Wangchuk <sangay.w@nghconsulting.com.au>
Subject: Blind Creek Solar Farm

Hi Sangay,

I'm responding to your enquiry regarding an accommodation strategy for the Blind Creek Solar Farm.

Did you want to set up some time to discuss?

Haydon Murdoch
Manager, Land-use Planning

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
Tel: 1300 735 025
Web: www.qprc.nsw.gov.au
Mail: PO Box 90 Queanbeyan NSW 2620



This message has been scanned for malware by Websense. www.websense.com



From: Haydon Murdoch <Haydon.Murdoch@qprc.nsw.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 2 December 2024 11:56 AM
To: Sangay Wangchuk <sangay.w@nghconsulting.com.au>
Subject: RE: Blind Creek Solar Farm

Hi Sangay,

Tomorrow or Wednesday looks good.

Haydon Murdoch
Manager, Land-use Planning

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
Tel: 1300 735 025
Web: www.qprc.nsw.gov.au
Mail: PO Box 90 Queanbeyan NSW 2620



From: Sangay Wangchuk <sangay.w@nghconsulting.com.au>
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2024 11:21 AM
To: Haydon Murdoch <Haydon.Murdoch@qprc.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Blind Creek Solar Farm

[EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organisation. Please do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know that the content is safe.

Hi Haydon,

Thank you so much for getting back to me.

When would be the best time for me to set up a meeting with you?

Regards,
Sangay

Sangay Wangchuk
NSW Regional Lead - Communities

Appendix D – Correspondence with the accommodation provider

Sangay Wangchuk

From: Hamilton's Queanbeyan Motel <res@hamiltonsmotel.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 22 November 2024 1:22 PM
To: Sangay Wangchuk
Subject: RE: Accommodation Strategy Development for Blind Green Solar Farm

Hi Sangay,

It was nice talking to you earlier today.

My understanding is, you may be hiring some locals to do the job and some of them will be travelling interstate to assist in the build phase.

There are roughly 13-14 motels in the Queanbeyan region and altogether there are close to 300 rooms in the region. Some of the properties participate in the School Camp program and have future bookings for kids travelling for camps.

As an estimate, if only 40% of the workforce travel from interstate or say you need accommodation for 40% workforce then you are looking at 120-160 rooms a night.

From my experience, if a motel is interested in participating in this program, they may only offer 30-40% of their rooms in this program depending upon their business model. I am confident that you will be able secure up to 100+ rooms in the region.

The project will certainly improve the economy in the region from the accommodation, food, shopping and leisure perspective.

As discussed, we can offer our three bedroom house at the motel (that can accommodate up to 3-4 ppl) and few other rooms from both the motels. I am happy to discuss this further if you need any information going forward.

Kind Regards,

Jag
Hamilton's Queanbeyan Motel
53 Tharwa Road, Queanbeyan NSW 2620
Email: res@hamiltonsmotel.com.au
Ph: 02 6297 1877
www.hamiltonsmotel.com.au

From: Sangay Wangchuk <sangay.w@nghconsulting.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 22 November 2024 9:12 AM
To: Hamilton's Queanbeyan Motel <res@hamiltonsmotel.com.au>
Subject: Accommodation Strategy Development for Blind Green Solar Farm

Hi Hamilton's Queanbeyan Motel Team Member,

I am reaching out on behalf of Blind Creek Solar Farm Pty Ltd, who have engaged NGH to assist in developing an Accommodation and Employment Strategy (AES) for the Blind Creek Solar Farm (the Project).

The project will be located north of the Bungendore sand and gravel quarry and south of the operational Capital Wind Farm, approximately 30 km southeast of Queanbeyan.

The Project is anticipated to create 300-400 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers during the 12-18-month construction phase and 5-10 FTE staff during the 35-year operational phase. As we develop the AES, we would like to gain some insight into economic and tourism opportunities and challenges in relation to accommodation. With this backdrop, I would like to request some insights into the following:

- How has the coming of other similar projects in the region influenced the accommodation and employment prospects of the region, together with economic and tourism opportunities/challenges
- Which months are generally not busy from an accommodation perspective?
- Will your motel be interested in renting rooms for a year to accommodate workers? If yes, how many rooms?
- What accommodation options should the Project explore to minimise the accommodation stress in the region

I understand that this will be time-consuming for you, and I understand if you can't respond. However, I can be reached on 0475243384 anytime if it is easier for you to call.

Sincerely,
Sangay

Sangay Wangchuk
NSW Regional Lead - Communities

Appendix E – Council comments and response for draft AES

Comments received from Council

From: Kylie Coe <Kylie.Coe@qprc.nsw.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 23 May 2025 4:43 PM
To: David Tullis <dtullis@gransolar.com>
Cc: Sergio Sánchez Arttime <ssanchez@gransolar.com>; Claude Lam <claudelam@octopusinvestments.com>; Marcelo Cummins <marcelo.cummins@octopusinvestments.com>; Tammy Vesely <tammy.v@nghconsulting.com.au>; Jane Love <jane.l@nghconsulting.com.au>
Subject: RE: BLI-QRPC AES management Plan

Good afternoon David,

Thank you for providing Council with the opportunity to comment on the Accommodation and Employment Strategy for the Blind Creek Solar Farm.

Having had recent experience with a gold mine near Braidwood and the effect it had on rental availability and price, the option to take up at least 10% of stock in Bungendore and surrounding villages is not supported by Council. Options in the larger urban centres needs to be explored in more detail and commuting to the site through the provision of bus transport incorporated.

I have also reviewed your median weekly rents in table 4-2, and I note that these are from ABS data of 2021. This data is very old and it is suggested that more up to date rental data be sourced. For example SQM Research which you have used for rental vacancies also provides median rental data. In Braidwood it is currently \$546.75 which is a 64% increase on the rent price provided by you.

I have also reviewed the rental vacancy rates, which I note will also need to be updated. For example, Braidwood currently has a vacancy rate of 2% with 4 rentals available, whilst the report states that rental vacancy is 3.3%. It is a similar situation with Bungendore in that the vacancy rate is currently 2.7% with only 7 vacancies whereas the report states that it is 3.4%. In small communities with a limited rental base, it is important to understand not only the percentage of rentals available but also the number. With only 4 rentals available in Braidwood to take up ½ that stock could have a real detrimental impact to the local community. Similarly, in Bungendore with only 7 rentals available the same situation exists.

The report also states on pg 17 that there is a very limited supply in the locations near the project location yet renting at least 10% of rental availability is still listed as one of the ways in which accommodation will be provided in Table 5-1. Council feels that this needs to be revisited as 10% of stock taken out of the rental market could have a very detrimental impact to the communities close to the project site.

I note in Table 5-1 that one of the measures listed is to contribute to temporary worker's housing supply in Bungendore. Council supports this option and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you as indicated in the strategy.

Kind regards,

Kylie

Kylie Coe
Manager Development

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
Tel: (02) 6285 6244
Web: www.qprc.nsw.gov.au
Mail: PO Box 90 Queanbeyan NSW 2620



Response submitted to Council's comments on 11 June 2025

Version 1 of AES	Council Comments	NGH Response
Where feasible, head lease proximal rental properties in Queanbeyan, Canberra, Bungendore and adjoining villages – target head leasing at least 10% of the total accommodation available to ensure minimal disruption to the local tourism industry and activities.	Having had recent experience with a gold mine near Braidwood and the effect it had on rental availability and price, the option to take up at least 10% of stock in Bungendore and surrounding villages is not supported by Council. Options in the larger urban centres needs to be explored in more detail and commuting to the site through the provision of bus transport incorporated.	NGH acknowledge the Council's concerns regarding the potential pressure on rental availability and pricing in Bungendore and surrounding villages. In recognition of these sensitivities, the AES explicitly specifies that the proposed 10% housing stock allocation includes consideration of larger urban centres such as Queanbeyan and Canberra. These locations are expected to accommodate a significant portion of the workforce. As of May 2025, there were 184 available rental properties in localities around the Project site, including Canberra city, Queanbeyan and Goulburn. Considering larger urban centres where workers will be accommodated, the AES included planned commuting options, including dedicated bus transport to ensure minimal impact on smaller local communities while maintaining accessibility to the project site. The revised 'Measures' now reads: <i>Where feasible, head lease proximal rental properties in Queanbeyan, Canberra, Goulburn, Bungendore, and adjoining villages. Target head leasing of at least 10% of the total available accommodation to ensure minimal disruption to the local tourism industry and community activities. Head leasing will be prioritised outside the immediate vicinity of the project sites to reduce localised housing pressure.</i> Regarding commuting to the site, one of the 'Measures' in the AES reads : <i>Where booking accommodation from larger accommodation suppliers in Queanbeyan, Canberra and Goulburn are arranged, manage scheduling to allow for shuttle buses to the site.</i>
	I have also reviewed your median weekly rents in table 4-2, and I note that these are from ABS data of 2021. This data is very old and it is suggested that more up to date rental data be sourced. For example SQM Research which you have	Thank you for your feedback. We acknowledge that the median weekly rents presented in Table 4-2 were based on ABS 2021 Census data which, while offering a consistent baseline, is now outdated. In response, the revised AES incorporates more recent rental data from SQM Research as of May

	used for rental vacancies also provides median rental data. In Braidwood it is currently \$546.75 which is a 64% increase on the rent price provided by you.	2025 to more accurately reflect current market conditions.
In August 2022, the residential vacancy rate was 0.0% and it increased steadily to 4.0% in March 2023 before it dropped to 2.0% in April 2023 and again increased to 5.0% in August 2023. The lowest after August 2022 was in March 2024 (0.4%). As of October 2024, the rate was 3.3%.	I have also reviewed the rental vacancy rates, which I note will also need to be updated. For example, Braidwood currently has a vacancy rate of 2% with 4 rentals available, whilst the report states that rental vacancy is 3.3%. It is a similar situation with Bungendore in that the vacancy rate is currently 2.7% with only 7 vacancies whereas the report states that it is 3.4%. In small communities with a limited rental base, it is important to understand not only the percentage of rentals available but also the number. With only 4 rentals available in Braidwood to take up ½ that stock could have a real detrimental impact to the local community. Similarly, in Bungendore with only 7 rentals available the same situation exists.	The rental vacancy rates included in the report reflected data available at the time the AES was originally prepared. We acknowledge that these figures are now outdated and agree that in small communities with limited rental stock, both the percentage and absolute number of available rentals are critical to understanding potential impacts. In response, the updated AES now incorporates the most recent vacancy data including number of available rental vacancy, accurate as of April 2025, to ensure a more accurate reflection of current market conditions. The presentation of the revised rental vacancy rate for Braidwood is reflected for your reference. All others are revised in the AES - <i>In August 2022, the residential vacancy rate was 0.0% and increased steadily to 4.0% by March 2023 before dropping to 2.0% in April 2023 and rising again to 5.0% in August 2023. The lowest rate after August 2022 was 0.4% in March 2024. As of April 2025, the vacancy rate stood at 2.0%, corresponding to approximately 4 available rental properties.</i>
Where feasible, head lease proximal rental properties in Queanbeyan, Canberra, Bungendore and adjoining villages – target head leasing at least 10% of the total accommodation available to ensure minimal disruption to the local tourism industry and activities.	The report also states on pg 17 that there is a very limited supply in the locations near the project location yet renting at least 10% of rental availability is still listed as one of the ways in which accommodation will be provided in Table 5-1. Council feels that this needs to be revisited as 10% of stock taken out of the rental market could have a very detrimental impact to the communities close to the project site.	As of May 2025, there were 184 available rental properties in localities surrounding the Project site, including Canberra, Queanbeyan, and Goulburn. 10% of this available stock, equivalent to 18 properties can be prioritised for use, without concentrating demand in the immediate vicinity of the project site. Thus, the revised measure in Table 5-1 now reads as: <i>Where feasible, head lease proximal rental properties in Queanbeyan, Canberra, Goulburn, Bungendore, and adjoining villages. Target head leasing of at least 10% of the total available accommodation to ensure minimal disruption to the local tourism industry and community activities. Head leasing will be prioritised outside</i>

		<i>the immediate vicinity of the project sites to reduce localised housing pressure.</i>
	I note in Table 5-1 that one of the measures listed is to contribute to temporary worker's housing supply in Bungendore. Council supports this option and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you as indicated in the strategy.	The implementation action listed in the AES will be adhered to and the implementation action reads: Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council have indicated availability of empty lands to develop temporary accommodation in Bungendore. Work with the Council to investigate and/or co-deliver workforce camps in Bungendore.

NGH Pty Ltd

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