

Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Apsley BESS

Energy Storage Project No 3 Pty Ltd

24 February 2026



Document version history

Version	Date	Revision description	Author
1.	4 February 2026	Prepare draft plan	Jesika Miller Engagement and Social Planner
2.	9 February 2026	Review and address comments and updated project owner name throughout	Alysia Bradshaw Principal – Engagement and Social Planning
3.	24 February 2026	Finalise working CSEP	Alysia Bradshaw Principal – Engagement and Social Planning

Disclaimer

This Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been prepared in accordance with the brief provided by Premise and Energy Storage Project No 3 Pty Ltd and has relied upon the information available at the time. All findings, recommendations and actions contained in the plan are based on that information. This plan is for the use of Energy Storage Project No 3 Pty Ltd and no responsibility will be taken for its use by other parties. Any party seeking to rely on this plan does so solely at their own risk. Premise or Energy Storage Project No 3 Pty Ltd may, at its discretion, use the plan to inform regulators and the public.

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1. Introduction

This Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) has been developed to guide community and stakeholder engagement activities associated with the Modification of the Apsley BESS (the Modification).

Energy Storage Project No 3 Pty Ltd (the Project Owner) is committed to engagement with the local community and maintaining a long-term relationship between the Project and all stakeholders.

A CSEP should be considered a living document and should be updated regularly in response to community and stakeholder feedback.

1.1. Purpose of this plan

The objectives of this Plan are to:

- outline actions to build connections with key stakeholders and the broader community;
- outline actions that will generate awareness of the Modification including its social, economic and environmental benefits;
- identify and implement strategies to address community issues and concerns about the Modification;
- establish a transparent process for stakeholder engagement; and to
- set out a process to ensure timely responses to external enquiries and complaints

1.2. Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities in Table 1.1 are specific to community engagement and communication and do not reflect other functions and activities being undertaken as part of the Modification. These parties comprise the Project team.

Table 1.1 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Project owner	Media spokesperson Approve Modification communications Review and update this Plan Undertake media monitoring Update and maintain the Project website Identify land access requirements for any field investigations Respond to community mailbox enquiries and monitor phone number
Premise	Engage with regulators Provide technical reports and documents to support Modification communications Identify land access requirements for any field investigations Prepare reports
Onward	Preparation of communication collateral Distribute Modification communications Facilitate community engagement activities and events Maintain stakeholder database Organise and attend landowner meetings Review and provide content for the website Monitor community mailbox and draft responses to be sent by Project Owner Monitor and respond to community phone number Update community engagement register

1.3. Link to other plans

This CSEP has been developed in accordance with various planning documents, government guidelines and industry frameworks for best practice engagement detailed in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 List of plans, guidelines and frameworks for community engagement

Document name	Description and relevance to Project
State significant development guidelines – preparing a modification report (Modification Guidelines) (DPIE, 2022)	Details the community engagement requirements for a modification application, if carried out, including the engagement that was carried out, the key issues raised and where they have been addressed in the modification report and any changes to the approved engagement that would be carried out if the modifications are approved.
Undertaking engagement guidelines for state significant projects (Engagement Guidelines) (DPHI, 2024)	Details the expectations, principles and minimum requirements for undertaking engagement with community and other stakeholders to support an application for state significant development.
International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values and Public Participation Spectrum (IAP2, 2018)	Details the level of participation appropriate to the Modification's level of impact for different stakeholder groups and the tools and methods that will be used to reach them, detailed in Section 4.
AS 10002.2022 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations	Details best practice for managing and responding to complaints and addressed in Appendix A.

2. Project overview

The Apsley Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (the Project) is an approved state significant development (SSD) to construct a 120 MW/240 MWh large-scale battery in Apsley, approximately 10 km south of Wellington, NSW in the Dubbo Regional Council area.

The project developer undertook stakeholder and community engagement during the development of the environmental impact statement (EIS) in 2021 and 2022. Stakeholders included residential and commercial receivers within 2 km of the Project site, Dubbo Regional Council, Dubbo Local Aboriginal Land Council, regulatory agencies and community groups.

During public exhibition of the EIS in September and October 2022, only one submission was received from Dubbo Regional Council. No submissions from members of the public were made.

The Project was approved in June 2023.

A modification application is being prepared for the Project. The Modification includes:

- an allowance to increase the energy storage capacity to 4 hours (increased from 2 hours);
- a connection to the existing 132 kV transmission line to the adjacent Transgrid overhead electricity line
- up to 2 full-time equivalent (FTE) remote operational jobs, up to 6 personnel undertaking ad hoc maintenance activities
- up to 100 FTE construction jobs (additional 50 FTE)
- increasing the construction duration to 18 months

2.1. Timeline

The works program for the Project is currently being finalised. A preliminary program is provided in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 Preliminary Project timeline

Timing	Milestone
December 2025 – March 2026	Prepare Modification application and detailed design
March 2026	Lodge Modification application
Q2 2026	Exhibition and assessment of Modification application
Late 2026	Modification determination
Late 2026	Construction commencement (subject to approval)

2.2. Negotiables

Community engagement is a ‘planned process’ where the Project Owner, the community and other stakeholders work together to shape decisions and actions in relation to an impact, opportunity or outcome of the Project.

However, engagement recognises that although communities and stakeholders may exert influence and have their views clearly heard and considered, they do not (usually) retain the right to make decisions. This requires the Project Owner to be clear about what elements of the Modification are negotiable with the community and stakeholders.

The following aspects of the Modification are negotiable and open to involvement or collaboration with community and stakeholders:

- tools for engaging with community and stakeholders, along with frequency and timing of engagement;
- identification of perceived and real Modification impacts; and
- suggestions for management and mitigation of the Modification’s possible impacts during construction and operation.

2.3. Considerations

The original application for development consent pre-dates the latest guidelines for SSD community engagement. There has also been a significant shift in the political and social climate towards renewable energy projects since the development consent was issued as well as the creation of Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWOREZ).

Based on similar projects in the CWOREZ, and elsewhere across NSW, the Modification may attract some small community interest.

Cumulative impacts are also more likely to be a factor now compared to the original development application, due to the creation of the CWOREZ and the number of renewable energy projects in development, construction or operation in the region.

2.4. Key messages

2.4.1. Apsley BESS

The Apsley BESS is an approved large-scale battery project which will connect to the existing transmission network. Apsley BESS will deliver 120 MW of power contributing to a more reliable, secure and diverse energy system.

The project is located 10 km south of Wellington, NSW. Site access will be provided via a new dedicated entrance from the Mitchell Highway. The project has been designed to decrease visibility and minimise disruption to the community and highway traffic.

The operational life of the project is at least 30 years.

The site would be progressively rehabilitated during and following the construction period, including removal of the temporary construction facilities.

At the end of operational life, above ground components would be removed and the land will be rehabilitated to pre-development conditions.

2.4.2. Batteries

Large-scale battery systems are a proven technology that contribute to the stability and reliability of the National Electricity Market. Battery systems have been developed to support the increased number of renewable energy sources that are emerging across Australia.

Large-scale battery systems charge during the day when solar and wind farms are generating electricity and demand is low, and release the stored energy back into the grid at night when Australian households need it most (high demand).

2.4.3. Benefits

The project will improve the reliability and stability of the local electricity grid, helping to prevent blackouts and network disruptions. The project site was selected for its direct access to the transmission system.

The project will also generate 100 full-time equivalent jobs during construction, as well as ongoing roles during operations and maintenance.

The Project Owner has entered into a planning agreement with Dubbo Regional Council to provide:

- a payment of \$120,000 up front at the commencement of commercial operations
- a further payment of \$230,000 to be paid at the start of the fifth year of operations

This planning agreement formed part of the original development consent. Any additional benefits as a result of the Modification would be negotiated with Dubbo Regional Council.

2.4.4. Modification application

Apsley BESS is a state significant development and was approved by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces in 2023. Under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, approval can be sought from the Minister to amend the development consent provided the development is substantially the same as the existing approved development.

The Project Owner has engaged local consultancy Premise to prepare a modification application. This includes an assessment of the project as well as specialist investigations to determine what, if any, impacts the project will have on the environment and community. Where impacts are identified, the Project Owner is required to avoid, minimise or mitigate those impacts.

Once the modification application has been lodged with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, the documents will be made available on the Major Projects Portal for public viewing.

2.4.5. What would be changed

The Project Owner is seeking to modify the existing approval for Apsley BESS to increase the duration of the BESS from 2 to 4 hours. The maximum output of the BESS will not change from 120 MW but the system would have the capacity to discharge for a longer period of time.

The Project owner is seeking to increase the storage capacity of the Project by using fewer smaller and more efficient battery containers. This will reduce the number of battery containers from 138 to 96.

The construction and installation of additional containers will require a larger workforce, and the Project Owner is proposing to increase the number of construction workers from 50 full-time equivalent personnel to 100 personnel. The number of ongoing roles to undertake ad hoc maintenance would also increase from 4 to 6 personnel.

2.4.6. Engagement and consultation

The Project Owner and their partners are committed to open communication, genuine engagement and ensuring the community experiences no surprises.

Neighbours and key stakeholders have been offered meetings with the Project team.

Feedback about the Apsley BESS or the proposed Modification is welcome at any time.

- Community phone 1800 329 172
- Community inbox apsley@bw-ess.com
- Website www.apsley-bess.com

3. Stakeholders

3.1. Stakeholder context

Key social and demographic indicators for the communities close to the Project site help us identify and understand which stakeholders may be interested in or impacted by the Modification. For this Plan a stakeholder is defined as an individual, group of individuals, organisation, or political entity with an interest in the Modification. A stakeholder may be, or perceive that they may be, impacted directly or indirectly by the Modification.

Dubbo LGA is located on the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri people, the largest Aboriginal nation in NSW and one of the largest Aboriginal nations in Australia. The Wiradjuri are known as the people of the three rivers: the Wambool (Macquarie River), Kalare (Lachlan River) and the Murrumbidgee River. Wiradjuri Country extends across large areas of central NSW.

The localities of Apsley and Neurea are predominantly comprised of rural residential properties. The Mitchell Highway connects Apsley and Neurea to the nearest servicing town, Wellington. The Wellington town centre is located about 10 km north of the Project site.

Some features of the local area include Osawano Japanese Gardens, Wellington Caves, Wellington Caves Holiday Park, and the Wellington Golf Club. Wellington Caves and the Osawano Japanese Gardens are key tourist attractions which draw significant visitors from outside the area.

At the time of the 2021 Census, the combined population of the local area was 245 people, where 32 residents, or 13.1%, identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. While the area had a higher median age (49 years) compared to Regional NSW (43 years), there was a lower proportion of people aged over 65 years.

3.2. Stakeholder mapping

From a review of the social context, we have identified the following key stakeholder groups who may have an interest in the Modification:

- Dubbo Regional Council – Councillors and staff
- NSW government – MPs and agencies
- Federal government – MPs and agencies
- Landholders – associated and non-associated
- Residents – Apsley
- First Nations and Traditional Owners
- business – representative bodies, potential suppliers and individual
- industry – representative bodies
- educational institutions
- community organisations
- special interest groups
- media – traditional and digital

We have assessed each stakeholder to identify their level of interest, impact and influence. Each is rated high, medium or low using the definitions in Table 3.1. This allows us to see at a glance where and how to allocate engagement resources.

Table 3.1 Definitions of stakeholder levels of interest, impact and influence matrix

	Level of interest	Level of impact	Level of influence
High	The stakeholder actively seeks information or involvement, closely monitors project decisions, and may advocate strongly for specific outcomes.	The stakeholder experiences direct, material and ongoing impacts from the project (e.g. land use change, amenity, access, livelihood, statutory responsibilities). Impacts may be difficult to avoid or mitigate and could generate strong responses.	The stakeholder has formal decision-making authority, approval powers, or strong capacity to affect outcomes (e.g. regulators, consent authorities, landowners, peak bodies).
Medium	The stakeholder has a general or situational interest, engages periodically, and may become more active at key milestones or if issues arise.	The stakeholder experiences noticeable but limited or intermittent impacts. Impacts are generally manageable, localised or temporary, and unlikely to significantly alter core interests or operations.	The stakeholder can influence outcomes indirectly through advocacy, expertise, public opinion, or advisory roles, but does not hold final authority.
Low	The stakeholder has limited awareness or concern, and is unlikely to engage unless prompted or directly affected.	The stakeholder experiences minimal or no direct impact. Any effects are indirect, minor or largely informational in nature.	The stakeholder has limited ability to influence decisions, beyond providing feedback or participating in consultation processes.

After assigning stakeholders levels of interest, impact and influence, engagement approaches for each stakeholder group or individual can be recommended. Guidance for the engagement approaches has been detailed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Engagement approach guidance

Stakeholder profile	Recommended engagement approach
High impact / high influence	Active, ongoing engagement. Involve early in project design and decision-making. Maintain regular two-way communication.
High impact / medium influence	Proactive and structured engagement. Focus on understanding concerns, managing impacts, and preventing escalation. Provide regular updates and targeted opportunities to input.
High impact / low influence	Supportive, transparent engagement. Prioritise impact mitigation, clear explanations, and accessible complaint and feedback pathways.
Medium impact / high influence	Strategic engagement at key milestones. Seek advice and alignment on matters within their remit. Maintain relationships to avoid late-stage issues.
Medium impact / medium influence	Periodic engagement. Provide timely information and opportunities to comment at key stages. Monitor for changes in interest or influence.
Medium impact / low influence	Inform and monitor. Use broad communications and respond as needed to emerging issues.
Low impact / high influence	Targeted engagement focused on compliance, endorsement or risk management. Keep informed of decisions and timing.
Low impact / medium influence	Keep informed. Engage if issues arise or if their influence increases over time.
Low impact / low influence	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.

A detailed stakeholder map, showing the stakeholder groups or individuals assigned with levels of interest, impact and influence, as the recommended engagement approach, can be found in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Stakeholder mapping

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Issues	Interest level	Impact level	Influence level	Engagement approach	Tools
Local Government	Dubbo Regional Council	Traffic and transport Environmental impacts Cumulative impacts Construction workforce housing Water sourcing for construction Community benefits	Medium	Medium	High	Strategic engagement at key milestones. Seek advice and alignment on matters within their remit. Maintain relationships to avoid late-stage issues.	Agency referral Email Briefing Website
	Councillors - Dubbo	Community engagement Community benefits Cumulative impacts	Medium	Low	Medium	Targeted engagement focused on compliance, endorsement or risk management. Keep informed of decisions and timing.	Briefing Website
State Government	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)	Application exhibition and assessment	High	Low	High	Targeted engagement focused on compliance, endorsement or risk management. Keep informed of decisions and timing.	Meetings Major Projects Portal
	Minister for Planning and Public Spaces	Consent authority	Medium	Low	High	Targeted engagement focused on compliance, endorsement or risk management. Keep informed of decisions and timing.	DPHI referral
	Transport for NSW (TfNSW)	Transport and related infrastructure	Low	Medium	High	Strategic engagement at key milestones. Seek advice and alignment on matters within their remit. Maintain relationships to avoid late-stage issues.	Agency referral
	Rural Fire Service (RFS)	Fire risk	Medium	Medium	Medium	Periodic engagement. Provide timely information and opportunities to comment at key stages. Monitor for changes in interest or influence.	Agency referral

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Issues	Interest level	Impact level	Influence level	Engagement approach	Tools
	Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR)	Environmental impacts	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Agency referral
	Crown Land	Land Use	Low	Low	Low	Inform and monitor	Agency referral
	EnergyCo	REZ infrastructure and investment	Low	Low	Low	Inform and monitor	Emails Website
	Transgrid	Substation owner	Medium	Medium	High	Strategic engagement at key milestones. Seek advice and alignment on matters within their remit. Maintain relationships to avoid late-stage issues.	Connection request
	ACERZ (Network operator for the CWO REZ consortium comprised of ACCIONA, COBRA and Endeavour Energy)	REZ infrastructure	Low	Low	Low	Inform and monitor	Emails Meetings
Federal Government	Hon Mark Coulton MP (Nationals)	Cumulative impacts Community interests Media opportunities Employment	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Email Briefing Website
	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)	EPBC referral Environmental compliance	Low	Low	Medium	Keep informed. Engage if issues arise or if their influence increases over time.	Agency referral (if required)
	Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)	Electricity storage and capacity Effects on energy supply	Medium	Low	Medium	Keep informed. Engage if issues arise or if their influence increases over time.	Website
Landowners	Associated	Existing agreement Fire risk Assessment process	High	N/A	High	Active, ongoing engagement. Involve early in project design and decision-making. Maintain regular two-way communication.	Meetings

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Issues	Interest level	Impact level	Influence level	Engagement approach	Tools
	Non-associated/neighbour	Fire risk Contamination/biosecurity Property values Visual impacts Noise and vibration impacts Construction impacts Compliance with conditions of consent	High	Medium	Medium	Proactive and structured engagement. Focus on understanding concerns, managing impacts, and preventing escalation. Provide regular updates and targeted opportunities to input.	Meetings Letters Email Door-knock
First Nations	Dubbo Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)	Aboriginal and cultural heritage Employment and supply opportunities	Medium	Low	High	Targeted engagement focused on compliance, endorsement or risk management. Keep informed of decisions and timing.	Email Briefing Website
	Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)	Aboriginal and cultural heritage Employment and supply opportunities	Medium	Low	High	Targeted engagement focused on compliance, endorsement or risk management. Keep informed of decisions and timing.	Email Briefing Website
	Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)	Aboriginal cultural heritage	Medium	Low	High	Targeted engagement focused on compliance, endorsement or risk management. Keep informed of decisions and timing.	Email Website
Mining license holders	Colossus Metals Pty Ltd	Land use	Low	Medium	Low	Inform and monitor. Use broad communications and respond as needed to emerging issues.	Email website
	Silver City Minerals Limited	Land use	Low	Medium	Low	Inform and monitor. Use broad communications and respond as needed to emerging issues.	Email website
	Sultan Resources	Land use	Low	Medium	Low	Inform and monitor. Use broad communications and respond as needed to emerging issues.	Email website

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Issues	Interest level	Impact level	Influence level	Engagement approach	Tools
Special interest	NSW Farmers Association Wellington Branch	Land use	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	Dubbo Field Naturalist and Conservation Society	Land use Environmental impacts Sustainability Biodiversity	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	Mid Macquarie Landcare	Environmental impacts Sustainability Biodiversity	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	Transition Dubbo	Jobs Cumulative impacts	Medium	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	Dubbo Environmental Group	Environmental impacts Sustainability Biodiversity	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	Central West Environment Council	Environmental impacts Sustainability Biodiversity	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	CWOREZist Inc	Environmental impacts Fire risk Loss of agricultural land Human health and wellbeing Rationale for renewables	High	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
Education	Wellington Public School	STEAM programs Impacts on local services	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	Wellington High School	Jobs Impacts on local services	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Issues	Interest level	Impact level	Influence level	Engagement approach	Tools
Business	Wellington Caves	Traffic Noise and vibration	Medium	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	Caravan Park	Traffic Noise and vibration Accommodation	Medium	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	Japanese Garden (Osawana Japanese Garden)	Traffic Noise and vibration	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	Wellington Golf Club	Traffic	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
	Wellington Bottle House	Traffic	Low	Low	Low	General information only. Minimal ongoing engagement required.	Website
Media	Wellington Times	Environmental and social impacts	Medium	Low	Medium	Keep informed. Engage if issues arise or if their influence increases over time.	Website
	Wellington District Leader newspaper	Jobs and skills shortages Impacts on local services					
	Dubbo Daily Liberal	Impacts on housing and accommodation					
	Renew Economy	Cumulative impacts Employment opportunities					

4. Approach to engagement

The approach to engagement has been developed in line with processes established in the Engagement Guidelines and the Modification Guidelines. The approach has been scaled to reflect the likely Modification impacts and the anticipated level of stakeholder interest.

4.1. Principles

Community engagement for SSDs recommends the use of the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum (Figure 1).

The Spectrum identifies five levels of engagement, the goal of each level and stakeholders' roles in decision-making and implementation. The greater the impact of the Project on a stakeholder, the greater their input into the decision-making should be. The selection of tools and methods by a proponent should reflect the required participation level.

Using the IAP2 Spectrum, the engagement approach for the Project is a combination of inform and consult.

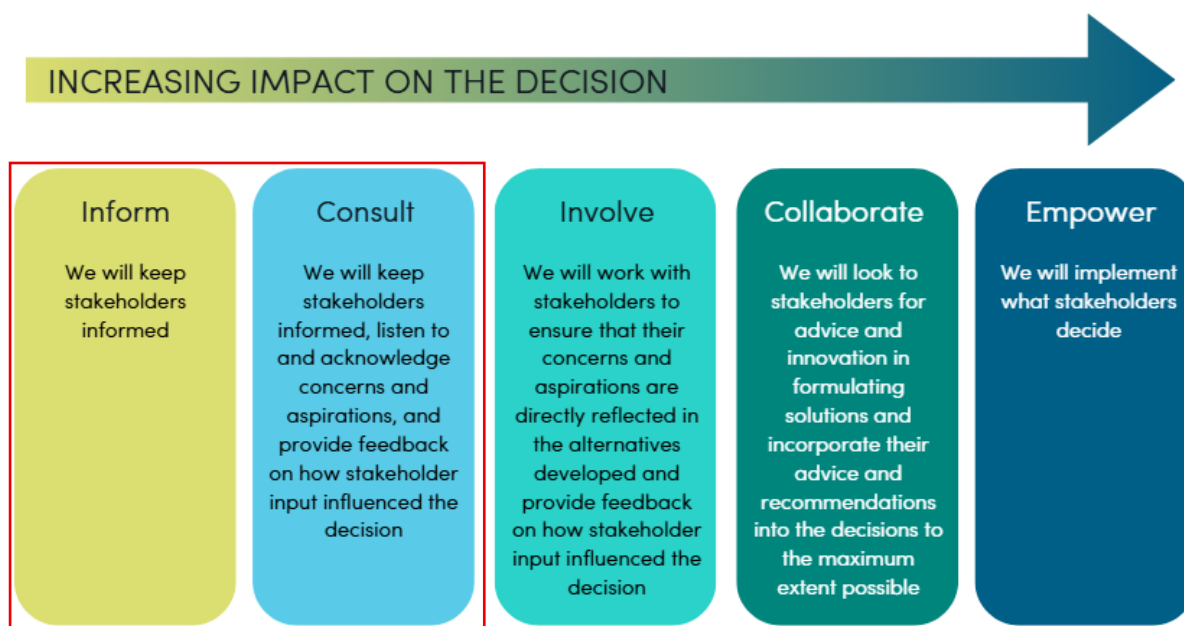


Figure 1 Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP2)

4.2. Previous engagement

A comprehensive CSEP was developed to inform the preparation of the EIS in 2022. Engagement activities undertaken included:

- meetings with local members and councillors to provide project updates
- doorknocks, letters and meetings with non-associated landholders (41 letters delivered)
- emails and calls to key stakeholders, community groups and regulators (one phone and three email enquiries received)
- advertisement in the Wellington Times
- two online information sessions (no attendees)

- survey as part of the social impact assessment (one response received)

Key feedback from engagement undertaken during the preparation of the EIS included:

- community benefits – those spoken to during property visits recognised the positive impact of renewable energy projects in the region
- visual amenity – concerns about visual impacts and any noise attenuation walls that may be required
- noise impacts – concerns about the potential for night-time noise
- safety – concerns about site safety, the risk of fire, as well as contamination and leakage from battery units
- site access – concerns about the potential for traffic conflict during construction
- vibration – Wellington Caves had concerns about the impact of vibration

Based on participation in engagement activities undertaken as part of development of the EIS, and the small number of receivers located within 2km of the Project site, it is likely interest in the Modification will remain low.

4.3. Tools

A range of online and offline tools will be used to communicate with and engage stakeholders during preparation of the Modification application, as set out in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 List of engagement and communication tools

Tool	Detail	Participation level
Briefings	Briefings will be facilitated wither online or in-person with Council, LALC, Traditional owners and state MP. Briefings/meeting provide an overview of the Modification, its possible impacts and benefits and provide stakeholders an opportunity for feedback.	Inform Consult
Doorknocking	Doorknocking allows stakeholders to meet the Project team and provide contact details for future Project communication.	Inform Consult
Email inbox	A Project email inbox allows the community to ask questions, share their views, issues and concerns and provide feedback.	Inform Consult
Letters	Letters will be drafted and delivered to residential and commercial receivers within 2 km via a door knock and letter box drop. The letters provided an overview of the proposed Modification, an offer to meet virtually or in person, and how to provide feedback on the Modification. The letter also provided a link to the Project website.	Inform
Meetings	Meetings will be offered to landowners and sensitive receivers who were engaged during the EIS phase.	Inform Consult
Phone line	The phone line provides the community with an accessible channel to contact the Project team, ask questions and provide feedback.	Inform Consult
Website	A stand-alone Project website was created during the EIS. This website will be updated to reflect the Modification.	Inform Consult

4.4. Delivery plan

The level of engagement that will be undertaken during the preparation of the Modification is proportionate to the anticipated level of impact of the changes proposed and the regulatory framework. The activities proposed for this period are detailed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Action plan for engagement during the preparation of the modification application

Due date	Activity	Purpose	Stakeholder group	Responsible party	Status
6 February 2026	Draft CSEP	To provide guidance for engagement and communication activities to inform and consult on the Modification	Premise Project Owner	Onward	Complete
6 February 2026	Review website content	To update content to reflect the Modification and detail new communication channels	Project Owner	Onward	Complete
13 February 2026	Finalise CSEP	To provide a consistent approach for engagement that meets the guidelines	All	Onward	Complete
18 February 2026	Prepare draft letters	To provide an overview of the Modification, provide project contact information, and offer meetings	Landowners State MP Council	Onward	Complete
18 February 2026	Update website content		All	Project Owner	Complete
23 February 2026	Review and approve draft letters		Onward	Premise Project Owner	Complete
27 February 2026	Finalise letters		Landowners State MP Council	Onward	Complete
As required	Respond to phone line	To provide a communication channel to receive and respond to enquiries and complaints	Landowners Community Business Special interest groups	Onward	Complete
As required	Respond to email enquires	To provide a communication channel to receive and respond to enquiries and complaints	Landowners Community Business Special interest groups	Onward	Complete
w/c 23 February 2026	Virtual briefings/meetings	To provide an overview and collect feedback about the Modification	DPHI	Premise	Under way
2-3 March 2026	Doorknock landowners, deliver letters, landowner meetings	To collect contact details, listen to concerns and collect feedback about the Modification	Landowners	Onward	Complete
5 and 30 March 2026	Virtual briefings/meetings	To provide an overview and collect	Dubbo Regional Council State MP	Project Owner Premise	Under way

Due date	Activity	Purpose	Stakeholder group	Responsible party	Status
		feedback about the Modification			
24 March 2026	Prepare draft engagement chapter for Modification Report	To collate and summarise engagement undertaken, and community issues raised	Premise Project Owner	Onward	Complete
25 March 2026	Review draft engagement chapter		Onward	Premise	
31 March 2026	Finalise draft engagement chapter		Premise Project Owner	Onward	

4.5. Future engagement

If the Modification is approved, Project engagement with community and stakeholders will continue in preparation for commencement of construction, in conjunction with an updated CSEP plan and any conditions of consent and the Engagement Guidelines.

The CSEP will be updated to reflect and relevant conditions of consent changes, or needs of the stakeholders.

5. Communication protocols

5.1. Stakeholder management database

A spreadsheet will be created to securely record details of all interactions and correspondence with stakeholders related to the Project. Members of the Project team will be required to enter their interactions into the database within two business days.

Personal information is handled according to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and NSW state laws, including the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*. These laws mandate strict guidelines for collecting, storing, using, and disclosing personal information including rights to access, correct, and complain.

The spreadsheet will record:

- date and time of interaction;
- method of interaction e.g. phone, email, meeting;
- stakeholder name;
- stakeholder contact information e.g. phone number, email address, residential address;
- nature of enquiry or complaint including identifying any issues/concerns;
- follow-up actions (if required); and
- link to communication e.g. email or correspondence.

The database will be used to:

- record all interactions with stakeholders and the community, and any actions resulting from these interactions;
- track the progress and closeout of enquiries and complaints;
- identify trending issues and opportunities;
- enable the implementation and mitigation of strategies;
- maintain accurate contact details of stakeholders;
- demonstrate that the Project Owner have and carried out the 'inform' and consult' components of the (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum; and
- prepare the engagement section of the Modification report.

5.2. Enquiries and complaints

Responding to complaints, feedback and enquiries is essential to the successful delivery of the Project and maintaining a positive reputation within the community. Complaints, feedback and enquiries may be received from a range of sources including phone calls, emails and face-to-face interactions.

An enquiry is defined as a question or request for information. A complaint is defined as a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. Complaints may also be accompanied by threats to contact the media, local MP or some other authority.

Complaints and enquiries may be received via phone, email, website submission, post or in person. They may be received by any member of the Project team, including Project Owner representatives, consultants, or contractors.

The management processes for complaints and enquiries can be found in Appendix A

5.3. Government relations

NSW and Commonwealth MPs for the area, relevant Ministers, and councils will be offered the opportunity for briefings by request.

Premise is responsible for coordinating and managing regulatory stakeholders, sharing Modification communications and recording interactions in the stakeholder database. Premise may delegate this responsibility to a contractor or sub-contractor.

5.4. Media relations

From time to time, the Project Owner may choose to issue media releases to provide an update on the Modification or the Project for the benefit of the community, media, and other stakeholders.

All media relations must be managed in accordance with the Project Owner's policies. A copy of the relevant policies should be provided to anyone working on the Modification.

To enable a coordinated and consistent response to media inquiries, all approaches by the media for comment or interviews, regardless of the topic, must be directed to the Project Owner.

This extends to media opportunities offered as part of sponsorships, conferences or events. It also covers any media opportunities that may arise out of normal business hours where the potential exists for an employee or contractor to be linked to the company.

6. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

6.1. Monitoring

Regular monitoring of engagement and communication activities ensures this Plan is delivering on its objectives. Monitoring can take many forms and includes environmental scanning to tracking community and stakeholder sentiment and trends. This can be by way of media and social media monitoring, feedback received through formal and informal channels, feedback received through engagement activities and regular analysis of complaints and enquiries received.

The Project Owner may elect to establish media monitoring and analytics tools to monitor wider sentiment and trends.

At the conclusion of engagement to support the Modification application, it is recommended the Project Owner review and update this CSEP, as required, for the next phase of the Project's development.

6.2. Reporting

Feedback received while undertaking engagement activities will be recorded in the stakeholder database which will be a live, shared document accessible by Premise and the Project Owner at any time.

6.3. Evaluation

The Project Owner should evaluate engagement activities against this Plan's engagement objectives using multiple sources of evaluation data. Evaluation should establish metrics and targets to determine whether data should be trending up, down or remain the same.

Due to the short duration of the engagement period associated with the Modification, evaluation is most appropriate at the conclusion of this engagement (Q2 2026).

An evaluation framework for engagement for the Modification is detailed in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Evaluation methodology

Area of evaluation	Quantitative metrics	Qualitative metrics	Source
Process - how well is the engagement designed?	# complaints received about engagement process # enquiries received about engagement process % enquiries and complaints closed out within agreed timeframes	- Participant sentiment to engagement process - Responsiveness to requests for different engagement methods, delivery	- Website analytics - Project team debrief - Stakeholder feedback - Stakeholder database
Relevance - is the engagement appropriate and is the community participating in the engagement process?	# calls received # emails received # meetings held	- Media sentiment - Participation and engagement in discussions	- Stakeholder feedback - Webpage analytics - Stakeholder database
Reach - are we reaching those affected and/or interested in the decision?	# people who viewed the Project webpage # receivers engaged with # key stakeholders / regulators engaged	- Diversity of participants across stakeholder groups - Participation from previously known stakeholders	- Webpage analytics - Stakeholder feedback - Stakeholder database

Area of evaluation	Quantitative metrics	Qualitative metrics	Source
Outcomes - are we achieving the objectives of the engagement process? • generate awareness of the Modification including its social, economic and environmental benefits • build connections with key stakeholders and the broader community • establish a robust and transparent process to engage with stakeholders and community • provide engagement opportunities, communication and feedback channels for community to provide input and feedback and get involved • ensure timely responses are given to Modification enquiries and complaints • identify and implement strategies to address community issues and concerns about the Modification	• # submissions received • % of objections received during public exhibition • % of sensitive receptors contacted • % enquiries and complaints closed out within agreed timeframes • # opportunities for feedback provided • % engagement actions delivered as per CSEP	• Did general awareness of the Apsley BESS increase? • What is the level of community support? • Have we strengthened relationships and connections with key contacts? • Was the process robust and transparent? • Did we amend communication and engagement in response to community feedback? • Were enquiries and complaints responded to within agreed timeframes? • Did we amend the Modification design in response to feedback? • Did we address real and perceived Modification impacts? • Availability of resources to respond to complaints/ enquiries	• Project team debrief • Project budget • Action plan • Stakeholder feedback

Appendix A

Enquiries and complaints management

A.1 Enquiry management process

The Project team will:

- provide a response in accordance with the timeframes set out in Table A.1
- refer enquiries not associated with Project's activities to the relevant authority, if known
- record all interactions in the stakeholder database within two business days

Appendix Table A.1 Enquiry and resolution timeframes

Source	Required acknowledgement	Target response time	Required resolution
Community phone line	Within 1 business day	3 business days	10 business days
Email	Within 1 business day	3 business days	10 business days
Letter	N/A	5 business days	15 business days
In person	Immediate	3 business days	10 business days

A.2 Complaint management process

The Project team will:

- respond to all complaints regarding the Modification
- investigate and determine the source of a complaint immediately, including an initial call to the complainant (when received by phone or where a number was provided or available on the stakeholder database)
- provide a response in accordance with the timeframes set out in Table A.2
- keep the complainant informed of the process until the complaint is resolved
- take action and implement measures to prevent the reoccurrence of the complaint where possible
- record details of the complaint in a Complaints Register
- refer complaints not associated with the Modification activities to the relevant authority, if known
- provide a copy of the Complaints Register to the relevant authorities, as required

Appendix Table A.2 Complaint response and resolution timeframes

Source	Required acknowledgement	Target response time	Required resolution
Community phone line	Within 2 business days	21 business days	3 business days
Email/website enquiry form	Within 2 business days	1 business day	3 business days
Letter	NA	NA	10 business days
In person	Immediate	1 business day	3 business days

The Complaints Register will record:

- date of complaint
- complainant contact details, where known
- who received the complaint
- issues raised
- the Modification's response to the complaint, including any actions taken to rectify or resolve the issue so it does not occur again

- a copy of any response provided by the complainant
- status – outstanding, in progress or closed
- duration taken to resolve and whether this fell within the Modification's complaints response timeframe and/or any licensing condition/s

A.3 Complaints Register – construction

Once approved, a complaints management system will be implemented in preparation for construction. The system would be maintained throughout the construction period and for a minimum of 12 months after construction finishes, and in accordance with the conditions of approval.

The complaints management system would include the following:

- a 24-hour, 7 days a week response line for construction complaints and enquiries
- a postal and email address to which complaints and enquiries may be sent
- publication of contact details in local newspapers and on the Modification website
- management of complaints in accordance with internal complaints management procedure and the conditions of approval including:
 - steps to receive, manage and take appropriate action in relation to community enquiries and complaints
 - verbal and written responses describing what action will be taken provided to the complainant within agreed time limits
- a complaints register to record all enquiries, complaints and contact with community members and stakeholders.
- a system for managing unresolved complaints
- reporting requirements in accordance with the formal conditions of approval