APPENDIX P UPDATED SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PREPARED FOR

Athena Energy Australia (Holdings) Pty Ltd

DATE
08 April 2025

REFERENCE
0657132

Bendemeer Solar Farm

Social Impact Assessment

DOCUMENT DETAILS

DOCUMENT TITLE	Bendemeer Solar Farm
DOCUMENT SUBTITLE	Social Impact Assessment
PROJECT NUMBER	0657132
Date	08 April 2025
Version	7.02
Author	Hilton Penfold
Client name	Athena Energy Australia (Holdings) Pty Ltd

DOCUMENT HISTORY

				ERM APPROVAL TO ISSUE		
VERSION	REVISION	AUTHOR	REVIEWED BY	NAME	DATE	COMMENTS
1	00	R. Provis	L. Penny	M. Davey	03.03.2023	Draft for Review
2	00	H. Penfold	L. Penny	M. Davey	05.04.2023	Draft
3	00	H. Penfold	L. Penny	M. Davey	07.06.2023	Final Draft
4	00	H. Penfold	L. Penny	M. Davey	09.06.2023	Final
5	00	H. Penfold	L. Penny	M. Davey	06.07.2023	Update
6	00	H. Penfold	L. Penny	M. Davey	12.01.2024	Update Draft– DPE Comments & Submissions
7	00	H. Penfold	P. Saad	M. Davey	18.03.2025	Final Update for client review
7	01	H. Penfold	P. Saad	M. Davey	04.04.2025	Final Update
7	02	H. Penfold	P. Saad	M. Davey	08.04.2025	Final

SIGNATURE PAGE

Bendemeer Solar Farm

Social Impact Assessment

0657132

Tom Parry
Managing Consultant

Mark Davey
Partner

Dr. Hilton Penfold
Consultant

Louis Penny
Principal Consultant

Environmental Resources Management
Australia Pty Ltd
Level 14 207 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000
T +61 2 8584 8888

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms	Description
AAS	Australian Anthropological Society
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABN	Australian Business Number
ACHAR	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report
AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System
APAC	Asia-Pacific Region
BDAR	Biodiversity Development Assessment Report
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CBF	Community Benefit Fund
CHAR	Cultural Heritage Assessment Report
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
CWA	Country Women's Association
DP	Deposited Plan
DPE	NSW Department of Planning and Environment (formerly DPIE)

Acronyms	Description
DPIE	NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMF	Electromagnetic Frequency
EPBC	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999
EPC	Engineering, Procurement and Construction
ERM	Environmental Resources Management
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
DC	Direct Current
DPE	NSW Department of Planning and Environment
GPG	Global Power Generation Australia
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
GW	Gigawatts
ha	Hectares
HV	High Voltage
Hwy	Highway
IAIA	International Association for Impact Assessment
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
ICN	Industry Capability Network
ICNG	Interim Construction Noise Guideline
IRSAD	Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage
km	Kilometres
kV	Kilovolts
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LEP	Local Employment Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement
LV	Low Voltage
m	Metres
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
MP	Member of Parliament
MW	Megawatts
NPI	National Pollutant Inventory
NSW	New South Wales
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OEH	Former Office of Environment and Heritage

Acronyms	Description
OHL	Overhead Line
OSOM	Oversized and Overmass
PADs	Potential Archaeological Deposits
PCU	Power Conversion Units
PIA	Planning Institute of Australia
PV	Photovoltaic
QLD	Queensland
RAPs	Registered Aboriginal Parties
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
RSL	Returned Services League
RU1	Rural Landscape Primary Production land zoning
RU4	Rural Landscape Primary Production Small Lots land zoning
RU5	Rural Landscape Village land zoning
SA1	ABS Statistical Area 1
SA EPA	South Australia Environmental Protection Agency
SAL	Suburb and Locality
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements
SEIFA	ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SES	State Emergency Service
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SIMP	Social Impact Management Plan
SISD	Safe Intersection Sight Distance
SSD	State Significant Development
TO	Traditional Owner
UCL	Urban Centre Locality
WAS	Workforce Accommodation Strategy
WHO	World Health Organisation

1. INTRODUCTION

Athena Energy Australia (Holdings) Pty Ltd ('Athena' or the 'Applicant') proposes to construct, operate, and decommission the Bendemeer Solar Farm (the 'Project') in Bendemeer, New South Wales (NSW).

The Applicant is seeking State Significant Development (SSD) consent under Part 4, Division 4.7 of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) for the Project. Athena has engaged Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd (ERM) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project, as part of the SSD consent process.

This report comprises the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) undertaken for the Project, which was completed in line with the Department for Planning and Environment's (DPE) Social Impact Assessment Guideline: For State Significant Projects (the 'Guideline') (DPE 2023a) and DPE's Technical Supplement: Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects (Technical Supplement) (DPE 2023b).

This SIA report has been amended (hereafter referred to as the Amended SIA) to address comments provided by DPE (dated October 2023) and the Submissions received during the exhibition of the EIS (which ended on 23 August 2023), as well as the amendments detailed in the Bendemeer Solar Farm Amendment Report (ERM 2024).

1.1 PROJECT APPLICANT

Athena was founded in Australia in 2019 and is a subsidiary of Athena Energy Holdings Pte Ltd, wholly owned by Metis Energy Limited (Metis). Headquartered in Singapore, Metis's core business spans a range of renewable energy generation technologies, including solar, wind and energy storage projects. Metis develops, finances, constructs, owns, and operates its projects as a fully integrated renewable energy company, with a genuine long-term approach.

Metis's core focus in Australia is long-term, created through project development and delivery of a sustainable pipeline of projects. Metis aims to deliver world-class projects to meet growing energy demands, supplying renewable energy at a competitive cost. Metis has a deep understanding of the sector through proven delivery of renewable energy across the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region.

As a responsible company with a long-term vision, demonstrated through a sustainable growth strategy and strong financing capabilities, underpinned by community engagement, Metis is committed to integrating internationally recognised environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards into its business practices.

As a key player in the low-carbon energy transition, Metis currently has more than 2 gigawatts (GW) in renewables projects under development or operational in the APAC region. Metis's goal is to own and operate a portfolio of renewable energy production in Australia to support the Australia's energy transition, whilst contributing to a global net zero future and greener society.

Athena's Australian Business Number (ABN) and address are listed below:

- **ABN**: 69 630 577 418; and
- **Address**: C/- Bell Partners Suite 302 LV2 279B, Marius St, Tamworth, NSW 2340.

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

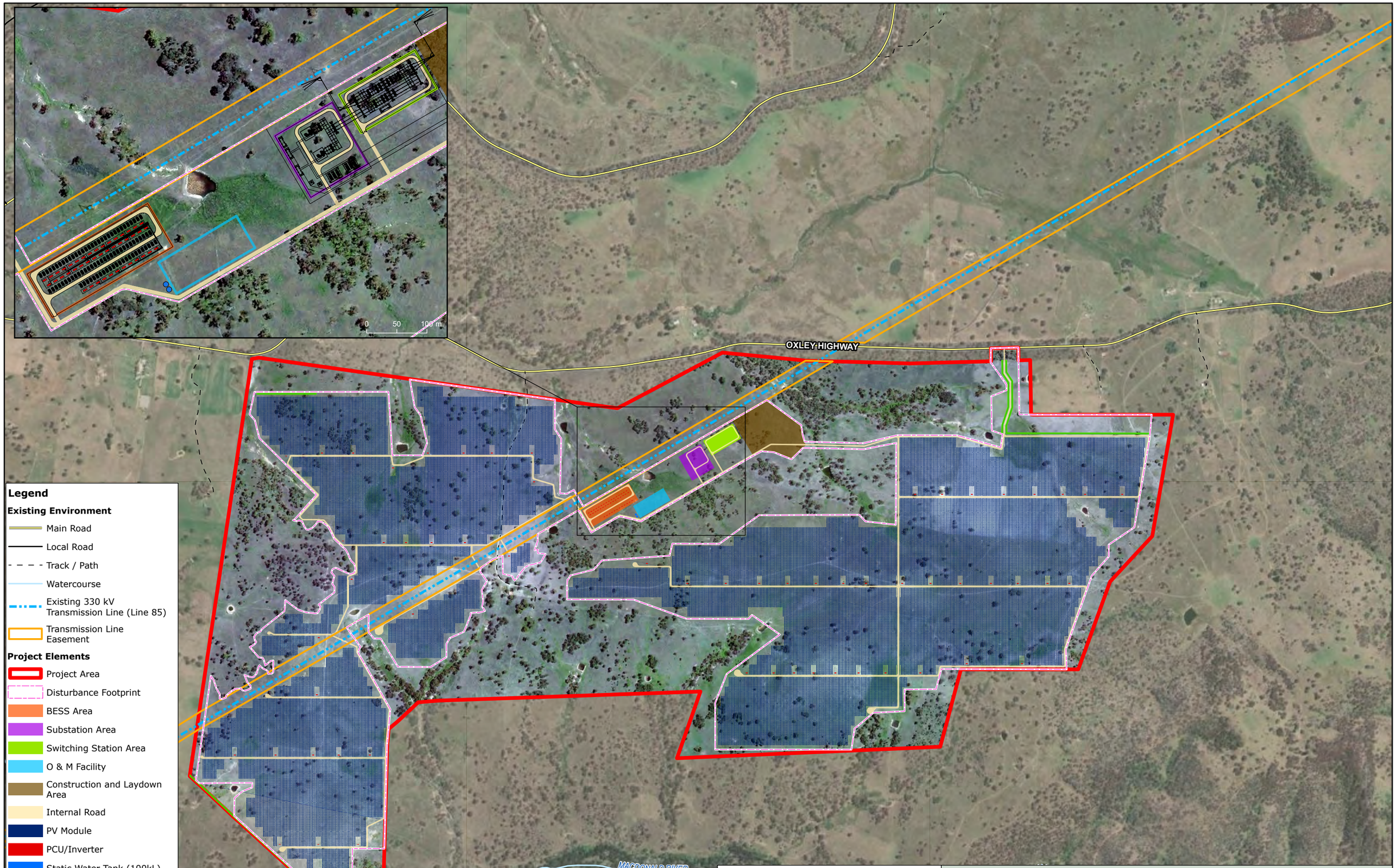
The Project is situated about 1.8 kilometres (km) east of the Bendemeer town centre, represented by the Bendemeer Hotel, and is located 46 km (by road) north-east of the Tamworth Post Office to the Project Area access location. The Project is entirely located within the Tamworth Regional Council Local Government Area (LGA) in the New England Region of NSW, on land that is predominately used for agricultural activities. The Project extends across an area of approximately 606.9 hectares (ha), over three freehold land parcels, which form the Project Area.

The Project will involve the construction, operation and decommissioning of a photovoltaic (PV) solar farm, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure. The Project layout is depicted in **Figure 1-1**, and includes:

- Solar Arrays with a capacity of approximately 255 Megawatt (MW) Direct Current (DC) (reduced from 280 MW) and registered connection capacity of 200 MW Alternating Current (AC);
- BESS with a capacity of up to 150 MW / 300 MWh;
- Electricity infrastructure:
  - Power Conversion Units (PCU) housing up to 60 inverters;
  - One 33/330 kilovolt (kV) collector substation and associated internal structures;
  - Switching station;
  - Electrical reticulation infrastructure including underground and overhead 33 kV cables;
  - Direct grid connection to existing 330 kV line;
- On-site permanent supporting infrastructure:
  - Site access road, entry and internal access roads;
  - Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Facility including control room, meeting facilities, storage facilities, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) facilities, workshop, parking, ablutions buildings, septic and static water supply, waste management facilities, lighting, fencing and asset protection zones;
- Off-site supporting infrastructure:
  - Tamworth waste and wastewater disposal facilities;
  - Existing public road network; and
- 24 hours a day, seven days per week operation with up to 15 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) personnel.

It is anticipated that up to 18 oversize over-mass (OSOM) deliveries will be required in order to facilitate delivery of larger Project components, such as substation equipment (e.g., transformers, switchrooms), construction equipment (e.g., dozers), and the O&M Facility. An additional 10 OSOM movements are expected during the decommissioning phase. Thirty (30) Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs), (e.g., mobile cranes), are also expected to access the site. Restricted Access Vehicles (RAVs) will be utilised to transport larger components, with the proposed transport routes to and from the Project Area comprising:

- **Port of Newcastle:** Via Industrial Drive, John Renshaw Drive, Hunter Expressway, then New England Highway through Tamworth to reach Oxley Highway;
- **Port of Brisbane:** Via Motorway (M4), Gateway Motorway (M1), M2, Cunningham Highway (M15), New England Highway, then Oxley Highway; and
- **Port of Melbourne:** M2, M1, M80, Hume Motorway, M5, M7, M2, Pennant Hills Road, M1, Hunter Expressway, New England Highway and Oxley Highway to Site Access.



Legend

Existing Environment

- Main Road
- Local Road
- Track / Path
- Watercourse
- Existing 330 kV Transmission Line (Line 85)
- Transmission Line Easement

Project Elements

- Project Area
- Disturbance Footprint
- BESS Area
- Substation Area
- Switching Station Area
- O & M Facility
- Construction and Laydown Area
- Internal Road
- PV Module
- PCU/Inverter
- Static Water Tank (100kL)
- Vegetation Screening
- Internal Electrical Infrastructure

Source:
Layout: Client Provided (Sept 2024)
Basedata: NSW DCDB/DTDB
Imagery: ESRI | Client Provided (Jan 2023)

Coordinate System:
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56

Date: 01/04/2025
Created By: MB
Drawing Size: A3

0 250 500m

1:15,000

F1-1 Bendemeer Solar Farm Project Layout

Bendemeer Solar Farm
Social Impact Assessment
Client: Athena Energy Australia (Holdings) Pty Ltd

0657132_BendSF_SIA_R01.mxd

FIGURE 1-2 TRANSGRID'S EXISTING 330 KV ARMIDALE-TAMWORTH OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION LINE

1.2.1 PROJECT AMENDMENTS OVERVIEW

Various elements of the Project have been amended since EIS exhibition. The Project layout (refer to **Figure 1-1**) has been revised and refined in response to submissions received; further assessment of environmental, economic and social aspects; constructability requirements; and consideration of the outcomes of agency, landowner, and community consultation.

To provide appropriate context, a comparison of the Project between that originally submitted with the EIS, and that included in this Amended SIA report is provided in **Table 1-1**.

TABLE 1-1 AMENDED PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Element	EIS (Original) Project	Amended Project	Difference between EIS and Amended Project
Project	• Bendemeer Solar Farm	• Bendemeer Solar Farm	• No Change
Applicant	• Athena Energy Australia (Holdings) Pty Ltd	• Athena Energy Australia (Holdings) Pty Ltd	• No Change
Project Area	• 606.4 ha	• 606.9 ha	• Negligible (0.08% increase)
Capital Investment Value	• $465,810,357 (ex. GST)	• $437,555,000 (ex. GST)	• $28,255,357 (6% decrease)
Project Components			
Disturbance Footprint	• 476.6 ha	• 369.2 ha	• Reduction by 107.4 ha (23%)
Solar Arrays	• 280 MW DC • 430,000 PV modules • 350.8 ha • 4.2 m panel height	• 255 MW DC • 354,330 PV modules • 301.0 ha • 2.66 m panel height	• DC Capacity reduced by 25 MW (9%) • PV modules reduced by 75,670 modules (18%) • Area reduced by 49.8 ha (14%) • Panel height reduced by 1.54 m
BESS	• 150 MW/ 300 MWh • 3.2 ha • 120 BESS units • LFP or NMC battery technology • Lot 2 DP 1211502 • 4 m high noise walls in the BESS Layout	• 150 MW/ 300 MWh • 1.9 ha • 264 BESS units • LFP battery technology • Lot 2 DP 1211502 • 4 m high noise walls in the BESS Layout	• No change in capacity • Area reduced by 1.3 ha (41%) • BESS make and model refined with individual BESS units of a smaller MWh capacity selected for the amended project. Due to the smaller capacity of the BESS, the number of BESS units increased by 144 (120%) • Commitment to LFP battery technology • No change in location • No change in noise walls mitigation measure

Project Element	EIS (Original) Project	Amended Project	Difference between EIS and Amended Project
Solar PV Power Conversion Units (PCU)	• 60 PCUs housing up to 60 inverters (within main solar area) • Lots 1, 2 and 3 of DP 1211502 • 3.5 m high noise walls for 14 inverters within solar array area	• 60 PCUs housing up to 60 inverters (within main solar area) • Lots 1, 2 and 3 of DP 1211502 • 3.5 m high noise walls for 28 inverters within solar array area • Noise attenuation kits for all 60 inverters within solar array area	• No change in number of PCUs or inverters (within main solar area) • Construction of noise walls for 14 additional inverters • Addition of noise attenuation kits to all inverters
Inverters	• 40 inverters within BESS with noise attenuation kits	• 44 inverters within BESS with noise attenuation kits	• Inverters increased by 4 units (10%) due to refinement in BESS and inverter proposed makes and models and to achieve National Electricity Rule compliance at the proposed 150 MW capacity
Substation and Switching station	• 200 MW AC registered capacity • One 33/330 kV collector substation and associated structures • 330 kV switching station • 2.9 ha	• 200 MW AC registered capacity • One 33/330 kV collector substation and associated structures • 330 kV switching station • 2.37 ha • 6 m high noise walls around the substation transformers	• No change in AC registered capacity • Reduced by 0.53 ha (18%) and slightly relocated 25 m further east • Addition of 6 m high noise walls around the substation transformers
Electrical Reticulation Infrastructure	• Internal underground high-voltage (HV) cables between solar arrays, BESS and transformers and overhead 330 kV conductors • Approximately 100 m distance between the switching station and existing 330 kV line • Direct grid connection to existing 330 kV line	• Internal underground HV cables between solar arrays, BESS and transformers and overhead 330 kV conductors • Approximately 48 m distance between the switching station and existing 330 kV line • Direct grid connection to existing 330 kV line	• No change
On-site Permanent Supporting Infrastructure	• Site access road, entry and internal roads		

Project Element	EIS (Original) Project	Amended Project	Difference between EIS and Amended Project
	• APZ of minimum 10 m (PV modules), 17 m (BESS and Substation) and 12 m (associated infrastructure) • Internal roads 29.7 ha • Perimeter and internal roads up to 6m wide, aligned on APZs and/or existing farm or other access tracks, where possible • Site access via B56 Oxley Highway	• APZ of minimum 10 m (PV modules), 12-31 m (BESS, Substation and associated infrastructure) • Internal roads 13.48 ha • Perimeter and internal roads up to 6m wide, aligned on APZs and/or existing farm or other access tracks, where possible • Site access via B56 Oxley Highway, with internal roads realigned to avoid existing vegetation	• No change in APZ minimum for PV modules • Allowance for a minimum 12-31 m APZ width for BESS, Substation and associated infrastructure based on surrounding vegetation categorisation, including slight disturbance footprint adjustment to accommodate minimum 31 m APZ adjacent to some areas of the BESS • Internal roads reduced by 16.22 ha (55%) • No change in maximum road width • Minor (~10 m) adjustment of site access road location
	• Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Facility		
	• Located within the construction compound and laydown area, to the north of the substation and BESS compound • 0.65 ha • 12 m APZ • 100 kL static water tank	• Located within the substation and BESS compound • 0.91 ha • 12-31 m APZ • 2 x 100 kL static water tanks	• Relocated south of existing transmission line • Area increased by 0.26 ha (40%) • Adjustment of APZ width based on vegetation adjacent to the new location • Addition of a static water tank, with total volume increased by 100 kL (100%)

Project Element	EIS (Original) Project	Amended Project	Difference between EIS and Amended Project
Construction			
Construction Duration	• Approximately 18 months	• Approximately 18 months	• No change in duration
Construction Workforce	• Peak workforce of approximately 307 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) (some additional contractor personnel) and average annual workforce of 260 FTE for the peak 12-month of construction of the Project	• Peak workforce of approximately 307 FTE (some additional contractor personnel) and average annual workforce of 250 FTE for the peak 12-month of construction of the Project	• 10 FTE reduction for peak 12-month average annual workforce (4%)
On-site Temporary Infrastructure	• Construction compound and laydown area located north of existing transmission line • 11.6 ha	• Construction compound and laydown area located to south of existing transmission line • 4.8 ha	• Relocated south of existing transmission line • Area reduced by 6.8 ha (59%)
Services and Utilities	• Adjustment, protection or relocation of existing utilities	• Adjustment, protection or relocation of existing utilities	• No change
Ancillary Activities	• Import of external gravel, aggregate and sand to site for on-site construction use	• Import of external gravel, aggregate and sand to site for on-site construction use	• No change
Traffic and Transport Route	• Main equipment deliveries via Port of Newcastle or Port of Brisbane • 62 heavy vehicles and 48 light vehicles movements per day during peak construction • Associated external road upgrades (also used for operational maintenance or decommissioning activities)	• Main equipment deliveries via Port of Newcastle or Port of Brisbane or Port of Melbourne • 94 heavy vehicles and 76 light vehicles movements per day during peak construction with an additional 36 shuttle bus movements • Associated external road upgrades (also used for operational maintenance or decommissioning activities)	• Port of Melbourne may also be used for deliveries of Project equipment • During peak construction increase in daily heavy vehicle movements by 32 (52%) and light vehicles by 28 (58%) • No upgrades to external roads required

Project Element	EIS (Original) Project	Amended Project	Difference between EIS and Amended Project
Operations			
Duration	• Development Consent in perpetuity • Infrastructure life minimum of 30 years	• Development Consent in perpetuity • Infrastructure life minimum of 30 years	• No change
Hours of Operation	• 24 hours a day, seven days a week	• 24 hours a day, seven days a week	• No change
Operational Workforce	• Approximately 15 FTE	• Approximately 15 FTE	• No change
Disturbance Footprint	• 476.6 ha	• 369.2 ha	• Reduction by 107.4 ha (23%)

1.2.2 CONSTRUCTION PHASE WORKFORCE

The workforce employed during the Construction Phase of the Project is to be engaged in construction activities that can be generally divided into civil, piling, mechanical and electrical scopes of work. The various roles (scopes) and a likely labour count for each role is outlined in **Table 1-2**. Consideration has also been given as to whether there is the potential for local and/or regional resourcing opportunities.

TABLE 1-2 KEY ROLES AND LOCAL RESOURCE OPPORTUNITIES

Scope	Typical Labour Count (similar sized project)	Local Resource Opportunity
Surveying	4 to 8	Yes
Site Works - Clearing and Grubbing	4 to 8	Yes
Site Works - Excavation, Grading, & Access Roads	8 to 20	Yes
Electrical Earthworks (Trenching)	20 to 25	Pending Regional Centre
Landscaping	4 to 8	Yes
Perimeter Fencing	8 to 10	Pending Regional Centre
Piling	20 to 30	Pending Regional Centre
Tracker Installation	~50	Pending Regional Centre
PV Module Installation	~40	Pending Regional Centre
DC Electrical Installation	~40	Pending Regional Centre
AC Electrical Installation	~25	Pending Regional Centre
PCU/BESS Foundation installation	6 to 10	Pending Regional Centre
PCU/BESS Installation	6 to 10	Pending Regional Centre
SCADA & Controls Installation	~4	Pending Regional Centre
HV - Substation Works	~15 at peak	Pending Regional Centre
Permanent Site Security System	4 to 8	Pending Regional Centre
Operations & Maintenance Building Installation	4 to 8	Pending Regional Centre
Management - Construction Manager, Engineering, Foreman, Leading Hands	~11	Pending Regional Centre
HSC and QA/QC Personnel	~3	Pending Regional Centre
Security	~4	Yes

Based on similar projects in the region and indicative feedback provided by the Applicant's Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor for a similar renewable energy project, it is anticipated that approximately 70% of the construction workforce will reside in the local area (i.e., the Tamworth Regional, Walcha Council, Uralla Shire and Armidale Regional LGAs). The assumptions underpinning this 70% local employment estimate are detailed in **Table 1-3**.

TABLE 1-3 LOCAL RESOURCING BREAKDOWN

Scope	Total Peak Workforce (the number of resources required)	Estimated Local Resources % (percentage to be sourced locally)	Estimated Local Labour Count (number to be sourced locally)
Surveying	8	100%	8
Site Works - Clearing and Grubbing	8	100%	8
Site Works - Excavation, Grading, & Access Roads	20	100%	20
Electrical Earthworks (Trenching)	20	40%	8
Landscaping	5	100%	5
Perimeter Fencing	8	100%	8
Piling	20	50%	10
Tracker Installation	50	75%	38
PV Module Installation	40	100%	40
DC Electrical Installation	40	75%	30
AC Electrical Installation	25	75%	19
PCU/BESS Foundation installation	8	50%	4
PCU/BESS Installation	8	20%	2
SCADA & Controls Installation	4	0%	0
HV - Substation Works	15	30%	5
Permanent Site Security System	4	0%	0
Operations & Maintenance Building Installation	8	50%	4
Management - Construction Manager, Engineering, Foreman, Leading Hands	9	20%	2
HSC and QA/QC Personnel	3	0%	0
Security	4	100%	4
Total Employment (Peak)	**307**	**Local Total (Peak)**	**215**
		Local Percentage (Peak)	**70%**

1.3 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY CONTEXT

1.3.1 NSW LEGISLATION

The Project has been determined to be SSD under Division 4.7 of part 4 of the EP&A Act. The Minister for Planning and Homes is the consent authority, who delegates the consent authority function to the Secretary of the NSW DPE.[1] DPE guides all aspects of the EIS through the SEARs.

The Project SEARs were issued on 15 March 2022 (SSD-36651552). **Table 1-4** summarises the SEARs relevant to the SIA.

Table 1-4 SEARs Requirements Relevant to the SIA

Issue	SEARs Requirement	Relevance to the SIA

General Requirements	The environmental impact statement (EIS) must meet the minimum form and content requirements as prescribed by Part 8, Division 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* (EP&A Regulation) and must have regard to the *State Significant Development Guidelines*.
	In particular, the EIS must include:
	• an assessment of the likely impacts of the development on the environment, focusing on the specific issues identified below, including:
	  ◦ a description of the existing environment likely to be affected by the development using sufficient baseline data;
	  ◦ an assessment of the likely impacts of all stages of the development (which is commensurate with the level of impact), including any cumulative impacts of the site and existing or proposed developments in the region, taking into consideration any relevant legislation, environmental planning instruments, guidelines, policies, plans and industry codes of practice including the Large-scale Solar Energy Guideline and Cumulative Impact Assessment Guideline;
	  ◦ a description of the measures that would be implemented to avoid, mitigate and/or offset the impacts of the development (including draft management plans for specific issues as identified below); and
	  ◦ a description of the measures that would be implemented to monitor and report on the environmental performance of the development;
	The EIS must also be accompanied by:
	• an estimate of the jobs that will be created during the construction and operational phases of the proposed project
		Outlines the requirements for consideration in the SIA of the social baseline (**Section 5**); project phases and cumulative impacts; avoidance, mitigation and offset measures (**Section 6**); and monitoring measures (**Section 8**).

Social impact	Including an assessment of the social impacts in accordance with *Social Impact Assessment Guideline*.	This standalone SIA addresses this SEARs requirement.

[1] In December 2021 the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) became the DPE after a NSW State Government portfolio reshuffle. DPE is primarily used throughout this report replacing DPIE, including where documents were published under DPIE.

Issue	SEARs Requirement	Relevance to the SIA
Economic	Including an assessment of the economic impacts or benefits of the project for the region and the State as a whole.	Gillespie Economics provided a standalone Economic Assessment, which informs the impact assessment in **Section 6**.
Legislation, Policies & Guidelines	The assessment of the key issues listed above must take into account relevant guidelines, policies, and plans as identified. A list of some of the legislation, policies and guidelines that may be relevant to the environmental assessment of this proposal can be found at: • https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Planning-reforms/Rapid-Assessment-Framework/Improving-assessment-guidance • https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/policies-and-guidelines; and • http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications#assessments	DPE's SIA Guidelines (DPE 2023a; DPE 2023b) are discussed below (**Section 1.3.2**).
Consultation	During the preparation of the EIS, you should consult with the relevant local, State or Commonwealth Government authorities, infrastructure and service providers, community groups, affected landowners and any exploration licence and/or mineral title holders. In particular, you must undertake detailed consultation with affected landowners surrounding the development, Tamworth Regional Council, Crown Lands, NSW Aboriginal Land Council and Transport for NSW. The EIS must: • detail how engagement undertaken was consistent with the Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects; and • describe the consultation process and the issues raised and identify where the design of the development has been amended in response to these issues. Where amendments have not been made to address an issue, an explanation should be provided.	Outlines the broader consultation requirements for the EIS. **Section 4** summarises consultation relevant to the SIA.

Additional elements of the SEARs relating to Landscape and Visual, Noise, Heritage, and Land Use Conflict are relevant to the SIA and are discussed in **Section 6**.

1.3.2 NSW SIA GUIDELINES

DPE's Social Impact Assessment Guideline: For State Significant Projects ('the Guideline') (DPE 2023a) and Technical Supplement: Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects ('Technical Supplement') (DPE 2023a), together referred to as 'the Guidelines', provide the most up to date guidance on undertaking SIAs in NSW. Together they update the 2021 versions of the same documents and supersede the 2017 Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Mining, Petroleum, and Extractive Industry Development (DPE 2017a) which had become the de facto guideline for all SSDs.

The Guideline intends to provide a rigorous framework to identify, evaluate, and respond to social impacts, guide meaningful stakeholder and community consultation on social impacts throughout project phases, and advise on ongoing project development, monitoring, and adaptive management. The Technical Supplement provides additional specific advice including on how the SIA should be presented, how to define likelihood and magnitude levels of social impacts, and how to determine impact significance (DPE 2023b, pp 12-13). This SIA has been prepared in line with DPE's preferred approach drawing on the Guideline and Technical Supplement.

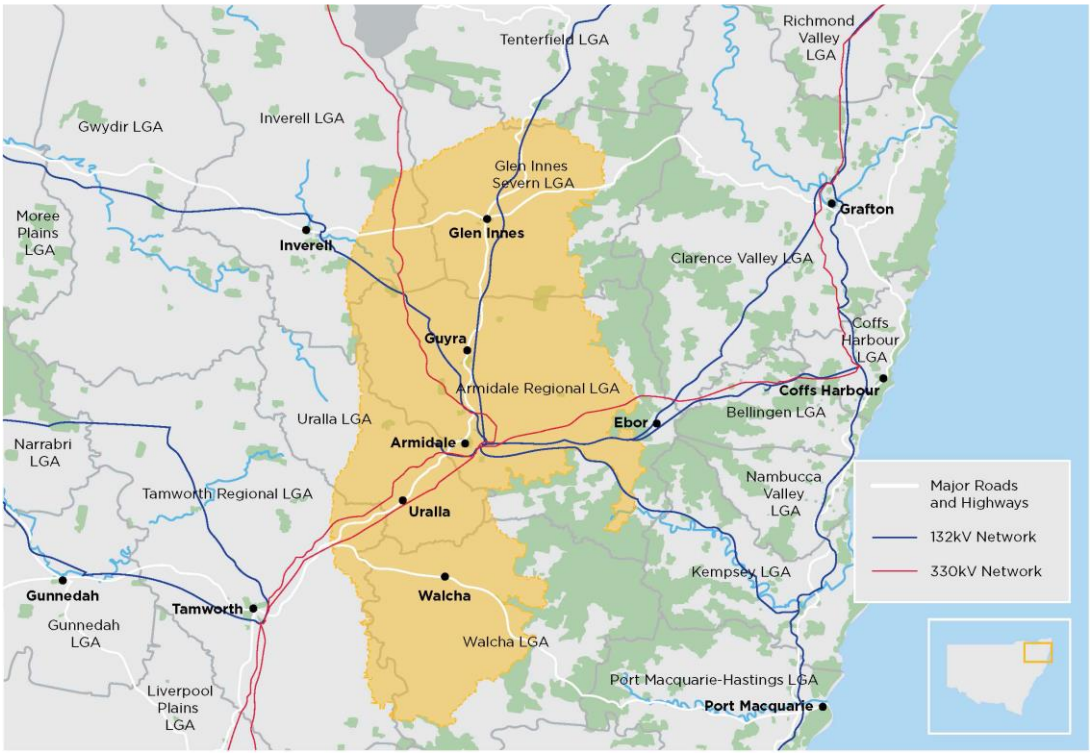
1.3.3 STATE, REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

1.3.3.1 NSW ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE ROADMAP

The NSW Government's *Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap* released in November 2020 is a framework to transition NSW to clean, reliable and affordable energy as existing carbon intensive power generation capacity is decommissioned over the coming years (NSW Government 2020). It intends to modernise the electricity system by coordinating investment across power generation, storage and network investment. The Roadmap is expected to attract $32 billion in private sector investment by 2030, creating 6,300 construction and 2,800 ongoing jobs, mainly in regional NSW, and is also expected to create an estimated $1.5 billion in lease payments to landholders in regional NSW by 2042 (NSW Government 2021). It is underpinned by the NSW Electricity Strategy (NSW Government 2019) and the and the NSW Transmission Infrastructure Strategy (DPE, 2018) and makes a significant contribution to the NSW Government's Net Zero Plan for reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050 (NSW Government 2020).

The Roadmap commits the NSW Government to establishing five Renewable Energy Zones (REZs), including one in the New England Region: the New England REZ, which was formally declared on 17 December 2021. The REZ is expected to deliver up to 8,000 MW of new network capacity. It is located close to an existing transmission corridor connecting NSW with Queensland (QLD). **Figure 1-3** provides an overview of the New England REZ.

FIGURE 1-3 NEW ENGLAND RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA



Source: Energy NSW 2022

1.3.3.2 NEW ENGLAND NORTH WEST REGIONAL PLAN 2041

The New England North West Regional Plan 2041 (Regional Plan) (DPE 2022b) applies to the Project Area. The Regional Plan sets a 20-year strategic land use planning framework for the region and covers all facets of land use planning, including employment areas, town centres, housing and related infrastructure, the natural environment and future hazards. It also provides guidance for councils in preparing local strategic plans, local plans, and planning proposals, as well as setting direction for state agencies to support the objectives of the Regional Plan. The strategies of the Regional Plan relevant to the Project are as follows:

- Minimise land use conflict that may restrict the use of important agricultural land;
- Encourage sustainable and resilient building design and materials (such as forest products) including the use of renewable energy to displace carbon intensive or fossil fuel intensive options;
- Support the development of renewable energy storage options and distributed energy systems that are located close to their point of use;
- Identify and mitigate impacts on views, local character and heritage where appropriate and undertake detailed hazard studies; and
- Support the development of circular economy, hubs, infrastructure and activities and consider employment opportunities that may arise from circular economies and industries that harness or develop renewable energy technologies and will aspire towards an employment profile that displays a level of economic self-reliance, and resilience to external forces.

1.3.3.3 TAMWORTH REGIONAL LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2010

The Project is located within the Tamworth Regional Council LGA and is therefore subject to the relevant provisions of the 'Tamworth Regional Local Environmental Plan' (Tamworth LEP) 2010.

Aims of the Tamworth LEP (Clause 1.2(2)) of relevance to the Project include:

> *"(a) to encourage the orderly management, development and conservation of natural and other resources within the Tamworth region";*
>
> *"(d) to promote ecologically sustainable urban and rural development";* and
>
> *"(e) to secure a future for agriculture by expanding Tamworth's economic base and minimising the loss or fragmentation of productive agricultural land".*

The Project Area is zoned RU1 (Primary Production) as shown in **Figure 1-4**. Objective of the RU1 zone relevant to the Project is, *"to encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base"* and *"to encourage diversity in primary industry enterprises and systems appropriate for the area"* (Land Use Table, zone RU1 objectives).

The Project is consistent with the objectives of the Tamworth LEP including land zone RU1, particularly in relation to meeting, encouraging and managing ecologically sustainable development. Additionally, the Project will continue to provide upgraded access for ongoing agricultural activities and further provide a diversified income stream through the Community Benefit Fund (CBF). The CBF will be administered by a Bendemeer CBF Committee and forms part of the Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) proposal currently presented to Tamworth Regional Council. Funds will be awarded to local projects and programs that are successful in applications/proposal process (refer to Section 3.9 of the EIS). The Applicant intends to provide $250 per MW per annum of AEMO and Network Operator approved and commissioned capacity, equating to $50,000 per annum for the life of the Project based on a 200 MW AC development. For each MW registered capacity commissioned above 200 MW AC, the Applicant will increase the contribution by $250/MW. Similarly, should the Applicant receive registration approval for a power capacity of less than 200 MW AC, the contribution will be reduced by $250/MW of shortfall capacity.

The Applicant proposes that a committee comprised of local community members, a representative from the Tamworth Regional Council, and a representative from Athena be established to review applications/proposals for funding. This committee will vote for allocation of funds from the CBF. The broad intention of the CBF is that funds would be allocated to support local non-profit organisations, community programs/events, Local/Regional Businesses, training, and services/infrastructure. Additionally, the income provided to landowner hosting Project's infrastructure can help make farms more resilient to the impacts of droughts, fires and commodity price fluctuations.

1.3.3.4 TAMWORTH LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT 2020: BLUEPRINT 100

The Tamworth Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020 (LSPS) (Tamworth Regional Council 2020) is the core strategic planning document for the Tamworth Regional Council. The LSPS acknowledges and identifies the potential of renewable energy initiatives as an opportunity for the LGA. The LSPS' Planning Priority Five – Design with Nature acknowledges the NSW Government's plans to increase renewable energy generation in the region but also notes the Council's role in managing land use conflicts and impacts on primary producers while supporting the region's agricultural identity.

Related to this, the Tamworth LSPS Vision is stated as: Tamworth is a prosperous, resilient and liveable region that:

- Is the Northern Inland Capital of New South Wales;
- Is well connected with the new England-North West and surrounding towns, villages and rural communities; and
- Boasts well designed living, play and work areas.

1.4 PURPOSE AND OUTLINE

This Amended SIA has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Guideline (DPE 2023a) and Technical Supplement (DPE 2023b). The purpose of this Amended SIA is to provide the DPE with an understanding of the Project's potential social impacts, and how these social impacts are identified, assessed, managed, and monitored.

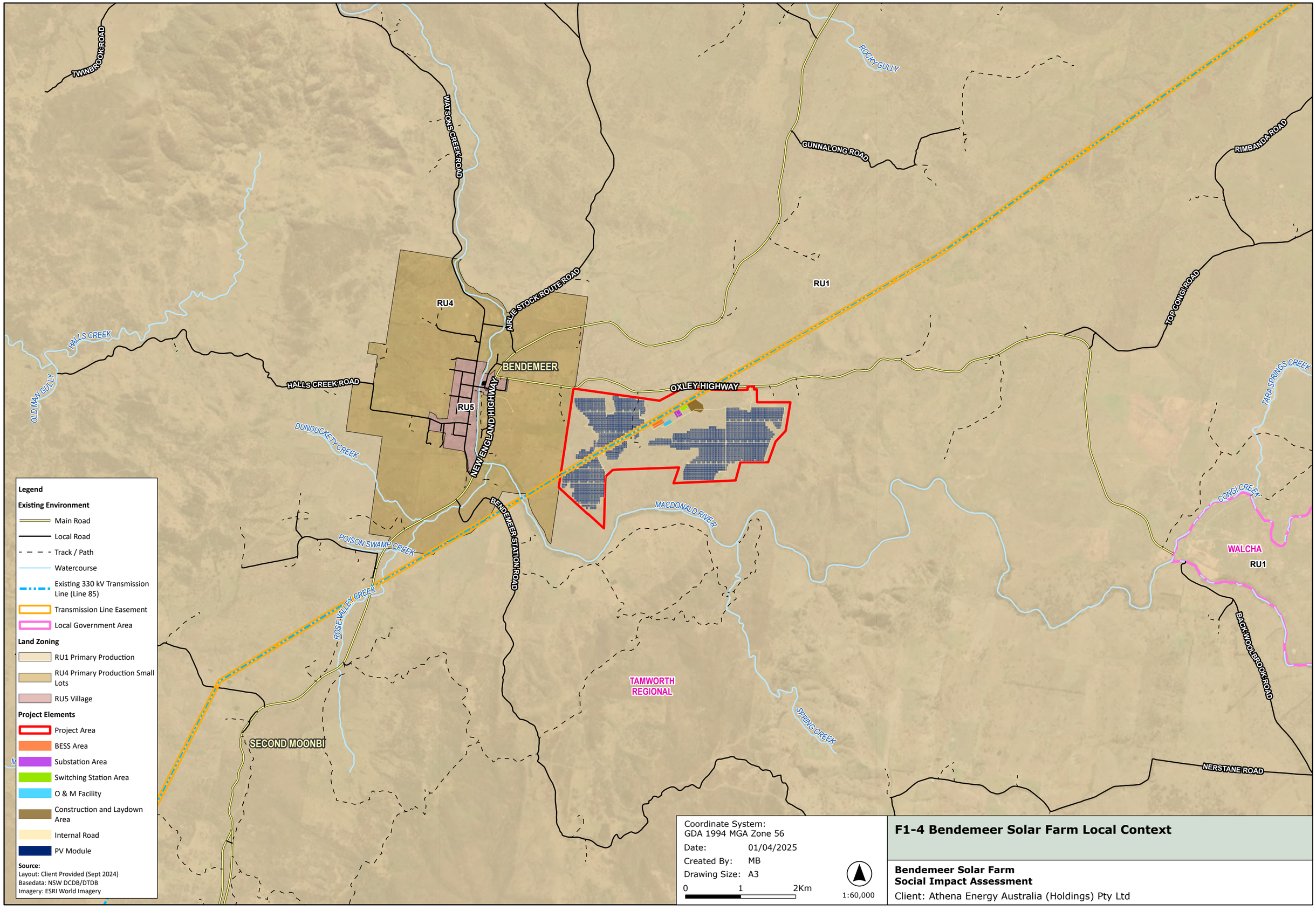
The Amended SIA is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides an overview of the social impact assessment methodology;
- **Section 3** describes the scoping for the Project's Social Locality and Stakeholder Identification;
- **Section 4** provides an overview of stakeholder engagement undertaken for the Project to date, focusing on engagement relevant to the SIA;
- **Section 5** describes the existing baseline conditions in the Project's Social Locality;
- **Section 6** assesses the social impacts that may result from the Project, provides an overview of enhancement and mitigation measures, and an assessment of residual impacts; and
- **Section 8** outlines and approach that will be followed in monitoring social impacts during the Construction and Operation Phases of the Project.

1.5 AUTHORSHIP

The SIA Report submitted to inform the EIS (v1.0, dated 03 March 2023) by Dr Rene Provis. Dr Provis holds a PhD in development anthropology from the University of New South Wales and is a member of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) and the Australian Anthropological Society (AAS). The report was co-authored, finalised and subsequently updated and amended (Amended SIA; v2.0 to v6.0), by Dr Hilton Penfold who holds a PhD in Human Geography from the University of Wollongong. The report was reviewed from a technical perspective by Louis Penny, who has over 14 years' experience in the field of social performance (including SIA) and holds a Bachelor of Regional and Town Planning from the University of Queensland and is a member of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA).

The SIA Report was completed in good faith in accordance with the relevant ethical frameworks, contains all relevant information, and to the lead author's knowledge does not contain any false or misleading information.



F1-4 Bendemeer Solar Farm Local Context

Bendemeer Solar Farm
Social Impact Assessment
Client: Athena Energy Australia (Holdings) Pty Ltd

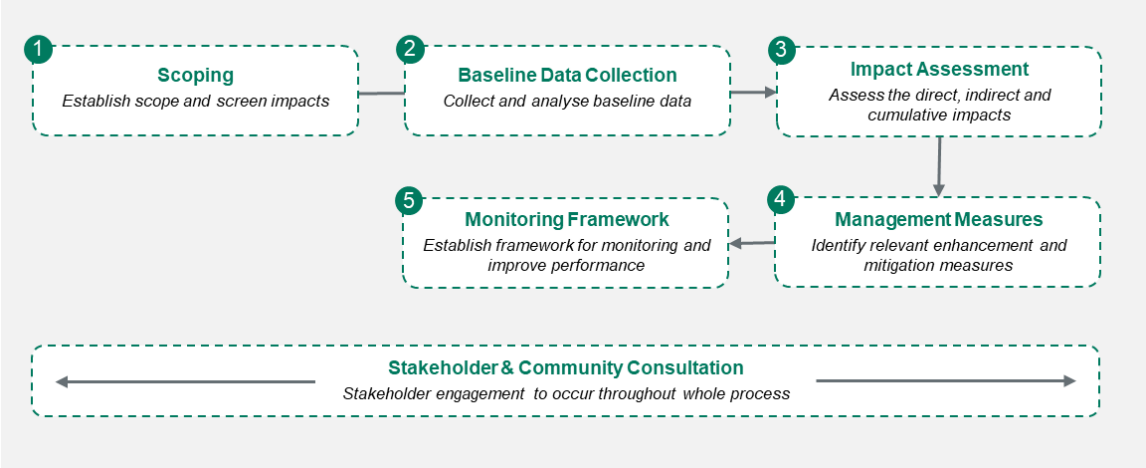
0657132_BendSF_SIA_R01.mxd

2. SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This Amended SIA has been prepared in accordance with the NSW Guideline and Technical Supplement (DPE 2023a, 2023b) which aims to enhance the rigor applied to SIAs with a view to minimising impacts and enhancing benefits in line with good international industry practice. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with these Guidelines and the Project SEARs (outlined in **Section 1.3.1**).

Figure 2-1 outlines the steps taken to complete the Amended SIA, which are described in the following sections.

FIGURE 2-1 SIA PROCESS



2.1 PHASE #1: SCOPING

Following good international industry practice (Vanclay et al 2015) and the NSW Guideline and Technical Supplement (DPE 2023a, 2023b), the scoping undertaken for this SIA aimed to:

- Capture and characterise the likely social impacts to inform Project planning to avoid or minimise these impacts;
- Enable a consistent but scalable approach to SIA where the level of assessment is proportionate to the scale and nature of the likely social impacts;
- Consider the information to be assessed during the SIA scoping and initial assessment and the approach to community engagement;
- Identify potential Project refinements and possible mitigation and enhancement measures; and
- Identify the impacts that may require further assessment in the EIS and the possible level of assessment for each impact.

The NSW Guidelines and Technical Supplement (DPE 2023a, 2023b) provided the basis to identify potential social impacts through the following steps:

- **Identification** of Project activities that may cause impacts;
- **Categorisation of impacts** according to their effects on way of life, community, accessibility, culture, health and wellbeing, surroundings, livelihoods, decision-making system; and whether the impacts are positive or negative, tangible or intangible;
- **Determination** as to which prior investigations are relevant to the Project;

- **Identification** of cumulative and combined impacts, including spatial, temporal, and linked impacts;
- **Definition** of material impact, including the extent of people affected, duration of impacts, intensity/scale of impacts, sensitivity of the people affected, and their level of concern or interest; and
- **Assignment of assessment levels**, such as detailed, standard, minor, or not relevant, for each identified impact.

2.2 PHASE #2: BASELINE DATA COLLECTION

The social baseline describes the social context without the Project. It documents the existing social environment, conditions and trends relevant to the impacts identified. The social baseline is the benchmark against which direct, indirect and cumulative impacts are predicted and analysed.

The scope and content of the social baseline has been tailored to the Project context and the level of assessment of social impacts using meaningful indicators and information, including stakeholder engagement activities relevant to the SIA (refer to **Section 4**). Where scoping identified that primary data was required for the assessment, stakeholder engagement activities for the EIS were adapted to provide this information (refer to **Section 3**).

The data collected and presented in this SIA is based on a review of available data from a range of primary and secondary sources. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) – Census (Community Profile), Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA);
- NSW Government Department data (e.g., NSW Health, Transport for NSW, and NSW Police Force);
- Local Government data;
- Stakeholder engagement outcomes – community insights, including issues and concerns, gathered through the stakeholder consultation process (refer to **Section 4**);
- Local and State government planning, policy, and strategy documentation; and
- Plans, policies and other documents provided by the Project.

Combined, this data seeks to portray community values, and how people and the things they value may be impacted by the Project. This includes consideration of:

- The features of the community, the social locality, and/or the landscape that people value which ranges from urban areas and the sense of community or the accessibility of services that the community experiences, to natural and diverse environments or quiet/vibrant neighbourhoods;
- How these features influence local people's way of life, health or wellbeing;
- How the Project might affect these features, and for which groups;
- How the Project could be modified to enhance these features and how they affect people's wellbeing; and
- How the Project may be designed to avoid and minimise any short-term adverse impacts.

In considering the above, the social baseline identifies and describes the:

- Different social groups who may be affected by the Project;
- Built and natural features that local people value and why they value them;
- Historical, current and expected social trends, including as a result of this Project and other projects in the area; and
- Various social elements of value, and interpretations of them[2] while demonstrating appropriate social-science research methods and data limitations.

2.3 PHASE #3: IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The SIA places people at the centre and considers the impacts relative to the Project from their perspective. The primary and secondary data collected and compiled for the social baseline, including community voices, is then assessed with the rigorous impact significance methodology, as described in the Technical Supplement (2023b).

In this approach, impact significance is understood as the likelihood of an impact occurring combined with the magnitude of impacts, both positive and negative, and prior to the application of any mitigation or management measures. The likelihood level refers to the probability of a social impact occurring because of the Project, while the magnitude is considered as a combination of the following characteristics rated from very low to very high:

- **Extent:** Who specifically is expected to be affected (directly, indirectly, and/or cumulatively), including any potential vulnerable people? Which location(s) and people are affected? (e.g., near neighbours, local, regional);
- **Duration:** When is the social impact expected to occur? Will it be time-limited (e.g., over particular Project phases) or permanent?
- **Severity:** What is the likely scale or degree of change?
- **Intensity:** How sensitive/vulnerable (or how adaptable/resilient) are affected people to the impact, or (for positive impacts) how important is it to them? This might depend on the value they attach to the matter; whether it is rare/unique or replaceable; the extent to which it is tied to their identity; and their capacity to cope with or adapt to change; and
- **Level of Concern/Interest:** How concerned/interested are people? Sometimes, concerns may be disproportionate to findings from technical assessments of likelihood, duration and/or severity. Concern itself can lead to negative impacts, while interest can lead to expectations of positive impacts.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators described in the social baseline are used inform an understanding of the social impacts identified in the scoping phase across each of these five characteristics.

The magnitude for each impact from the following five levels can then be defined on the following scale:

- **Transformational:** Substantial change experienced in community wellbeing, livelihood, infrastructure, services, health, and/or heritage values; permanent displacement or addition of at least 20% of a community;

[2] Social elements of value to people are defined in the Guideline as people's: way of life, community, accessibility, culture, health and wellbeing, surroundings, livelihoods, and decision-making systems (DPE 2023a, p. 7).

- **Major:** Substantial deterioration/improvement to something that people value highly, either lasting for an indefinite time, or affecting many people in a widespread area;
- **Moderate:** Noticeable deterioration/improvement to something that people value highly, either lasting for an extensive time, or affecting a group of people;
- **Minor:** Mild deterioration/improvement, for a reasonably short time, for a small number of people who are generally adaptable and not vulnerable; and
- **Minimal:** Little noticeable change experienced by people in the locality.

The likelihood of an impact occurring along with its magnitude of impact as assessed above combine to yield a rating of social impact significance, as described in **Table 2-1**.

TABLE 2-1 ADAPTED DPE SOCIAL IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE MATRIX (2023B)

		Magnitude level				
		1 Minimal	**2 Minor**	**3 Moderate**	**4 Major**	**5 Transformational**
Likelihood level	**A** Almost certain	Medium	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
	B Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
	C Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
	D Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	E Very unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
*Where impacts are positive, the following colour scale is used:						
	Positive		Low	Medium	High	Very High

2.4 PHASE #4: MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Following the assessment of impacts, measures to avoid and/or minimise negative impacts are considered, including those implemented in earlier stages of Project planning and development. Where avoidance or minimisation is not possible, management strategies are identified. Where an impact is predicted to be positive, measures to enhance positive impacts are identified to ensure the maximum benefit to the community across all impact significance ratings.

The following factors (DPE 2023b, p. 15) were considered in the development of mitigation measures:

- Ensuring a clear connection between the mitigation measure and the negative social impact being mitigated;
- Whether there is an applicable standard that defines what is acceptable;
- Whether the Project is the sole or primary cause of the negative social impact, and the scale of its relative contribution to the overall or cumulative impact;
- Whether the mitigation measure requires action by another party separate to the Applicant;
- Whether the mitigation measure itself is likely to cause secondary social impacts;
- Whether the mitigation measure is reasonable or practicable;
- Whether and in what ways the mitigation measure is acceptable to affected people;
- Whether the mitigation measure will address all reasonably foreseeable scenarios; and
- Whether the mitigation approach is prescribed in a government policy, or if alternative formalised arrangements are required.

Social impact significance, as outlined in **Table 2-1**, is used to determine the level of management required with a proportional focus on impacts with a higher impact significance (i.e., medium, high and very high). The impact assessment and impact significance ratings derived in the assessment are revised after the application of management and mitigation strategies have been applied to provide a residual impact significance rating for each impact.

These management and mitigation strategies are arranged according to Project phase (e.g., Construction and Operation) and into in the following categories: stakeholder and community; employment and procurement; local disruptions during construction; accommodation and worker influx; land use and landscape, and cumulative impacts. The management and mitigation strategies summarised in **Section 6** provide a preliminary Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP). The preliminary SIMP focuses on effective, adaptive, and actionable measures and includes consideration of the likelihood of their implementation and sustainability from the community's perspective.

2.5 PHASE #5: MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The accuracy of the impact assessment, progress towards preparation and implementation of a complete SIMP (post-approval), and the effectiveness of measures it contains is accompanied by a monitoring framework. The framework includes and program for monitoring the predicted social impacts against actual impacts and describes the:

- Desired outcomes in social terms, including measures and strategies to be detailed in the SIMP;
- Indicator(s) that will be used to monitor change;
- Targets against which performance will be assessed;
- Methods that will be used to monitor the social impact;
- Frequency of monitoring;
- Roles and responsibilities involved in the monitoring framework (and subsequent plan); and
- Process for responding to monitoring results, including the process, and roles and responsibilities for identifying and implementing adaptive management strategies as required.

The framework also outlines any relevant social incident notification and reporting process, a program for ongoing analysis of social impacts (positive and negative), identification of any data gaps and how they might be addressed, and processes for reviewing and reporting on the results of monitoring. Monitoring and evaluation plans are conditions typically applied during the Project's state assessment and approvals process.

The framework outlined in **Section 8** provides the basis for developing a more detailed SIMP that will be prepared as part of the anticipated conditions of approval.

3. SCOPING: SOCIAL LOCALITY AND STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

This section outlines the approach to determining the Social Locality for the Project and provides a description of the Social Locality. Additionally, this section highlights the relevant ABS datasets and key stakeholder groups that were identified through the determination of the Social Locality.

3.1 APPROACH TO DETERMINING THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

The first step in a SIA is the scoping process, which helps to define the social Area of Influence, or Social Locality. Determining the Social Locality for the Project involves understanding the nature of the Project, the characteristics of the surrounding communities, and how potential positive and/or negative impacts will be experienced by different community members/groups.

In determining the Social Locality, the following Project aspects were taken into consideration:

- The location of Project infrastructure across the Project Area, including solar arrays, BESS, substation, and site access road;
- The location of these components within the overall Project Area relative to sensitive land uses. This includes proximity to environmental values and topographical features;
- Construction, Operation and Decommissioning Phase activities, such as:
  - Land clearing and ongoing access for maintenance;
  - Workforce requirements, including skills required and accommodation arrangements;
  - Goods and services required by the Project; and
  - Haulage routes to and from the Project Area.

When considering these aspects, it was determined that the Project's Social Locality should include the Project Area, the area surrounding the Project Area where noise, visual and other impacts may occur, the haulage routes where similar amenity impacts may be experienced and the communities in larger centres that may provide workers or goods and services to the Project.

It was determined that the Social Locality would not include the following:

- The complete extent of haulage routes from regional ports where State/National highways are to be used. Large parts of the haulage routes identified for potential use by the Project have already been designed and constructed to accommodate large-scale industrial vehicles (i.e. B-Doubles). As such, the sections of haulage routes to be included in the Social Locality have been limited to those which are relevant to localised community concerns, or where likely to be used for non-material transport related purposes (e.g. worker movements, localised school bus routes, etc.).
- The complete extents of the New England REZ. As the Project is situated on the south-western perimeter of the New England REZ, extending the Social Locality to include all the REZ will create too broad of an area to appropriately consider potential social impacts of relevance to the Project and Project stakeholders / receptors. It is noted however, that whilst the Social Locality does not incorporate the full extent of the New England REZ, where cumulative social impacts of the Project may be experienced within the New England REZ these have been considered in **Section 6.2.3** of the SIA.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

The Project is situated about 1.8 km east of the Bendemeer town centre, represented by the Bendemeer Hotel, and is located 46 km (by road) north-east of the Tamworth Post Office to the Project access. The Project is entirely located within the Tamworth Regional Council Local Government Area (LGA) in the New England Region of NSW, on land that is predominately used for agricultural activities. The Project extends across an area of approximately 606.9 ha, over three freehold land parcels. Given the size and locality of Bendemeer, nearby regional centres of Tamworth and Armidale, are likely to provide goods and services to support the Construction Phase of the Project.

The Project's Social Locality, as defined for the purposes of the SIA is comprised of the following three components:

1. The **Project Area and immediate surrounding areas**, located within the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) Nos.: 11004120515, 11004120530, and 11001118906. SA1 data has been used to identify key baseline indicators for the Social Locality, where applicable. Additionally, LGA level data for the Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310) and State level data for NSW were used to provide an understanding of the broader and comparative social context within the Project is located.
2. The **likely workforce transportation and haulage routes** from and to larger town centres via the New England Highway. Project Area access will occur via the Oxley Highway with the workforce transiting from Tamworth or Armidale, and the solar farm components transported from either the Port of Brisbane, Port of Melbourne or Port of Newcastle to the Project Area via the New England Highway. The Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) (DATE) has determined that the routes from the Port of Newcastle, Port of Melbourne and from the Port of Brisbane will use the State/National highways that accommodate B-Doubles. As per **Section 3.1**, the Social Locality does not include the sections of the highways from the ports to/from the Project Area, with the exception of the sections between Armidale, Tamworth and the Project Area.
3. The **surrounding towns and regional centres** of Tamworth and Armidale, which may provide goods and services to support the construction phase of the Project. ABS Urban Centres and Localities (UCLs) data were used to provide baseline information Tamworth and Armidale.

The Project Area and immediate surrounding areas, SA1s, Tamworth Regional LGA, transportation and haulage routes, and UCLs for Tamworth and Armidale form the Social Locality, as depicted in **Figure 3-1.**

Indicative travel distances and times to/from the Project Area are provided in **Table 3-1.**

TABLE 3-1 VEHICULAR TRAVEL DISTANCES FROM THE PROJECT AREA ACCESS POINT

Town/Regional Centre	Travel Distance	Indicative Travel Time
Bendemeer	1.8 km	5 mins
Tamworth	46 km	40 mins
Armidale	70 km	55 mins

3.2.1 ABS DATASETS

The data presented in the baseline provides an understanding of the communities within the Social Locality, including the Project Area and immediate surrounding areas, local transportation and haulage routes, and nearby regional centres. It is noted that not all data sets (e.g., health, crime, transport) are readily available at SA1 level. Where this is the case, the most appropriate data is presented, which may be at a LGA or regional level.

Table 3-2 outlines the primary ABS datasets used to provide key demographic data across the Project's Social Locality. Where available, 2016 and 2021 Census data is used for the purposes of trend analysis.

TABLE 3-2 SUMMARY OF RELEVANT ABS DATASETS

Location	2016		2021	
	Approx. area	ABS Data Reference	Approx. area	ABS Data Reference
Tamworth Regional LGA	9,884.4 km^2	LGA17310	9,884.4 km^2	LGA17310
SA1 (containing western portion of Project Area)	540.5 km^2	1120515	540.5 km^2	11004120515 (SA1)
SA1 (containing Bendemeer township)	0.97 km^2	1120530	0.97 km^2	11004120530 (SA1)
SA1 (containing eastern portion of Project Area)	489.7 km^2	1118906	489.7 km^2	11001118906 (SA1)
Tamworth	38.2 km^2	UCL112014	38.2 km^2	UCL112018
Armidale	31.0 km^2	UCL112001	30.2 km^2	UCL112001
NSW	800,808.8 km^2	1	800,810.8 km^2	Code 1 (STE)

3.3 IDENTIFICATION OF KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Based on this understanding of the Project's Social Locality, the stakeholder groups identified as potentially impacted by the Project are outlined in **Table 3-3**.

Specific vulnerable groups within these key stakeholder groups have been identified within the Social Baseline (refer to **Section 5.2.2**).

TABLE 3-3 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

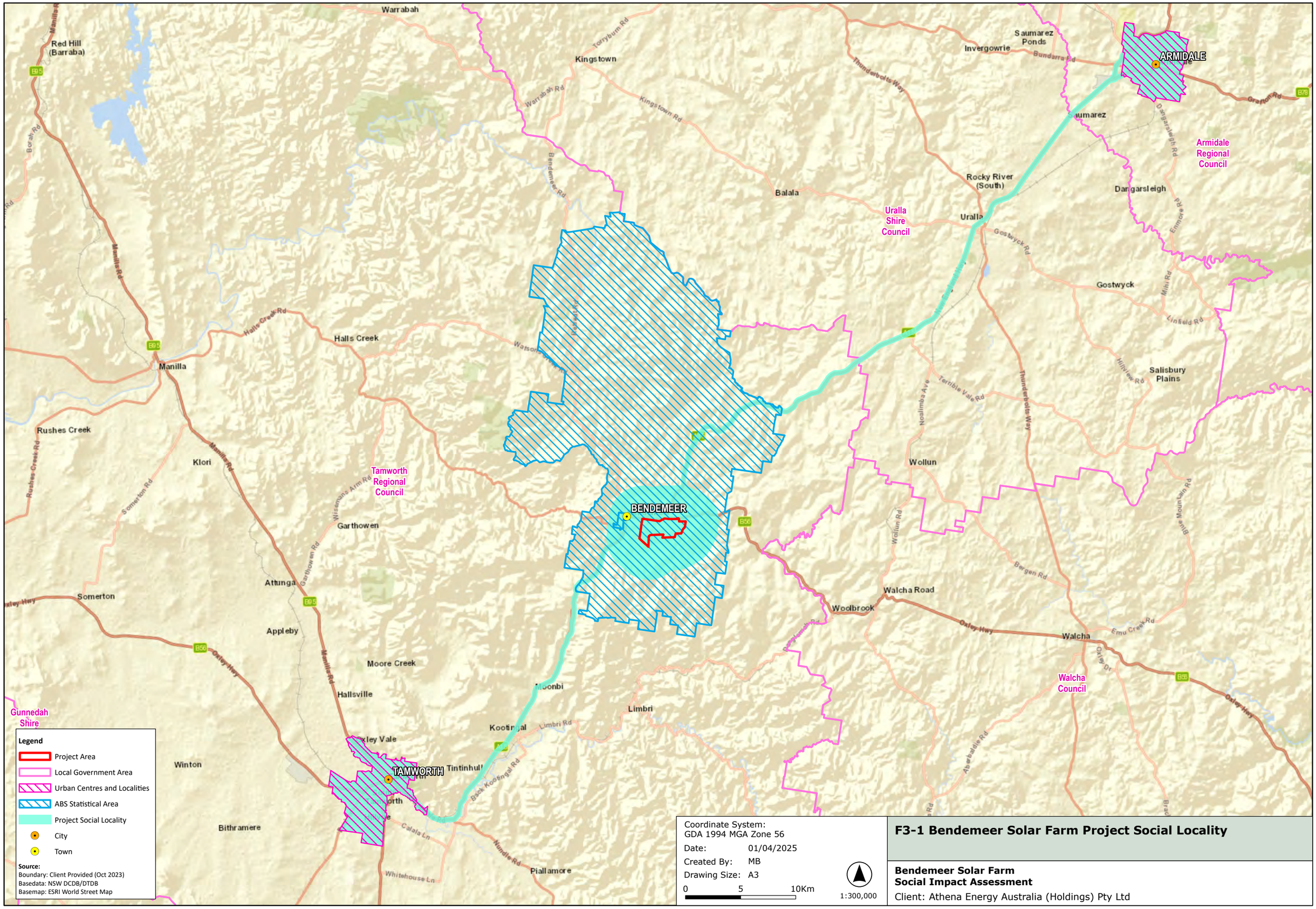
Stakeholder Group	Stakeholders	Form of Consultation
Host Landowners	Landowners with the potential to host infrastructure, have already engaged in discussion or have already agreed to host infrastructure.	Individual consultation.
Immediate Neighbours	Properties with and without dwellings which neighbour the Project area.	Individual consultation.

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholders	Form of Consultation

Surrounding Communities	Community members and groups who live in surrounding communities but are not immediate neighbours, including:
	• Local Communities in Bendemeer, Woolbrook, Kentucky, Moonbi, and Walcha
	• Regional Centres including Tamworth, Uralla, and Armidale
	• Community Groups including:
	  ◦ Bendemeer Country Women's Association (CWA);
	  ◦ Bendemeer Town Hall Committee;
	  ◦ Woolbrook Hall and Park Committee;
	  ◦ Macdonald River Landcare Group;
	  ◦ Friends of Kentucky Action Group;
	  ◦ Thunderbolt Energy Hub Community Consultative Committee;
	  ◦ Bendemeer Art Show Committee;
	  ◦ Bendemeer Camp Draft and Rodeo;
	  ◦ Woolbrook Stampede;
	  ◦ Bendemeer Tractor Muster and Land Rover Gathering;
	  ◦ Save Our Scenery Bendemeer Action Group;
	  ◦ Red4NE – Responsible Development for New England;
	  ◦ Voice 4 Walcha; and
	  ◦ Bendemeer Rural Fire Service (RFS).
		Community consultation.

Aboriginal Communities	Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) as identified through the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Applicants (DECCW 2010) including: • Tamworth LALC; • Gomeroi Native Title Applicant; • Stakeholder 1 (name withheld at stakeholder request); • Stakeholder 2 (name withheld at stakeholder request); • Didge Ngunawal Clan; • Wurrumay Pty Limited; • AT Gomilaroi Cultural Consultancy; • Warragil Cultural Services; and • Steve Talbot.	Community and individual consultation
Local/Regional Businesses	Local/Regional business represented by Tamworth Business Chamber.	Jobs, economic benefits/impacts, community consultation
Emergency Services	Emergency services including the Westpac Rescue Helicopter service.	Workplace health and safety, site access during emergencies.
Local Council	Tamworth Council: • Cr Russel Webb (Mayor); • Paul Bennett (General Manager); • Gina Verecker (Director Liveable Communities); • Jacqueline O'Neill (Director of Growth and Prosperity); and • Elected Councillors.	Jobs, economic impacts, opportunities for tourism and other industry benefits. Community consultation, community wellbeing, impact on local residents and businesses, economic benefits, impacts on local roads and infrastructure.

A summary of the outcomes of engagement undertaken to-date with these groups is described in **Section 4**.



F3-1 Bendemeer Solar Farm Project Social Locality

Bendemeer Solar Farm
Social Impact Assessment
Client: Athena Energy Australia (Holdings) Pty Ltd

0657132_BendSF_SIA_R01.mxd

4. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT RELEVANT TO THE SIA

This section summarises the community and stakeholder engagement activities and outcomes relevant to the SIA that have been undertaken during ongoing stakeholder engagement for the Project, and during targeted engagement for the SIA. Accordingly, this section includes a summary of the key themes covering Project benefits, impacts, issues, and concerns raised throughout stakeholder engagement activities across all stakeholder groups. It further informs the scoping of social issues and potential impacts outlined in **Section 3** to ensure that these concerns are adequately captured in the impact assessment contained in **Section 6**. Stakeholder engagement was informed by the Undertaking engagement guidelines for state significant developments (DPE 2022a).

A wide variety of historical and current consultation activities have been utilised to inform the SIA. Since commencement of the Project, regular and ongoing stakeholder engagement activities as well as targeted technical studies prepared for the EIS, have provided feedback and sentiment from Immediate Neighbours, Aboriginal communities, government officials, and the Surrounding Community. ERM consultants also conducted targeted SIA consultation (face-to-face interviews) during February 2023 to inform the social impact assessment.

4.1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN FOR THE EIS

The Applicant has regularly engaged with the community since Project commencement. Early in the engagement, the Applicant was engaging face-to-face with landholder and community groups. Face-to-face engagement was largely put on hold during the Scoping Phase of the Project due to Covid-19 restrictions; however, the Applicant adapted its approach to virtual engagement.

During the EIS preparation phase, several stakeholder and community engagement activities and methods have been undertaken to communicate the scale and context of the Project to associated landholders, neighbours, local residents, community members and the wider region. An overview of the engagement activities conducted is provided in **Table 4-1**. The EIS provides more detailed and significant community consultation events which are summarised in **Table 4-2.**

All interactions are captured on a Stakeholder Register, which logs stakeholder details, interactions details and follow up actions. There are currently 289 individual stakeholders on the register, along with 80 organisations. Since 2021 at total of 1483 interactions have been captured, as depicted in **Figure 4-1**.

FIGURE 4-1 STAKEHOLDER REGISTER INTERACTIONS SUMMARY

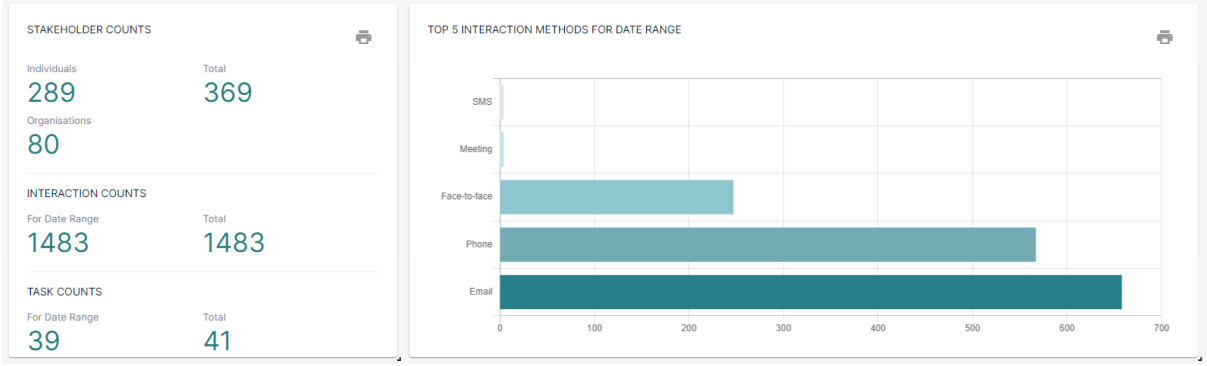


TABLE 4-1 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW

Method/Activity	Summary

Newsletters	• Project newsletters have been developed monthly from May 2022 (previously quarterly) and are exhibited on the Project's website and distributed via electronic direct mail.
	• Digital copies have been shared across the current recipient database of around 220 people, and at least 20 hardcopies placed at business premises in Bendemeer, and copies are made available at Community Pop-Up Sessions and the Community Hub.
	• The average read rates for the newsletters are approximately 55%, which is above the industry average of 29%.
	• Newsletters include the following:
	  ° Project director's message;
	  ° Project update;
	  ° Community engagement contact details, including community hotline and email address;
	  ° Any relevant monthly activities or upcoming events (e.g., community pop-up sessions); and
	  ° Newsletter databases sign up, also promoted via Project website and social media.
	• Current and past newsletters can be found at: https://bendemeerenergyhub.com.au/newsletters/

Community Pop-Up Sessions	• Community Pop-Up Sessions are used to share critical Project information and collateral (e.g. brochures, maps, etc.).
	• Members of the Project are present at these meetings to answer questions from the community members.
	• Community Pop-Up Sessions are held at the following locations:
	  ° Bendemeer Village: commencing in May 2022 these were held bi-monthly at the Bendemeer Hotel. Since March 2023, these have been held monthly; and
	  ° Woolbrook Village: one Pop-Up Session was held in November 2022, followed by bi-monthly sessions commencing March 2023 until August 2023.
	• A total of 13 Community Pop-Up Sessions have been held. On average, 5-10 members of the community attend each session, however numbers fluctuate depending on time and day of week.
	• Names, contact details and main issues are recorded in the Stakeholder Register.

Community Hub	• A permanent Community Hub has been established in Bendemeer Village to provide a centralised location for the community to engage with the Project team. • The building has been rented from the Bendemeer CWA branch, creating additional avenues for engagement, and providing an economic benefit, to the local community group. • The building is located on 7 Henry Street, Bendemeer, NSW 2355. • From April – November 2023, the Community Hub was staffed every Friday between 10am and 2pm. From December 2023, the Community Hub is staffed on a monthly basis at the same times.

Host Landholder Meetings	• Regular meetings are held with the host landholder to share relevant Project updates and progress. These meetings include:
	  ° Face-to-face meetings: Atleast nine face-to-face meetings have been held with the host landholder. These meetings allow the landholder to ask questions of the Project team. All questions captured in the Stakeholder Register;
	  ° Virtual meetings: three virtual meetings were held during Covid-19 lockdowns. The host landholder was also given the opportunity to dial-in where necessary. All questions captured in Stakeholder Register; and
	  ° Phone calls and text: ongoing group text chat with host landholder.

Method/Activity	Summary
Events and Community Sponsorship	• The Applicant has financially supported key community events, including the Grey Fergie Tractor Muster 2022, which is one of the biggest community events in Bendemeer. The Applicant had an information stand set up at the event, where members of the Project team engaged with community members. • The Applicant attended the Bendemeer Camp Draft and Rodeo 2023 providing a financial contribution to display at the event. • The Applicant has established a long-term partnership with the Bendemeer Art Show to be the major sponsor of the Bendemeer Art Show for the period of 2023 to 2027, pending approval of the Project. • The Applicant has engaged with the Macdonald River Landcare Group to offer and provide ongoing support for the group's activities.
Face-to-face Meetings	• 98 face-to-face meetings have been held with non-associated landholders, including two group sessions. The Applicant has met with some neighbours multiple times. Each meeting conducted included a discussion of issues/concerns, which are captured in Stakeholder Register. • Meetings have also been extended to government and community groups, including Tamworth Regional Council (four face-to-face meetings); the NSW Member for Tamworth and Minister for Lands and Water, Minister for Hospitality and Racing (two face-to-face meetings); Shadow Minister for Gaming and Racing, and Shadow Minister for Arts and Heritage (one face-to-face meeting); NSW Member for Northern Tablelands (one face-to-face meeting); and Federal Member for New England (two face-to-face meetings). • Five meetings have been held with community groups, including the Rural Fire Service, Macdonald River Landcare Group, Bendemeer Art Show, Bendemeer CWA, and Kootingal Lions Club, where Project presentations were given.
Project Briefings	• Project briefings were conducted to support various face-to-face meetings, including with the NSW Government MP and Federal MP, Mayor and General Manager of Tamworth Regional Council, and the CWA.
Community Hotline and Email	• A dedicated Community Hotline and email address were set up in May 2022 to support the Project. Prior to that time, community members and landholders contacted the Project team members directly. • The details for the Community Hotline and email address are shared on the Project website, social media, newsletters and factsheets. The details are: ◦ Email: community@metisenergy.com ◦ Hotline: 0402 949 462 • The Community Hotline and email are monitored daily by the Project team. • Since May 2022, an average of one email and two calls have been received per week via the Community Hotline and email.
Community Survey	• An online survey was launched in March 2023 to further the understanding of community sentiment. • The Community Survey was conducted was a third-party research company, and targeted members of the Bendemeer Village community, and nearby communities. • The Community Survey closed on 07 April 2023. By time of closing, the survey had 63 responses, 50 of which were from the Bendemeer region.

Method/Activity	Summary
Project Website	• A dedicated website has been created for the Project, which provides: ◦ Project overview, including location, timelines and documents (Scoping Report and SEARs) ◦ Project updates and community sessions details, found at: https://bendemeerenergyhub.com.au/news/ ◦ Past community newsletters and fact books ◦ Community newsletter including sign up option to receive regular updates ◦ Community hotline, email address and LinkedIn ◦ Project team biographies ◦ Information about the proposed CBF ◦ Website: https://bendemeerenergyhub.com.au/
Public Relations and Media	• Media opportunities and public relations have been used to boost community engagement and community pop up sessions • Media releases have been developed and distributed to local media markets • News articles can be found at https://bendemeerenergyhub.com.au/news/
Social Media	• A LinkedIn account has been set up for the Project at https://www.linkedin.com/company/bendemeer-renewable-energy-hub/ • This account is used to promote newsletters, upcoming events, Project milestones and community pop up sessions. • The Project has also featured on various other social media platforms, such as Facebook.
Project Factsheets	• Project factsheets have been developed to address key areas that have been raised by community members, landholder and neighbours. • Project factsheets been adapted as the Project has evolved and updated facts have been made available on the website, in the newsletter and in person at the Community Hub and pop-up sessions.

Table 4-2 Summary of Community Consultation

Stakeholder	Date and Tool	Purpose and Outcomes
Host Landholder	• March 2022 – March 2025 • Phone, Email and Virtual	• To introduce the Project, provide updates and identify early feedback and concerns. • Three virtual meetings were held with the host landholder. Ongoing liaison with host landholder also occurred via phone and email, which equates to over 150 individual interactions, as well as six non-associated landholders (e.g. owners of three dwellings within assessment area with over 127 individual interactions via phone and email. • Non-associated landholders have been kept updated on progress of the Project and application.
	• March 2022 – March 2025 • Face-to-face	• To provide updates on the Project progress, the impacts associated with the Project and answer questions. • Ove nine face-to-face meetings with the host landholder. • Over 53 face-to-face meetings with non-associated landowners and two group sessions, held at properties neighbouring the Project. • The landholders were keen to be kept updated on the progress of the application and have been briefed face-to-face as key environmental studies have been completed. Key areas of interest include ensuring management of impacts such as traffic, visual, noise, and biodiversity. • Key information from relevant environmental studies has been provided to community members and landholders via email, newsletters, and in face-to-face meetings. • Photomontages have been undertaken and have been provided to residents and landholders once completed.
	• February 2023 • SIA Focused Engagement	• To identify the local community values, strengths and vulnerabilities, as well as their perspective on economy, infrastructure, and environment. • Host landholder and non-associated landowners were engaged. • These engagements indicated the benefits of the Project are well understood (e.g., mixed land use, economic benefits to the region, creation of jobs, decreased costs of energy bills, energy security) and investment in local infrastructure.

Stakeholder	Date and Tool	Purpose and Outcomes
Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Communities, Community Groups and Local/Regional Businesses	• March 2022 – Ongoing Phone and Email	• Direct contact with the Project Team to answer questions from the community, identify early feedback and concerns, and provide updates on the Project. • On average, one email per week is received on the community email address enquiring about the Project and an average of two calls per week have been received on the community hotline. • Generally, email and phone enquiries via the community hotline and email have requested general Project information. In this instance the Project fact book has been supplied, as well as information regarding the Project website and monthly newsletter. • One landholder was interested in how her property would be impacted from a visual perspective; in this instance a face-to-face meeting was arranged. • A letter was received from the SOS Bendemeer Action Group requesting information on noise and visual impacts, cumulative assessment and impacts to wildlife. An in-depth response and Project fact book was provided via email, and an in-person meeting was offered.
	• March 2022 – June 2023 • Community Group Meetings	• A presentation of the Project was given to introduce the Project and identify feedback and concerns. • Five meetings with community groups including the Bendemeer CWA, RFS, Macdonald River Landcare group, Bendemeer Art Society and Kootingal Lions Club. • Attendees were keen to learn more about the Project with special interest regarding electricity distribution from the Project, and if there was an ability to graze under solar panels. • Community groups requested regular contact from the Project team to be kept informed of Project progress. There was special interest in preservation of Macdonald River, improvements to the Bendemeer community and traffic disruptions during the construction period. • Two meetings have resulted in official requests for sponsorship.
	• July 2022 – Ongoing • Community Information Sessions • Dec 2023-ongoing	• To provide the community with a greater understanding of the Project, answer questions and identify concerns and feedback. Fact sheets, information brochures and location maps were distributed. • 13 community pop-up sessions have been held, including three sessions in the neighbouring village of Woolbrook. An average of 5-10 members of the community attended each session. Numbers fluctuate depending on time and day of week, with the aim to vary the schedule to capture as many community members as possible. • Since April 2023, a Community Hub has also been set up, running out of the Bendemeer CWA Hall every Friday between 10am-2pm, where community members have come to ask questions about the Project. Hard copies of factsheets and community newsletters are available at the Community Hub. This was run weekly from April – November 2023, then transitioned to monthly from December 2023. • Project information stands were also set up at the Grey Fergie Tractor Muster 2022, and the Bendemeer Campdraft and Rodeo 2023, where factsheets and information were distributed to the public. • At all community sessions attendees asked questions about the Project, including the Project's economic benefits and noise and visual impacts. An update on SSD review and approvals process and timeline were also provided. Attendees were informed of community newsletters, pop-up sessions and provided with project factsheets and key information.

Stakeholder	Date and Tool	Purpose and Outcomes
		• All neighbours to the project were contacted and presented, either face to face, or via email with the amendment changes. There were some positive responses to the changes as well as those still opposing. Highlighted areas of concern were that of the Water Management as well as Weed Management plans outside of the Solar fenced area.
	• February 2023 • SIA Focused Engagement	• To identify the local community values, strengths and vulnerabilities, as well as their perspective on economy, infrastructure, and environment. • Community members, businesses and groups engaged with include neighbours to the Project, Macdonald River Landcare Group, Bendemeer Hotel, Bendemeer Rodeo President, Bendemeer Art Show Society, Bendemeer CWA and Tamworth Business Chamber. • These engagements indicated that community values most strongly resonated with environment, especially the natural landscape, rolling hills and Macdonald River, farming, and community and family. • Benefits identified include increased economic activity in Bendemeer associated with the Project, CBF investment in buildings and social infrastructure (e.g., sewage infrastructure, healthcare services) in the Bendemeer village, and sustainability initiatives surrounding the management of the Macdonald River.
Aboriginal Communities	• October – November 2022 • Email and Media Release	• To identify RAPs who wish to be consulted about the Project and to assist in the preparation of the ACHAR. • An email was sent to Aboriginal agencies and Tamworth Regional Council, an advertisement was also placed in the *Northern Daily Leader.* • Letters were sent to 56 parties identified by Heritage NSW and North West LLS. • Nine groups or individuals registered to be consulted as RAPs (Tamworth LALC, Gomeroi Native Title Applicant, Didge Ngunawal Clan, Wurrumay Pty Limited, AT Gomilaroi Cultural Consultancy, Warragil Cultural Services, Steve Talbot and other and two other stakeholders) as described in the ACHAR.
	• November – December 2022 • Fieldwork	• To identify any cultural values within the landscape in which the Project is located so that those values can be recognised and incorporated into the Project management recommendations. • Two representatives from Tamworth LALC and four representatives from AT Gomilaroi Cultural Consultancy participated in the fieldwork undertaken over four days. • No specific cultural values were identified by the RAPs regarding the Project Area; however, the strong cultural values of Aboriginal communities towards landscapes and cultural heritage sites are recognised.
	• February 2023 • SIA Focused Engagement	• To identify community values, strengths and vulnerabilities. • Representatives of Tamworth LALC and AT Gomilaroi Cultural Consultant were engaged. • RAPs engaged with were supportive and identified several measures that could benefit from the development of the Project, such as training for locals to maintain the MacDonald River, training programs for one or two young Aboriginal people in (or nearby to) Bendemeer to become National Park rangers, improve socio-economic outcomes for local Aboriginal youth/ job procurement, and the facilitation of cultural burning practices.

Stakeholder	Date and Tool	Purpose and Outcomes
	• February, March 2023 • Email	• A letter attached to the draft ACHAR was sent to the nine registered RAPs to review the draft ACHAR and provide any comments on the cultural values of the sites recorded and the broader Project Area. A follow up reminder for feedback was sent to the RAPs on 10 March 2023. • The RAPs did not provide comments on the draft ACHAR.
	• November 2023, February 2024, March 2025 • Email, letter	• A Project update letter was distributed to all RAPs advising that the ACHAR and Project EIS have been on public exhibition and comments were received from Heritage NSW that needed to be addressed in the revised ACHAR. This included the need to survey the external road work area across the site access; • A Project update letter was sent to all RAPs advising that the Project layout has been amended where survey of the external road work area had been completed and no Aboriginal sites were recorded, and the amended Disturbance Boundary will not harm Riverside PAD-1 or PAD-2. • A Project update letter was sent to a all RAPs advising that an additional 0.4 ha of land has been included in the Project Area and amendments to the disturbance footprint. Both areas were assessed during survey and no Aboriginal sites were present in these areas. • A Project update letter was sent to all RAPs advising of a reduction in disturbance footprint to retain additional vegetation.
Infrastructure Owners	• February 2023 • Email	• An email was sent to TransGrid to provide an update on the Project following the receipt of the Project SEARs, seek feedback, identify concerns, and offer online or phone meeting. A Project Layout updated figure was included in the email indicating Project key elements. • TransGrid replied to the letter advising that a Connection Processes Agreement (CPA) is required to facilitate a connection to TransGrid's network and will need to include all new connection assets as part of its approval. No concerns or issues were raised by TransGrid.
	• October 2022 • January – June 2023 • Email	• New England Renewable Energy Zone (New England REZ) Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Bendemeer Renewable Energy Hub submitted via email on 21 October 2022. • Initial New England REZ introductory session was provided by Energy Co on 8 February 2023 outlining general objectives of the New England REZ, infrastructure requirements, schedule and community engagement. Request was made to Metis for supply of project details, community engagement feedback, and development schedule. Energy Co also offered to review the Project's EIS prior to submission. • Technical meeting held on 10 March 2023 to provide information requested during initial meeting on 10 February 2023. • A meeting was conducted with Energy Co on 14 March 2023 to discuss the engagement activities undertaken by the Project team. Following this, the results of the community survey were shared with Energy Co to assist in understanding community sentiment. • The Project EIS Chapters 1 to 4 were provided to Energy Co for review on 17 April 2023. • Update to the Project layout was provided to Energy Co on 28 April 2023. • No concerns or issues were raised during engagement with Energy Co.

4.2 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN FOR THE SIA

SIA focused engagement interviews were undertaken during February 2023 with a targeted sample stakeholder group comprising associated landowners, neighbouring landowners, community groups, RAPs (Tamworth LALC and AT Gomilaroi Cultural Consultant), emergency services and local government. These engagements indicated that community values most strongly resonated with environment (flora and fauna), farming, and community and family. Respondents particularly noted the value of the natural landscape, rolling hills and Macdonald River.

Several respondents described the Bendemeer township as falling into despair and shared concerns about the small town 'dying' and becoming 'sleepy'. As such, conversations with stakeholders about community benefits were generally filled with a sense of excitement and hope (refer to **Section 6** in relation to the management of community expectations). When discussing potential community benefits associated with the Project, it was identified from stakeholders that the benefits believed to be of most value were the repair and maintenance of buildings and social infrastructure in the Bendemeer township, provision of healthcare services, and rolling out of sustainability initiatives associated with the management of the Macdonald River. In particular, stakeholders consulted requested community benefits that are well suited to the unique challenges of living in a rural area and emphasised the need for the fund to be managed separately from local government.

Key social concerns surrounded the maintenance of road infrastructure and how the Project will impact the Macdonald River. Many respondents noted that the Macdonald River is the "heart of Bendemeer" and contains several fauna species. The only stakeholders to share specific concerns relating to visual impacts, along with related concerns about property values, were the Immediate Neighbours to the Project. However, it was noted that stakeholders beyond Immediate Neighbours did not share concerns about visual impacts and property devaluation. Discussion was also had in relation to community divisions arising from the proposed Project and the associated Bendemeer Wind Farm. The majority of stakeholders interviewed however, suggested this was primarily directed at the visual impacts associated with the Wind Farm component of the Bendemeer Renewable Energy Hub, rather than the solar component (i.e. the Project).

Table 4-3 outlines specific comments provided on each of these areas of interest by the various stakeholder groups identified in **Section 3.3**. In line with participatory research methods, SIA focused engagement by ERM recognises all stakeholders as key knowledge holders who can provide valuable information about the local community, economy, infrastructure, and environment (Vanclay, 2003). The comments in **Table 4-3** provide valuable qualitative data that has informed the assessment of social impacts in **Section 6** of the SIA.

It is important to note that SIA focused stakeholder engagement drew on a stratified sample methodology comprised of oppositional, neutral, and supportive community members. Accordingly, the viewpoints expressed by interviewed stakeholders (presented in **Table 4-3**) should not be considered as a complete record of all stakeholders within the Social Locality. To this end, some data points are skewed by stakeholders who openly stated that they were biased against or towards the Project proceeding. Accordingly, whilst stakeholder views and comments have been considered in the impact assessment, not all stakeholder viewpoints have been assigned an equal weighting.

In order to determine the weighting of the stakeholder viewpoints presented in **Table 4-3**, the impact assessment in **Section 6** draws on a combination of technical studies (to distinguish between the perception and realised impact), baseline data (regarding claims about vulnerable groups), and qualitative interview methodologies, to appropriately triangulate and interpret the qualitative information obtained.

It should be noted that **Table 4-3** does not provide the full list of responses to comments raised during stakeholder engagement for the wider EIS. Please refer to Section 5 of the EIS for that information.

In addition, the SIA stakeholder interviews conducted also discussed the Bendemeer Wind Farm along with the Project, which together are referred to as the Bendemeer Renewable Energy Hub (Metis Energy, 2023). This SIA only covers issues associated with the Project (the Project being a solar farm and BESS).

TABLE 4-3 COMMUNITY VIEWS FROM SIA ENGAGEMENT

Theme / Topic	Stakeholder Group	Comment Raised
Community Benefits	Host Landowners	Suggested the need to invest in social infrastructure, such as health and education, that will benefit the whole community (as opposed to upgrading the tennis court).
		Identified the need to improve sewage infrastructure.
	Surrounding Community	Seeking more information on community benefits and how funds will be spent
		Keen to find out what benefits are/will be available.
		Mentioned there is local demand for childcare service and people are leaving Bendemeer as a result.
		Highlighted that Council are not currently investing in Bendemeer, and CBF will need to be separate from Council.
		Opportunity to subsidise energy bills to equally distribute benefits throughout the community.
		Discussed the importance of improving and maintaining the local sporting facilities and playground areas.
		Opportunity for the CBF to address the existing vermin problem to satisfy farmers and environmentalist groups.
		Identified the demand for a local doctor, hairdresser, and aged-care services, or a shuttle service bus to Tamworth.
		Mentioned the need for a bike track or skateboard park for younger people.
	Aboriginal Communities	Discussed the possibility of investing in a library with computer workstations and free training courses.
		Identified the need to prioritise National Park ranger training programs for one or two young Aboriginal people in (or nearby to) Bendemeer.

Theme / Topic	Stakeholder Group	Comment Raised
Economic Activity	Host Landowners	Described the construction phase as a boon and godsend for the Bendemeer community.
		Discussed how small agriculture-based rural communities like Bendemeer are starting to die off.
		Mentioned that the small number of jobs during the operation phase of the Project could be the difference between having a small business, an extra teacher, and/or a local doctor.
	Surrounding Community	Concerns that job procurement will not come from Bendemeer.
		Happy with the local economy in its current form.
	Aboriginal Communities	Excited for increased economic activity described the Project development as a matter of progress.
	Local/Regional Businesses	Shared excitement about the increase in economic activity during the construction phase after COVID-19 restrictions and the recent years of flooding.
Transport and Traffic	Host Landowners	Concerns regarding traffic impacts and road access especially when transporting the construction machinery and materials.
	Surrounding Community	Suggested that projects focus on their timing with surrounding wind and solar projects to reduce traffic congestion and hazards.
		Traffic congestion and highway maintenance (New England Highway passing through Moonbi Ranges).
		Improve the condition of roads (Havannah Street turn off); concerns about road deterioration generally.
		Dangerous intersection (Oxley Highway and New England Highway).
		Increased traffic congestion and commuting times to Tamworth.
	Emergency Services	Concern about increased traffic related incidents. Suggested bussing Tamworth based workforce to Project Area to limit traffic movements and fatigue.
	Local/Regional Businesses	Discussed the need to assist the Bendemeer petrol station owner to stay open for longer hours and weekends to support increased traffic and workforce commutes from Tamworth. Currently open 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.
Community Engagement	Host Landowners	Commending the community engagement and flexibility of negotiations.
	Surrounding Community	Commending the current community engagement, particularly the pop-up information sessions at Bendemeer Pub.
		Suggestion that a letterbox drop would make Project information accessible to elderly people in the community do not know about the Project.
		Mistrust that community engagement is truthful.
		Suggestion of an email communication for middle-aged people who do not socialise in the community.
	Aboriginal Communities	Seeking updated information about how the Project will impact tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Theme / Topic	Stakeholder Group	Comment Raised
Landscape and Visual	Surrounding Community	Little concern about the visual impact of the Project.
		Request for more maps and examples of visual impacts.
		Concern regarding viewpoints of photomontages and appropriate representation.
		Comments regarding local visual impact; however, supportive of the proposed location.
		Concern of visual impacts for potential house construction site. Showed interest in vegetation screen using trees around the fence line.
		Concern about the reflection of light. Compared the solar farm to the reflection of a water surface.
	Local/Regional Businesses	Requests for specific visual impact consideration from Bendemeer pub and private properties.
Project Design	Surrounding Community	Asked why the Project does not have a larger buffer from Bendemeer township.
		Scepticism about the efficiency of NSW Government's planning and the Renewable Energy Zones (REZs).
		Suggested the Project should be further West, and where rural properties are so vast there will be little social impact to anyone.
		Frustrated that small rural communities (Bendemeer) are left responsible for producing energy for major cities (Sydney) and regional cities (Tamworth).
Noise and Vibration / Hazards	Surrounding Community	Expressed desire to maintain a quiet, pristine environment.
		General concern about the effects noise – compromising the pristine rural amenities of the area.
		Concern about electromagnetic fields.
Biosecurity	Surrounding Community	Concern about the introduction of invasive plant and animal species via increased movement and vehicle transportation throughout the Project Area.
		Suggested the Project should not only mitigate biosecurity impacts but actively assist in reducing invasive plant (privet, black widows and blackberries) and animal species (rabbits and foxes).
	Local Government	Discussion of the importance of protecting the habitat of local animals, particularly protecting animals during the construction phase.
Environment and Wildlife	Landowners	General concern about how the Project will impact the wildlife in the Macdonald River.
	Surrounding Community	Concern about the endangered Bell's Turtle, Platypus and fish populations.

Theme / Topic	Stakeholder Group	Comment Raised
Hydrology	Host Landowners	Mentioned that the health of the Macdonald River is a major concern within the Surrounding Community.
	Surrounding Community	Asked what will happen if solar panels become damaged and whether any chemicals can leach into the water supply for Bendemeer.
		Would like to know if chemicals are being used to clean solar panels.
		Mentioned that the Macdonald River is already experiencing issues with agricultural run-off and fertiliser chemicals. Suggested there is an opportunity for the Project to improve the management of the river health.
	Aboriginal Communities	Talked about how the Project Area is a reasonable distance from the Macdonald River, but that it is essential that the Project does not impact on the river.
		Identified that Aboriginal people belong to a river system from the start to the finish.
Indigenous and Historic Heritage	Aboriginal Communities	Potential for artefact findings in proximity to the Project Area and mentioned that burial sites are scattered around creeks.
		Identified that development causes damage but does not destroy songlines or creation stories if the traditional custodians can tell those stories.
		Concern about the construction of access roads and substations during the construction phase.
Workforce Accom-modation	Landowners	Upscale the caravan park with dongas.
		Considered the possibility the workforce in both construction and operation phase renovating some of the older unoccupied houses in Bendemeer.
	Local/Regional Businesses	Mentioned being able to accommodate some of the workforce if given assistance to build small cabins on property.
	Emergency services	Discussed using the CAE Oxford Aviation Academy dorms at the airport then bussing to site to limit traffic movements and fatigue (CAE, 2023).
Decom-missioning	Surrounding Community	Interested to know how the solar panels will be disposed of or recycled.
		Wants more information about the decommissioning of the Project.
	Local Government	Concerned about infrastructure being developed by the Project and falling into disrepair after decommissioning.
Property Values	Host Landowners	Mention that landowner property prices are likely to increase due to mixed land use.
	Surrounding Community	Discussed how neighbouring properties with visual impacts from the Project will decrease in value due to the Project and will not be offset by any agreements or benefit funds.

4.3 SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

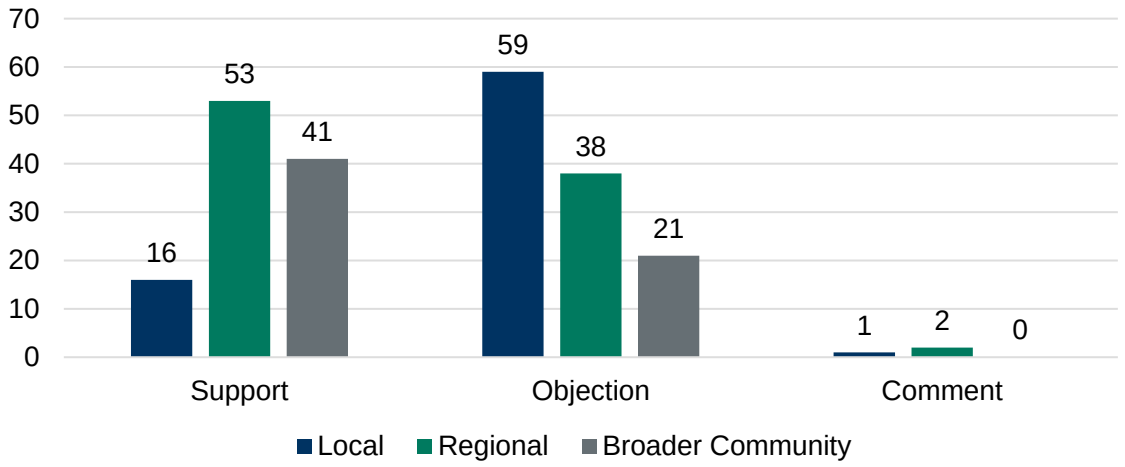
The EIS was publicly exhibited between 27 July 2023 and 23 August 2023 by the DPE. Of the 231 unique public and organisation submissions received:

- 76 (33%) were local (<5 km from the Project Area), comprising 16 in support, 59 in objection and one (1) with comment only;
- 93 (40%) were regional (5-100 km from the Project Area), comprising 53 in support, 38 in objection and two (2) with comment only; and
- 62 (27%) were categorised as broader community interest (>100 km from the Project Area) comprising 41 in support and 21 in objection.

It should be noted that Bendemeer is located approximately 1.8 km from the Project Area and therefore would be included in the "local" characterisation, while Tamworth (located approximately 46 km from the Project Area), and Armidale (located 70 km from the Project Area), would comprise part of the "regional" characterisation (refer to **Section 3.2**).

The analysis of submission by geography highlights that Objections to the Project were more prevalent within 5 km of the site. **Figure 4-2** illustrates the overall breakdown of submissions and the geographic distribution of public submissions by distance.

FIGURE 4-2 SUBMISSION ANALYSIS BY DISTANCE FROM THE PROJECT



Section 4.2.5.13 of the Submissions Report outlines how the public submissions relating to social impacts have been addressed by this SIA report. The following categories of social impacts were raised and discussed in this Submissions Report:

- Lifestyle Impacts;
- Mental Health;
- Community Division;
- Housing Concerns;
- Community Services; and
- Local Employment.

Social impacts that were raised during public submissions have been incorporated into the social impact assessment undertaken (refer to **Section 6**), with key impacts expanded upon to account for additional concerns raised through public submissions.

Refer to Table 4-61 through to Table 4-66 in the Submissions Report for a summary of public submission data relating to these social impacts.

5. SOCIAL BASELINE

This section provides an overview of the social baseline for the Project's Social Locality through a series of socio-economic data sets. In line with the Social Impact Assessment Guidelines (DPE 2023a, 2023b), the social baseline describes the Social Locality without the Project and informs the assessment of impacts outlined in **Section 6**.

5.1 LAND USE CONTEXT

The Project Area's immediate surroundings comprise sparsely populated rural communities mainly employed in beef cattle farming. The demographic profile of the area indicates a higher median age population, strong indigenous representation, and a high percentage of unoccupied dwellings. The Project Area contains limited social infrastructure or commerce, with the closest services available in Tamworth, approximately 46 km away.

Land use within the vicinity of the Project Area typically comprises mixed farming with livestock and crops and other farming activities. The Project Area is spread over rural properties zoned 'RU1: Primary Production' under the Tamworth Regional Local Environmental Plan, 2010. Immediately west of the Project Area is zoned as 'RU4: Primary Production Small Lots' and the Bendemeer Township is zoned 'RU5: Village'.

5.2 POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 5-1 draws on the ABS datasets listed in **Table 3-2** to provide a demographic overview of the Social Locality. As outlined in **Section 3.2**, the Project Area is located within ABS SA1 Nos.: 11004120515, 11004120530, and 11001118906. These SA1s are the primary source of information in relation to the impacted community's defining characteristics and is used to provide an understanding of vulnerable groups within the Project's immediate Social Locality.

The Social Locality is characterised by an ageing population, with the younger demographics located in the Town Centres. This Social Locality also has a much higher proportion of residents identifying as Indigenous Australian when compared to the state of NSW. Between 2016-2021, the Tamworth Regional LGA experienced modest population growth and trended toward a higher proportion of residents identifying as Indigenous Australian, and a slightly lower median age. Contrary to surrounding regions, however, the SA1 containing most of the Project experienced a population decline and significant increase in the proportion of population over the age of 65.

TABLE 5-1 KEY POPULATION INDICATORS ACROSS THE PROJECT'S SOCIAL LOCALITY

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Population	Pop. Δ (avg. annual growth rate)	Median Age	Indigenous Pop.	Pop. over 65 Years of Age	Pop. under 14 Years of Age
Tamworth Regional LGA LGA17310	*2021*	63,070	1.12%	39	12.7%	19.8%	20.2%
	2016	59,663		40	10.1%	18.6%	20.2%
SA1 (Western Portion) SA1-11004120515	*2021*	286	-1.15%	53	10.5%	27.7%	17.3%
	2016	303		48	2.6%	15.0%	17.1%
SA1 (Bendemeer Township) SA1-11004120530	*2021*	202	1.45%	52	14.4%	27.4%	11.3%
	2016	188		51	14.9%	26.0%	14.5%
SA1 (Eastern Portion) SA1-11001118906	*2021*	254	1.40%	47	14.1%	22.4%	14%
	2016	237		42	14.3%	23.0%	24.1%
Tamworth UCL112018	*2021*	35,415	0.89%	37	15.2%	19.8%	20%
	2016	33,885		38	12.4%	18.5%	20.2%
Armidale UCL112001	*2021*	21,312	0.89%	34	8.7%	18.0%	17.8%
	2016	20,386		33	8.0%	16.1%	17.4%
NSW Code 1 (STE)	*2021*	8,072,163	1.53%	39	3.4%	17.7%	18.2%
	2016	7,480,228		38	2.9%	16.2%	18.5%

5.2.1 SEIFA

SEIFA is a product developed by the ABS[3] that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census from 2016 and 2021. The SEIFA is commonly used to determine areas that require funding and services, identify new business opportunities, and assist research into the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and various social outcomes. A relative measure of socio-economic disadvantage was first produced by the ABS following the 1971 Census while the SEIFA in its present form was first produced from the 1986 Census data (ABS 2018b; ABS, 2023a).

The concept of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage used in the SEIFA 2016 and 2021 is the same as that used for the previous two censuses (2006 and 2011). The ABS defines relative socio-economic advantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society. This definition is purposely broad in recognition of the many concepts that have emerged in the literature to describe advantage and disadvantage.

The dimensions included in SEIFA are guided by international research as well as Census data. The Census used relates to the key dimensions of income, education, employment, occupation, housing, and some other miscellaneous indicators of advantage and disadvantage (ABS, 2018b). The latest available SEIFA indicators across the Project's Social Locality are reported in **Table 5-2**. While the Tamworth Regional LGA area exhibits a moderate degree of socio-economic disadvantage, the SA1 of Bendemeer, the closest town to the Project, is substantially more disadvantaged compared to the LGA and surrounding areas.

The SA1s containing the Project Area (SA1-11004120515 and SA1-11001118906) varied in disadvantage and lack of advantage from their 2016 percentiles, however, the disparity in the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) rating reduced for the Eastern Portion (SA1-11001118906) and increased for the Western Portion (SA1-11004120515) in 2021.

TABLE 5-2 SEIFA INDICATORS ACROSS THE PROJECT'S SOCIAL LOCALITY

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	SEIFA (percentile in NSW)
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	*2016*	42
	2021	31
SA1 Western Portion (SA1-11004120515)	*2016*	47
	2021	36
SA1 Bendemeer Township (SA1-11004120530)	*2016*	7
	2021	8

[3] Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census, available at: https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/latest-release

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	SEIFA (percentile in NSW)
SA1 Eastern Portion (SA1- 11001118906)	*2016*	19
	2021	28
Tamworth UCL (UCL112014)	*	*
Armidale UCL (UCL112001)	*	*
NSW Code 1 (STE)	*	*

* SEIFA is not provided for ABS UCL and STE Statistical Areas.

5.2.2 VULNERABLE GROUPS

Vulnerability refers to an individual or groups capacity to adapt to, or cope with changes in their environment and is influenced by a range of different socio-economic factors. Some individuals or groups may be more vulnerable than others due to certain existing socio-economic characteristics including (but not limited to) age, livelihood, language proficiency and health status.

Regional towns throughout NSW are often prone to social, cultural, environmental and economic changes over time. The socio-economic indicators considered in the Social Baseline (refer to **Section 5**) suggest that this variability is borne out within the Social Locality. In particular, the SA1 which extends over the Bendemeer township (SA1-11004120530) exhibits relatively higher levels of vulnerability compared to population characteristics of Tamworth Regional LGA. In particular, the IRSAD index of the SEIFA denotes Bendemeer is substantially more disadvantaged and lacking advantage than other areas within the Social Locality.

Outside of the Bendemeer township collectively, vulnerable groups identified in the Social Locality also include the elderly, youth and Aboriginal persons. The overall trend in the Social Locality is a decrease in the percentage of children under 14 years of age, an increase in the percentage of persons aged over 65 years, and an increase in the median age (refer to **Table 5-1**). The decrease in children under 14 reflects stakeholder engagement findings in **Section 4.3** that younger families are being forced to relocate to regional centres due to the limited access to economic opportunities, childcare and education services in Bendemeer. Elderly and youth populations have the potential to be more acutely affected by the Project based on changes in the local socio-economic environment and resultant pressures placed on social and emergency services.

With respect to Aboriginal persons, whilst the population in the Bendemeer township has decreased slightly since 2016, overall however, the number of Indigenous persons within the Social Locality has increased, and with greater proportionality to that of NSW. Aboriginal populations and Aboriginal Communities are culturally vulnerable to the Project impacts that may affect tangible and intangible heritage, particularly given past practices and government policies that may have created detachment from traditional lands.

5.3 ECONOMIC PROFILE

Table 5-3 characterises the economic profile of the Social Locality through the key industries and areas of employment for the three SA1s, the LGA (Tamworth), the two UCL (Tamworth and Armidale), and NSW.

TABLE 5-3 KEY INDUSTRIES FOR SELECT ABS STATISTICAL AREAS

Location	Key Occupation and Industries
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	• 59.5% of the LGA's residents reported being in the workforce. • The top occupations reported in Tamworth were Professionals (17.6%), Labourers (14.0%), Technicians and Trades Workers (14.0%), Managers (12.7%), Community and Personal Service Workers (12.6%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (11.5%), Sales Workers (9.0%), and Machinery Operators and Drivers (7.0%). • Of the employed people in Tamworth, the top industries of employment were Hospitals (5.6%), Secondary Education (3.3%), Meat Processing (3.2%), Other Social Assistance Services (3.1%), and Supermarket and Grocery Stores (2.6%).
SA1 Western Portion (SA1 -11004120515)	• 52.5% of the SA1's residents reported being in the workforce. • The top occupations reported in the SA1 were Managers (31.7%), Professionals (13.3%), Community and Personal Service Workers (12.5%) Clerical and Administrative Workers (10.0%), Labourers (9.2%), Sales Workers (5.0%), Technicians and Trades Workers (4.2%), and Machinery Operators and Drivers (4.2%). • Of the employed people in the SA1, the top industries of employment were Beef Cattle Farming (20.8%), Liquor Retailing (5.0%), Hospitals (4.2%), House Construction (3.3%), and Other Auxiliary Finance and Investment Services (3.3%).
SA1 Bendemeer Township (SA1-11004120530)	• 45.4% of the SA1's residents reported being in the workforce. • The top occupations reported in the SA1 were Labourers (22.7%), Community and Personal Service Workers (20.0%), Technicians and Trades Workers (14.7%), Machinery Operators and Drivers (12.0%), Professionals (8.0%), Managers (4.0%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (4.0%), and Sales Workers (4.0%). • Of the employed people in the SA1, the top industries of employment were Supermarket and Grocery Stores (8.0%), Pubs, Taverns and Bars (8.0%), Aged Care Residential Services (8.0%), House Construction (6.7%), and Road Freight Transport (5.3%).
SA1 Eastern Portion (SA1- 11001118906)	• 47.7% of the SA1's residents reported being in the workforce. • The top occupations reported in the SA1 were Managers (34.7%), Labourers (19.8%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (9.9%), Community and Personal Service Workers (8.9%), Sales Workers (7.9%), Technicians and Trades Workers (6.9%), and Professionals (5.9%). • Of the employed people in the SA1, the top industries of employment were Beef Cattle Farming (14.9%), Sheep Farming (10.9%), Sheep-Beef Cattle Farming (8.9%), Local Government Administration (7.9%), and Aged Care Residential Services (5.9%).
Tamworth UCL (UCL112018)	• 57.3% of the UCL's residents reported being in the workforce. • The top occupations reported in the UCL were Professionals (17.8%), Labourers (17.2%), Community and Personal Service Workers (13.7%), Technicians and Trades Workers (13.4%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (11.0%), Sales Workers (9.6%), Managers (9.2%), and Machinery Operators and Drivers (6.6%). • Of the employed people in the UCL, the top industries of employment were Hospitals (6.3%), Meat Processing (5.0%), Other Social Assistance Services (3.5%), Supermarket and Grocery Stores (3.1%), Secondary Education (3.0%).

Location	Key Occupation and Industries
Armidale UCL (UCL112001)	• 54.8% of the UCL's residents reported being in the workforce. • The top occupations reported in the UCL were Professionals (26.4%), Community and Personal Service Workers (14.2%), Labourers (11.5%), Technicians and Trades Workers (11.4%), Managers (11.4%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (11.2%), Sales Workers (8.7%), and Machinery Operators and Drivers (3.9%). • Of the employed people in the UCL, the top industries of employment were Higher Education (10.4%), Hospitals (4.3%), Other Social Assistance Services (3.5%), Combined Primary and Secondary Education (3.2%), and Aged Care Residential Services (3.0%).
NSW Code 1 (STE)	• 55.2% of the State's residents reported being in the workforce. • The top occupations reported in NSW were Professionals (25.8%), Managers (14.6%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (13.0%), Technicians and Trades Workers (11.9%), and Community and Personal Service Workers (10.6%), Labourers (8.2%), Sales Workers (8.0%), and Machinery Operators and Drivers (6.0%). • Of the employed people in NSW, the top industries of employment were Hospitals (4.2%), Supermarket and Grocery Stores (2.5%), Other Social Assistance Services (2.4%), Computer System Design and Related Services (2.3%), and Aged Care Residential Services (2.2%).

5.4 HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

Rental affordability and availability are the most likely portion of the housing market to respond to change in population prompted by large projects and is a key component for economic vitality of communities and wellbeing of individuals (Lawrie et al. 2011). Generally, housing stress can occur when rent exceeds 30% of a low-income household gross income.[4] SGS in partnership with National Shelter, Beyond Bank, and Brotherhood of St Laurence have published the Rental Affordability Index (RAI) since 2015 (SGS 2022).

SQM housing vacancy rate data draws on a combination of ABS data (refer to **Table 5-4**) and online data from monitoring major property listing sites to provide a time-series analysis on a monthly and postcode scale (SQM Research 2022). A review of housing vacancy data (SQM Research 2022) exhibited that Tamworth's highest vacancy rate was in April 2015 at 3.8%, by May 2018 the rate dropped to 1.1% and by October 2022 the vacancy rate was at 0.8%. Armidale's highest vacancy rate was in December 2016 at 6.1%, by January 2019 the vacancy had dropped to 1.8%. As of October 2022, the vacancy rate is 1.5%. For Bendemeer, July 2018 had the highest vacancy rate of 14.9%, by November 2020 the vacancy rate had dropped to 0% (SQM Research 2022), indicating that no rentals were available.

[4] Specifically, the ABS and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare apply the 30/40 rule which identifies households in the lowest 40% of incomes that spend more than 30% of gross household income on housing costs as being subject to financial housing stress. (See: AIHW 2022 and ABS 2022b.)

TABLE 5-4 KEY INCOME AND HOUSING INDICATORS ACROSS THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Median Weekly Household Income	Unemployment (%)	Dwelling count (occupied/ unoccupied/ (%))	Dwelling tenure (owned outright + mortgaged / rented, %)*
Tamworth Regional LGA LGA17310	*2021*	$1,416	4.5%	23,617 / 2,298 (9.7%)	64.9% / 31.1%
	2016	$1,180	5.8%	21,745 / 2,580 (11.9%)	65.0% / 30.9%
SA1 (Western Portion) SA1-11004120515	*2021*	$1,473	2.4%	99 / 39 (39.4%)	73.8% / 13.1%
	2016	$1,122	1.9%	111 / 12 (10.8%)	80.4% / 15.7%
SA1 (Bendemeer Township) SA1-11004120530	*2021*	$833	6.3%	95 / 15 (15.8%)	73.7% / 15.8%
	2016	$734	8.1%	78 / 4 (5.1%)	75.6% / 17.1%
SA1 (Eastern Portion) SA1-11001118906	*2021*	$1,265	6.7%	86 / 13 (15.1%)	66.2% / 16.3%
	2016	$944	3.1%	79 / 12 (15.2%)	78.8% / 17.3%
Tamworth UCL112018	*2021*	$1,328	5.7%	13,712 / 1,300 (9.5%)	55.4% / 40.8%
	2016	$1,121	7.0%	12,675 / 1,541 (12.2%)	56.6% / 39.1%
Armidale UCL112001	*2021*	$1,369	6.2%	7,860 / 965 (12.3%)	55.7% / 40.8%
	2016	$1,132	9.3%	7,096 / 1,056 (14.9%)	54.3% / 42.2%
NSW Code 1 (STE)	*2021*	$1,829	4.9%	2,900,486 / 299,524 (9.4%)	64% / 32.6%
	2016	$1,486	6.3%	2,604,320 / 284,741 (10%)	64.5% / 31.8%

*The residual percentage comprises other tenure types and tenure not stated.

At the time of writing, Bendemeer has no rental properties available, the closest rental properties to the Project are in Kootingal. Kootingal, at the time of writing, has three rental properties available (Real Estate.com 2022).

In addition, the Accommodation and Employment Strategy for the New England Solar Farm (ACEN Australia and Green Light Elecnor Group (GLEC) 2022) identified the approximate number of long-term rental housing available within Tamworth, Armidale, Uralla and Walcha LGAs. This rental property availability data is presented in **Table 5-5**.

TABLE 5-5 LONG-TERM RENTAL HOUSING AVAILABILITY

Location	House and Unit Size				Rental Properties (Approx.)
	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4+ Bed	
Tamworth	22	72	67	32	193
Armidale	27	37	46	24	134
Uralla	-	3	1	2	6
Walcha	-	-	1	-	1
Total	**49**	**112**	**114**	**58**	**334**

Source: ACEN Australia and GLEC 2022

Short-term accommodation such as hotels, motels, cabins and caravan parks are important in regional areas to provide accommodation for visitors and to support regional tourism and economic activity. **Table 5-6** provides an overview of the short-term accommodation providers. The capacity / vacancy data identified in **Table 5-6** has been extracted from the ACEN/GLEC (2022), as it provides the most up-to-date information pertaining to accommodation in Tamworth, Armidale, Uralla and Walcha.

TABLE 5-6 SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS

Accommodation Provider	Capacity / Vacancy
Tamworth	
Best Western Sanctuary Inn	60 rooms
Quest Tamworth	40 rooms
Quality Hotel Powerhouse	81 rooms
City Sider Motor Inn	38 rooms
CH Boutique Hotel	62 rooms
The Tamworth Hotel	14 rooms
Aaron Cottage	3 rooms
Almond Inn Motel	27 rooms
The Duck Inn Apartments	6 rooms
Kootingal Land view Motel	12 rooms
Tamworth City Motel	31 rooms
Motel Grande Tamworth	11 rooms
Motel 359	55 rooms
Golden Grain Motor Inn	13 rooms
Country Capital Motel	31 rooms
The Roseville Apartments	3 rooms
Abraham Lincoln Motel	15 rooms
Ibis Styles Tamworth	108 rooms

Accommodation Provider	Capacity / Vacancy
Best Western Motor Inn	29 rooms
Tamworth Lodge Motel	17 rooms
Sundance Park Motel	25 rooms
Amberoo Apartments	14 rooms
Econo Lodge	60 rooms
Tamworth Central Motel	5 rooms
Mercure	52 rooms
Town & Country Motor Inn	18 rooms
Best Western Plus All Settlers Motor Inn	20 rooms
The Stagecoach Motor Inn	24 rooms
Roydons Motor Inn	12 rooms
Colonial Inn	33 rooms
Edward Parry Motel & Apartments	15 rooms
McNevin's Tamworth Motel	24 rooms
City Gate Motel	11 rooms
Tamwell Motel & Coffee Lounges	16 rooms
Golden Guitar Motor Inn	30 rooms
Cadman Motor Inn & Apartments	20 rooms
Golf Links Motel	21 rooms
Motabelle Holiday Units	9 rooms
Ashby House Motor Inn	21 rooms
Studio 637	2 rooms
The Retreat at Frog Moore Park	5 rooms
Total Rooms in Tamworth	**1,093 rooms**
Armidale	
UNE Residential System – short-term accommodation	100 rooms
Country Comfort Armidale	42 rooms
Lindsay House Country Hotel	5 rooms
City Centre Motor Inn Armidale	40 rooms
Petersons Armidale Winery & Guesthouse	7 rooms
Moore Park Apartments	3 bedrooms
Hideaway Motor Inn Armidale	22 rooms
Alluna Motel	20 rooms
Abbotsleigh Motor Inn	32 rooms

Accommodation Provider	Capacity / Vacancy
Quality Hotel Powerhouse Armidale	57 rooms
Moore Park Inn	20 rooms
Armidale Pines Motel	19 rooms
Deer Park Motor Inn	24 rooms
Armidale Motel	21 rooms
Elite Motor Inn	14 rooms
Estelle Kramer Motor Inn	7 rooms
Sandstock Motor Inn Armidale	12 rooms
Club Motel	18 rooms
Cedar Lodge Motel	2 suites
New England Motor Inn	10 rooms
Acacia Motor Inn Armidale	15 rooms
Cotswold Gardens	24 rooms
Armidale Tourist Park	9 rooms
Townsmart	1 apartment
Armidale Cottage	1 room
White Lanterns Motel	13 rooms
Westwood Motor Inn	17 rooms
Westside Studio Apartments	9 rooms
Belmont New England	4 rooms
Loloma Bed and Breakfast	2 rooms
Armidale Rose Villa Motel	10 rooms
Guyra Summit Caravan Park	50 rooms
Top of the Range Retreat	3 rooms
Total Rooms in Armidale	**633 rooms**
Uralla	
Altona Motel	16 rooms
Aurelia’s Farm	2 rooms
Bushranger Motor Inn	17 rooms
Country Road Caravan Park	8 rooms
Dingle B&B	2 rooms
Elmswood B&B	1 room
Grace Cottages	2 cottages
Harlow Park Horseriding	3 rooms

Accommodation Provider	Capacity / Vacancy
Ticino B&B	2 rooms
Thunderbolt Inn	7 rooms
Top Pub	14 rooms
Wayward Jerseys Farmstay	3 rooms
Sentry Box Boer Goat Stud & Farmstay	1 room
Lakeside Lodge B&B	4 rooms
Woodhaven Cottage B&B	1 room
Kentucky B&B	1 room
Lochiel Cottage	3 room
Retreat Shearers Quarters	3 rooms
Myanbah Cottages	5 rooms
Total Rooms in Uralla	**95 rooms**
Walcha	
Walcha Caravan Park	11 cabins
Apsley Arms Hotel	7 rooms
Commercial Hotel	4 rooms
Walcha Road Hotel	3 cabins
Walcha Royal café & Accommodation	10 rooms
New England Hotel Motel	10 rooms
Walcha Motel	19 rooms
Total Rooms in Walcha	64 rooms

Source: ACEN Australia and GLEC 2022

5.5 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Social infrastructure comprises schools and other education institutions, medical services, emergency services, recreational facilities, and community organisations. Some commercial services are also listed under social infrastructure, such as childcare facilities.

Social infrastructure in the rural localities in the immediate vicinity of the Project Area is limited to outdoor recreation areas in Bendemeer, the Watsons Creek National Park and Moore Creek, such as the Bendemeer Tourist Park and Camp Ground, various trails throughout the National Park and lookout points.

The nearest town is Bendemeer (population of 486) (ABS SAL), located approximately 1.8 km west of the Project Area. Bendemeer hosts a public primary school, a childcare centre, a post office, Rural Fire Service (RFS), a tourist centre, two progress associations, and a church. Bendemeer also has a range of accommodation options and a general store.

Tamworth (population of 35,415) is the nearest regional centre servicing the north of the Project Area. The Tamworth Hospital is public hospital providing a variety of medical services, including a 24-hour emergency facility. Tamworth also has a multiple separate medical centre with general practitioners. Tamworth is in the Hunter New England NSW Local Health District, along all other regional centres within the Social Locality. Emergency services based in Tamworth include NSW Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue, RFS, and the State Emergency Service (SES). Tamworth has private and public primary and high schools. A variety of religious organisations and churches are present in Tamworth, along with branches of the Returned Services League (RSL), the Lions and Rotary Clubs, and several sporting and recreation clubs including for equestrian activities, sailing, pistol shooting, cricket and writing. The Tamworth Correctional Centre is a state run medium-security prison facility for male offenders in the locality of the Northern. The facility is located approximately 35 km southwest from the site access location.

Armidale (population 21,312) is a regional centre located 70 km northeast of the Project Area. Similar to Tamworth, Armidale is the largest centre in the Armidale Regional LGA hosting the council offices. Medical services available in Armidale include the Armidale Hospital, Armidale Medical Centre, Armidale Community Health Service and aged care services. All major emergency services are present in Armidale: NSW Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue, RFS, and the SES. Armidale has several public and private primary and high schools. A wide variety of community organisations are present in the town including the Country Women's Association (CWA), progress association and historical society, Lions and Rotary Clubs, an RSL and a Legacy Club, a branch of the Red Cross, and a Men's Shed.

Public health and education services in surrounding towns and regional centres which may support the Construction Phase of the Project are identified in **Table 5-7** and **Table 5-8** respectively. Key health and education indicators across the Project's Social Locality are reported in **Table 5-9**.

TABLE 5-7 PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

Location	Public Health Service
Bendemeer	• No public health services available. • KinCare – provides private in-home support for home care, personal care, wellbeing, housekeeping, social connection, assisted daily living, rehabilitation, nursing, Allied Health services and transport.
Tamworth	• Tamworth Hospital • Tamworth Community Health Services
Armidale	• Armidale Hospital • Armidale Community Health Services

TABLE 5-8 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Location	Educational Centre	
Bendemeer	• Bendemeer Public School	
Tamworth	• St Nicholas Primary School • Tamworth Public School • Tamworth West Public School • St Joseph's Primary School • Calrossy Anglican School • Parry School • Tamworth South Public School • Oxley High School • McCarthy Catholic College • Bullimbal School • Tamworth Montessori Preschool	• St Edward's Primary School • St Mary's North Tamworth • Hillvue Public School • Oxley Vale Public School • Peel High School • Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School • Tamworth High School • Peter Pan Preschool • TAFE NSW - Tamworth • University of New England • Tamworth Community College
Armidale	• The Armidale School • New England Girls School • PLC Armidale • Armidale Secondary College • St Mary's Primary School • Armidale City Public School • Armidale Waldof School • O'Connor Catholic College • Drummond Memorial Public School • Sandon Public School	• Ben Venue Public School • Martins Gully Public School • Kellys Plains Public School • Minimbah Primary School • Newling Public School • Armidale Montessori Preschool • University of New England • TAFE NSW – Armidale • Armidale Community College

TABLE 5-9 KEY HEALTH AND EDUCATION INDICATORS ACROSS THE PROJECT'S SOCIAL LOCALITY

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Count of selected long-term health conditions: 0 / 1 / 2 / 3 or more conditions	Educational attainment, year 12 or equiv.	Educational attainment, vocational training	Educational attainment, university
Tamworth Regional LGA LGA17310	*2021*	56.6% / 21.5% / 7.5% / 4.3%	11.6%	29.0%	15.0%
	2016	-*	11.6%	29%	15.0%
SA1 (Western Portion) SA1-11004120515	*2021*	58.0% / 17.1% / 5.2% / 4.2%	7.6%	21.2%	15.7%
	2016	-*	6.4%	29.9%	13.1%
SA1 (Bendemeer Township) SA1-11004120530	*2021*	54.0% / 23.8% / 9.4% / 8.4%	10.3%	26.4%	8.0%
	2016	-*	11.9%	17.8%	8.9%
SA1 (Eastern Portion) SA1-11001118906	*2021*	48.4% / 15.0% / 7.1% / 5.5%	9.1%	22.1%	8.2%
	2016	-*	8.7%	19.5%	8.2%

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Count of selected long-term health conditions: 0 / 1 / 2 / 3 or more conditions	Educational attainment, year 12 or equiv.	Educational attainment, vocational training	Educational attainment, university
Tamworth UCL112018	*2021*	55.2% / 21.2% / 8.0% / 4.5%	12.1%	26.7%	14.9%
	2016	-*	11.7%	25.9%	12.3%
Armidale UCL112001	*2021*	57.2% / 20.2% / 6.6% / 3.2%	14.5%	21.4%	27.9%
	2016	-*	18.5%	20.4%	24.8%
NSW Code 1 (STE)	*2021*	64.9% / 18.3% / 5.7% / 3.0%	14.5%	24.3%	27.8%
	2016	-*	15.3%	23.7%	23.4%

*Count of select long-term health conditions was not reported in the 2016 Census Quick-stats.

5.6 ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

The Project Area is adjacent to the state-maintained highway of Oxley Highway, linking Bendemeer to the Pacific Highway near Port Macquarie. The New England Highway is located approximately 1.5 km from the Project Area and connects Toowoomba, Queensland to Newcastle, New South Wales. The Tamworth Regional Council is approximately five and a half hours from Sydney. Tamworth is ideally located with main roads leading north to the Darling Downs Queensland, South to Hunter and Central West and west to the Orana, making the route a popular drive and destination for tourists and bringing economic activity into the area. Attractions are associated with the natural environment and cultural activities, such as national parks, retreats, historic buildings and museums and country experiences assist with bringing tourists to visit the region.

Tamworth and Armidale are serviced by the Tamworth Regional Airport and Armidale Regional Airport for aviation services, respectively. In addition, Tamworth and Armidale are also serviced by the Intercity Train, which operates from Central Station to Tamworth Station and Armidale Station once a day, the Tamworth regional council operates six bus services Monday-Friday between Tamworth and Bendemeer and NSW Transport provides bus services from Tamworth to Dubbo, Port Macquarie and Inverell via several regional stations.

The Oxley Community Transport Service provides additional transport services in Tamworth for the elderly to and from medical and shopping facilities with the trips generally restricted to Tamworth and Liverpool Plans Shire Areas. There are also taxi and minibus services available in both Tamworth and Armidale LGAs.

5.7 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Information contained within this section of the SIA draws on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) prepared by Ozark (2025) and the SIA focused stakeholder engagement with RAPs.

The Project Area is situated along the border of the traditional lands of the Gamilaraay and Anaiwan peoples. Stakeholder engagement with RAPs identified that borders between the two communities were generally more fluid than current borders and were not clearly demarcated through elements of the physical landscape. The Project Area was comprised of ridgeline and crests and undulating landforms with areas of granite outcropping and boulders, distant to permanent or semi-permanent water sources.

Both communities used a wide range of traditional methods for gathering food, including fish traps, subsistence agriculture, hunting and harvesting a wide range of natural fruits and vegetables. Some groups of people would stay in one place, while others moved around the land according to the seasons, to ensure sustainable and rich food supplies, and to fulfil their spiritual and cultural obligations. The colonisation of the New England Tablelands began in the late 1830s. In September 1839, government records show that there were 37 stations across the Tablelands supporting 422 colonists. By 1841 the colonial population had tripled to 1,052.

There has been a high level of previous disturbance to most of the Project Area. This includes the widespread clearance of native vegetation, long-term grazing, and ground disturbance due to soil erosion. There are two Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD) within the Project Area, which sits outside of the Disturbance Footprint. These sites comprise artefact scatters and isolated finds, which were assessed as having low to moderate significance (in relation to scientific, aesthetic and historical values), and high significance (in relation to social/cultural values).

The intangible Aboriginal cultural values across the wider district relate to several important places and themes associated with non-archaeological cultural values. These places mainly relate to spiritual and ceremonial connections across the broader landscape that may encompass areas of culturally significant geographical features, such as the Warrabah National Park, which are linked to storylines and creation stories. The traditional custodians shared two creation stories that run through the Macdonald River: the stories of Mululyan and Warabah.

The story of Mululyan is about birth and rebirth or reincarnation. It begins with Mululyan coming out of the egg and up from the sand where his father looks after him. Then in a second life, Mululyan goes down the river to his mother where she looks after him. The story of Mululyan is about spiritual awakening. The story of Warabah tells us how the Macdonald River became purified for drinking. The river itself was created by Garagua (rainbow serpent) but it was Warrabah who filtered the water by swimming through the creeks and rivers. Warabah was turned on his back around Boggabri and kicked out of the Billiga (Pilliga).

FIGURE 5-1 MACDONALD RIVER, BENDEMEER

5.8 COMMUNITY VALUES

The Project is located within the Tamworth Regional LGA and nearby to the Bendemeer township. Bendemeer is a small rural community around 40 minutes' drive from Tamworth, which remains dependent on rural industries, mainly sheep and beef cattle farming, which provides jobs and economic prosperity to the local community.

Bendemeer was described during the stakeholder engagement conducted for the SIA (refer to **Section 4.2**) as a tight knit rural community where people are 'always willing to help each other out'. The Macdonald River (refer to **Figure 5-1**) and the Bendemeer Pub (refer to **Figure 5-2**) were frequently described as a being the heart of the Bendemeer community. The Rodeo and Camp draft, held in February, is the major annual event in Bendemeer, and the Grey Fergie Muster and Art and Craft Show are other significant events for the village. The stakeholder engagement conducted for the Project indicates that community values most strongly resonate with the natural environment, farming, and community and family, with the region's natural landscape, rolling hills, and the Macdonald River of significant value.

Tamworth and Armidale are the regional centres of the New England / North West Region. They host a large rural community providing services to surrounding towns, such as Bendemeer. The Tamworth Region is known as the capital of country music and supports manufacturing, health, education, retail, construction and agricultural industries. Tamworth is the centre of production and processing of beef, lamb and poultry products in NSW and services the mining community due to the proximity to Gunnedah. Attractions such as festivals, sporting events, restaurants, museums and galleries has allowed tourism to act as another economic driver. Significant festivals and events occurring within the Tamworth, Armidale, and Uralla areas are identified in **Table 5-10**.

Outdoor pursuits throughout the region include horse riding, gardens and parks, camping sites and a marsupial park which are popular for locals and tourists. Tamworth has an active cultural community embracing the arts, dance and music with artists' studios that can be visited, dance performances and classes and Tamworth Country Music Festival.

FIGURE 5-2 BENDEMEER HOTEL, BENDEMEER

TABLE 5-10 SIGNIFICANT FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Location	Event / Festival	Indicative Timing	Indicative Duration
Tamworth	National Thunder Motorcycle Rally	September/October	~3 days
	Fiesta La Peel	October	1 day
	Country Music Festival	January	10 days
	NCHA Futurity	May/June	~ 2 weeks
Uralla	Thunderbolt Festival	September/October	1 day
	Uralla Show	February	1 day
	Seasons of New England	March	1 day
Armidale	Autumn Festival	April	2 days
	The Big Chill	May	2 days
	TroutFest	September/October	~ 1 week
	UNE Autumn Graduations	May	2 days
	UNE Winter Graduations	August	2 days

6. SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

As outlined in **Section 2.3**, the impact assessment methodology follows that outlined in DPE's Technical Supplement (2023b). Overall, the key drivers of social change that may affect communities in the Social Locality resulting from the Project relate to:

- Increased economic activity for Local/Regional Businesses and employment opportunities for the local workforce;
- Opportunities for diversification of income streams for host land owners;
- Disruptions due to construction related activities (noise, dust, transportation of materials and workers.);
- Accommodation arrangements for construction workforce; and
- Visual amenity and other land use and landscape changes due to altered landscapes.

Technology to support renewable energy projects is continuously evolving and improving. Accordingly, following the 30-year operational timeframe, components of the solar farm may be upgraded to prolong the life of operation, or decommissioned and the land returned to the original land use. Given the timeframe involved, the Decommissioning Phase has been considered at a higher level in the impact assessment than the other phases of the Project. It should be noted however, that the potential social impacts associated with the Decommissioning Phase of the Project will also be considered in greater detail as part of a future Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan (or similar).

In assessing the potential social impacts of the Project, ERM has considered the:

- Characteristics of the Project, including the timing, duration and intensity of activities (where known);
- Issues raised by stakeholders during the engagement process; and
- Outcomes from technical studies undertaken by the Project (noise, visual, Aboriginal cultural heritage etc.).

The impacts have been assessed based on the likelihood of the impact occurring, the magnitude of the impact (degree of change caused by the impact) if it occurs, and the vulnerability of the impacted receptors (refer to **Section 2**).

6.1 DESCRIPTION OF SOCIAL IMPACT MITIGATIONS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN

This section describes historical Project refinements and design changes which have been made in response to community and other stakeholder feedback, or any other Project changes which have been undertaken to mitigate potential future impacts.

Since the conception of the Project, the design has evolved through consideration of technical, environmental, social, and commercial limitations. A significant aspect of this design refinement was done through engagement with landowners, neighbours to the Project, the broader community, local government, State and Federal Agencies, and business and stakeholder groups. This engagement, along with technical studies undertaken, has helped to shape the indicative Project layout presented in the EIS.

The Project design has since been revised and refined based on further detailed assessments and in response to the identification and assessment of environmental limitations, constructability requirements, submission received, and consideration of the outcomes of agency, landowner, and community consultations. **Table 6-1** describes the evolution of the Project layout since inception, and the amendment responses to key environmental and other land use limitations identified.

Further detail as to the amendments made since lodgement of the EIS is detailed in the Bendemeer Solar Farm Amendment Report (ERM 2024).

TABLE 6-1 PROJECT AMENDMENTS

Project Element	Initial Layout	Project (EIS)	Amended Project	Benefits
Project Area	• > 1,370 ha	• 606.4 ha	• 606.9 ha	• Amendments to the Project elements allowed for the retention of an ecological corridor through the centre of the Project Area, with a vegetated link between the Macdonald River in the south and retained vegetation around the Oxley Highway. These amendments reduce potential impact on areas containing two PCTs associated with Box Gum Woodland CEEC. • Amendments to the Disturbance Footprint avoided impacts to the two areas of PAD (Riverside-PAD1 and PAD2) recorded in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHAR). • Relocation of BESS allowed for noise compliance at closest sensitive receivers, further reduce potential impact on areas containing two PCTs and reduce visual impact from Oxley Highway. • Access road moved further from Bendemeer village to avoid impacts to the Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) over a track-in-use through Crown reserves.
Solar Arrays	• 280 MW DC • 500,000 PV modules • 1,370 ha to 352 ha	• 280 MW DC • 430,000 PV modules • 350.8 ha • 4.2 m panel height	• 255 MW DC • 354,330 PV modules • 301.0 ha • 2.66 m panel height	
Disturbance Footprint	• 680 ha	• 476.6 ha	• 369.2 ha	
BESS	• 200 MW / 400 MWh • North of existing 330kV transmission line. • LFP or NMC battery technology	• 150 MW / 300 MWh • 3.2 ha • 120 BESS units • LFP or NMC battery technology • Relocated to south of existing 330kV transmission line and to the west of Project's substation	• 150 MW / 300 MWh • 1.9 ha • 264 BESS units • LFP battery chemistry	

Project Element	Initial Layout	Project (EIS)	Amended Project	Benefits
Substation and Switching Station	• Up to 322 MW AC registered capacity • South and north of existing 330kV transmission line.	• 200 MW AC registered capacity • Relocated to south only of existing 330kV transmission line	• 200 MW AC registered capacity • One 33/330 kV collector substation and associated structures • 330 kV switching station • 2.37 ha	• Implementation of noise suppression to reduce noise impacts from battery units, transformers and inverters on nearby sensitive receivers.
Site access road	• Site access via B56 Oxley Highway via the existing access to 'Riverside'	• Site access via B56 Oxley Highway relocated 2 km further east	• Site access via B56 Oxley Highway, with internal track realigned to avoid existing vegetation	

6.2 KEY IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS

Several key social impacts were identified through the assessment process, which are presented in the sections that follow. These impacts were also reflected as key concerns during stakeholder engagement, as well as understood based on experience with similar recent solar farm projects in NSW (refer to **Section 4** for additional information relating to stakeholder engagement).

The key impacts and mitigations detailed in the following sections are summarised in **Table 6-33** .

6.2.1 CONSTRUCTION PHASE

The following section details the potential social impacts that may arise during the Construction Phase of the Project. Potential social impacts have groups according to the topic areas to which they relate, comprising:

- Stakeholder and Community (refer to **Section 6.2.1.1**);
- Employment and Procurement (refer to **Section 6.2.1.2**);
- Local Disruptions (refer to **Section 6.2.1.3**); and
- Worker Influx and Accommodation (refer to **Section 6.2.1.4**).

It is noted however, the relevant impact category, as specified in the Guideline (refer to **Section 2.1**), has been assigned to each potential impact.

6.2.1.1 STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY

Stakeholder and community impacts have been raised during stakeholder engagement conducted for the EIS, SIA and during public exhibition period.

Concerns arising from this stakeholder viewpoint include reduced community cohesion (refer to **Section 6.2.1.1**), ineffective community engagement (refer to **Section 6.2.1.2**), and perceived impacts on places of local community significance (refer to **Section 6.2.1.3**).

Reduced Community Cohesion

During the engagement carried out for the Project it was suggested by some stakeholders that the Bendemeer community was divided in relation to their support for the Project proceeding. Some community members held firm negative sentiments in relation to the Project, whilst others expressed supportive views, often focusing on the potential benefits. This difference of opinion between community members over the Project has led to increased tension within what was previously described as a 'tight knit rural community' (refer to **Section 5.8**). There were no suggestions during stakeholder engagement that any vulnerable groups (outlined in **Section 5.2.2**) would be disproportionately impacted by community division.

This concern around a reduced sense of community cohesion was also expressed in some of the submissions received during the public exhibition period for the EIS, with submitters stating:

> *"The community is divided already with neighbours that have been friends for 30 years now hating each other." (Submission ID: SE-61522710)*
>
> *"This project has broken our community spirit." (Submission ID: SE- 61102748)*
>
> *"Bendemeer was an extremely tight nit community, there is quite a large division been driven in the community already because of the difference of opinions regarding the wind and solar." (Submission ID: SE-61065957)*

During SIA focussed engagement it was suggested by various stakeholders that community opposition was primarily linked to the amenity impacts generated associated with the Wind Farm component of the Bendemeer Renewable Energy Hub, rather than that of the Project.

While it could be considered that the proposal of the Project has already divided the community within the Social Locality, it should be noted that those who expressed more negative sentiments only comprised a subsect of those interviewed during stakeholder engagement. Furthermore, the extent of community division purported to be experienced by stakeholders varied based on the individual and their stance of the Project. Those who suggested that the community was highly divided trended toward holding an opposing view of the Project, whilst those who suggested that community cohesion has not been negatively impacted tended to hold less of an oppositional stance to the Project. There is evidence of community division present within the Social Locality which has the potential to negatively impact on mental health and wellbeing of stakeholders, if not managed appropriately.

To this end, it should also be noted that metal health and wellbeing impacts may be more acutely experienced during the period of construction as stakeholders are exposed to other social impacts related to the Project. Potential social impacts, such as local disruptions (refer to **Section 6.2.1.3**) may only serve to exacerbate underlying social tensions between members of the community and subsequently result in a greater extent of community division than during the pre-construction period.

Management and Mitigation

To manage the potential for the local community to become divided over the Project and address the mental health and wellbeing of stakeholders involved, it will be important to ensure that there is ongoing stakeholder engagement conducted with surrounding communities, including those stakeholders that have voiced concern in relation to the Project.

Specifically, the following management measures are proposed to be adopted by the Project:

- The implementation of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) tailored to Construction Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. The SEP will include the requirement to provide regular Project updates and seek input from stakeholders in relation to their concerns and/or impacts that are being experienced.
- A grievance mechanism will also be developed and implemented by the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during day-to-day construction activities.

- The Project will apply Construction Phase mitigation measures outlined in **Section 6.2.1** to reduce the secondary impacts to community cohesion.
- The Project will use varied and/or alternative engagement methods to reduce the potential for stakeholder fatigue and enable the ongoing engagement of stakeholders for the duration of the Construction Phase.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for reduced community cohesion is provided in **Table** 6-2.

TABLE 6-2 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: REDUCED COMMUNITY COHESION

Impact		**Reduced Community Cohesion**				
Potential Impact		Reduced community cohesion and increased social tensions due to divergent opinions related to the desirability of the Project and the resultant negative mental health and wellbeing impacts to the local community.				
Social Impact Category		Health and Wellbeing				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Communities				
Dimensions of Magnitude	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The loss of community cohesion has the potential to impact all stakeholders within the Social Locality, however given the location of the Project, those stakeholders located in Bendemeer township are likely to be the most impacted.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months. It is anticipated that the loss of community cohesion will be most acutely experienced during the period of construction.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholder engagement suggested that the scale of community division generated— at least in part— from this Project has not been experienced previously within Bendemeer.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Bendemeer is a small and interconnected community. Accordingly, the loss of community cohesion will elicit a higher degree of change for impacted stakeholders.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Perceptions about the level of community division generally reflected stakeholders' position on the Project. Regardless, most stakeholders suggested that community divisions are mainly related to the wind farm component of the Bendemeer Renewable Energy Hub, not the Project.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		Given that community cohesion has already been impacted by the Project during the pre-construction period, the potential that it will be further reduced during the Construction Phase is Almost Certain.				
		Low		**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Impact</th><th colspan="5">Reduced Community Cohesion</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Impact Significance</td><td colspan="5">With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Almost Certain, the significance of this impact is Very High.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities</td><td colspan="5">• Develop and implement a SEP.
• Develop and implement a grievance mechanism.
• The Project will apply all Construction Phase mitigation measures outlined in Section 6.2.1 to reduce the secondary impacts to community cohesion.
• Use of varied and/or alternative engagement methods to reduce the potential for stakeholder fatigue and enable the ongoing engagement of stakeholders for the duration of the Construction Phase.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Post-Mitigation / Enhancement</td><td rowspan="2">Magnitude</td><td>Minimal</td><td>Minor</td><td>Moderate</td><td>Major</td><td>Transformational</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Once mitigations have been implemented, it is anticipated that the level of concern and intensity will be reduced, resulting in a Moderate rating</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Likelihood</td><td>Very Unlikely</td><td>Unlikely</td><td>Possible</td><td>Likely</td><td>Almost Certain</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The likelihood of the impact is expected to be reduced to Likely once the mitigations have been implemented.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Impact Significance</td><td>Low</td><td colspan="2">Medium</td><td>High</td><td>Very High</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood of this impact being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.</td></tr>
</table>

Ineffective Community Engagement

During stakeholder engagement mixed feedback was received regarding the effectiveness of community engagement for the Project. Most interviewees commended the level of engagement undertaken with the local community and directly referenced the various engagement mechanisms used by the Applicant (outlined in **Section 4**) as a positive. Other stakeholders however, raised general concerns about stakeholder engagement and shared their mistrust for the information being distributed to the community. One community member reflected that their mistrust is linked to their opposition to the Project, however, noting that, *"We don't want to trust them…because they are doing something we don't want."*

During public submissions for the EIS, one submitter also noted:

> *The extended community consultation and engagement with the Bendeemer community, commitment to a community contribution fund and engagement with Registered Aboriginal Parties I believe are good indicators that the project developers are taking the project social license seriously. (Submission ID: SE-61588239)*

These mixed sentiments within the community suggest that as the Project progresses there will need to be ongoing direct engagement with the local community to help develop a sense of trust and assuage concerns around the nature of information provided, and the manner by which the information is disseminated to the community. If there remains limited trust between the local community and the Applicant, there is the potential that concerns from the community are not raised or addressed, which in turn, may lead to deeper community cohesion concerns. Trust can be developed through the implementation of suitable measures to remove, mitigate or manage Project impacts in concert with Project stakeholders; and by ensuring that these same stakeholders have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

It was noted by another community stakeholder that there are some people within the local Bendemeer community who do not socialise with others and are therefore less informed about the Project on-the-whole. Further, it was also raised that other community members, namely the older residents, are not well connected digitally, and therefore ensuring that there are hard-copy communication materials in addition to electronic communications would be essential in ensuring a robust strategy for stakeholder engagement. Accordingly, without the appropriate engagement mechanisms in place to manage their inclusion, there remains a possibility that vulnerable groups, such as the elderly population of Bendemeer and the wider Social Locality, may become excluded from stakeholder engagement efforts, and in doing so, reduce their ability to influence Project management and mitigation options of importance to their mental and physical health and wellbeing. To ameliorate this impact the Project drew on a range of non-digital engagement methods, such as Newsletters, Community Pop-Up Sessions, Community Hub, Events and Community Sponsorship, Face-to-face Meetings, Project Briefings, Public Relations and Media and Project Factsheets.

Management and Mitigation

As the Project moves into the Construction Phase it is important that transparent and inclusive engagement be achieved. This is best achieved through development and implementation of Construction Phase specific SEP. The SEP will include regular Project updates provided across a variety of platforms (e.g., electronic and hard-copy communication materials) and, where relevant, will seek input from stakeholders on issues that may affect them and which they may help to manage and/or mitigate.

Accordingly, in order to address issues of ineffective community engagement, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement a SEP; and
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.
- The following measures will be implemented to ensure that vulnerable groups have access to the grievance mechanism:
    - Provide multiple channels for submitting grievances (local drop box, hotlines and website);
    - Conduct ongoing community engagement to ensure vulnerable groups understand how to access the grievance mechanism; and
    - Ensure that vulnerable groups have the opportunity to share their preferences for communication mechanisms and are consistently informed about how to access grievance mechanisms through various communication channels.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for ineffective community engagement is provided in **Table 6-3**.

TABLE 6-3 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: INEFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Impact		**Ineffective Community Engagement**				
Potential Impact		Community engagement for the Project is ineffective with stakeholders feeling as though they have not been heard or are unable to influence Project decisions and management outcomes.				
Social Impact Category		Decision-making Systems				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Communities				
Dimensions of Magnitude	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Concern was limited to a small group of stakeholders in Bendemeer township.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months. It will be important that community engagement is managed throughout the course of the Project lifespan, and particularly during periods of pre-construction and construction.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Bendemeer is a 'close-knit' community. There may be impacts to community cohesion and if people feel their voices are not being heard or they do not trust the Applicant about the Project.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholder engagement has and will continue to use variety of engagement methods to ensure that vulnerable groups (e.g. elderly persons) can access Project information and provide feedback.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There is a level of concern in relation to the ineffectiveness of community engagement that were shared, however this tended to reflect individual stakeholder perceptions of the Project.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		There was strong support for level of stakeholder engagement undertaken to-date, and therefore the potential for this impact to occur is considered Unlikely.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**		**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Medium.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement a SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints are identified and acted upon. • Ensure that the grievance mechanism is accessible and inclusive for vulnerable groups.				
Post-Mitigat.	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Despite the mitigation measures, it is expected that the impact magnitude will remain unchanged since the stakeholders who raised this concern are				

Impact		Ineffective Community Engagement				
		in opposition to the Project and therefore are unlikely to trust Applicant supplied information sources.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the perceived impact is expected to remain Unlikely.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**		**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood being Unlikely, the significance of this impact remains Medium.				

Perceived Impact on Places of Local Community Significance

A central concern during stakeholder engagement was the health of the Macdonald River, which was frequently described as being the 'heart' of the Bendemeer community. All stakeholders discussed the social and environmental significance of the Macdonald River as a key priority for the Project to consider and manage given its ongoing cultural significance to the community, with comments made such as:

> *"The project has taken into account biodiversity impacts and created a native vegetation corridor through the project area." (Submission ID: SE-61388227)*
>
> *"To build the solar farm in the proposed location would be to destroy agricultural land and natural habitat of threatened native species such as koalas. This loss of biodiversity would have dire effects on the natural environment." (Submission ID: SE-60625993)*
>
> *"The project is situated beside the Macdonald River and sits over a catchment area for this river which is our town drinking water supply." (Submission ID: SE-61482457)*

Specific environmental concerns raised by stakeholders included impacts to local turtle, platypus, and fish populations. Additionally, stakeholders, particularly nearby agricultural landowners sought more information on how the Project will affect the water quality of the river, which provides drinking water for both their animals as well as the local community. Given the creation stories that run through the Macdonald River (refer to **Section 5.7**) Aboriginal Communities have been identified as a vulnerable group that would be impacted if the Project were to pollute the Macdonald River. **Section 6.2.2** expands on the tangible and intangible cultural heritage significance attached to the Macdonald River and notably connected to turtle species and water quality. Additionally, there are agricultural landowners whose livelihoods are tied to the Macdonald River (i.e. horses and livestock).

Community concern was based on the understanding that if the Macdonald River was to be impacted by the Project, this would have a negative emotional impact on members of the community and be an ongoing cause of distress. Despite this however, other stakeholders were less concerned with the Project's impact on the Macdonald River and express their opinion that the existing issues with pollution in the Macdonald River, such as agricultural run-off, were of a greater concern to the community at-large.

To this end, the findings of the Hydrology and Hydraulics Assessment (HHA), prepared for the Project, identified that there is likely to be no significant adverse impacts to flood behaviour on the Project Area, downstream properties, or the floodplain. No relevant technical studies of the EIS have identified pollution as a concern that cannot be managed through the management and mitigation measures outlined below.

Management and Mitigation

To address these concerns and avoid impacting places of community significance the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which provides specific environmental controls and/or measures to address runoff, protect local aquatic environments and maintain the water quality of the Macdonald River.
- Develop and implement a SEP.
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for perceived impact on a places of local community significance is provided in **Table 6-4** .

TABLE 6-4 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: PERCEIVED IMPACT ON PLACES OF LOCAL COMMUNITY SIGNIFICANCE

Impact		**Perceived Impact on Places of Local Community Significance**				
Potential Impact		Perceived impacts on the Macdonald River which is regarded by the local community as a place of local community significance. Impacts have the potential to cause mental and/or emotional impacts on stakeholders, as well as restrict usage by nearby agricultural landowners.				
Social Impact Category		Health and Wellbeing, Livelihoods				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Communities, Aboriginal Communities				
Dimensions of Magnitude	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The extent of perceived impacts to the Macdonald River was concentrated to the local community surrounding the Project.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months. Construction activities that may generate the potential for the Macdonald River to be impacted, such as moving earth, are infrequent.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholders were concerned about the Macdonald River and discussed the mental anguish that would result from Project impacts. Despite this however, stakeholders also raised that the existing issues with pollution in the Macdonald River were of a greater concern than those raised by the technical studies for the EIS.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Impact</th><th colspan="5">Perceived Impact on Places of Local Community Significance</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="3"></td><td colspan="5">Aboriginal Communities were identified as a vulnerable group that would be impacted if the Project were negatively impact the Macdonald River given its cultural significance. Additionally, there are nearby agricultural landowners whose livelihoods are tied to the Macdonald River (i.e. horses and livestock) who could be negatively impacted if the river was to be polluted.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Level of Concern / Interest</td><td>Very Low</td><td>Low</td><td>Medium</td><td>High</td><td>Very High</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">All stakeholder groups interviewed in Bendemeer raised questions about the impacts to the Macdonald River, given its importance to the local community.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement</td><td rowspan="2">Magnitude</td><td>Minimal</td><td>Minor</td><td>Moderate</td><td>Major</td><td>Transformational</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Likelihood</td><td>Very Unlikely</td><td>Unlikely</td><td>Possible</td><td>Likely</td><td>Almost Certain</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The perception of this impact pre-mitigation is Possible, however the HHA identified that the actual likelihood of impacts would be lower.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Impact Significance</td><td>Low</td><td colspan="2">Medium</td><td>High</td><td>Very High</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood being Possible, the significance of this impact is Medium.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities</td><td colspan="5">• Develop and implement a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which provides specific environmental controls and/or measures to address runoff, protect local aquatic environments and maintain the water quality of the Macdonald River.
• Develop and implement a SEP.
• Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Post-Mitigation / Enhancement</td><td rowspan="2">Magnitude</td><td>Minimal</td><td>Minor</td><td>Moderate</td><td>Major</td><td>Transformational</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The SEP is expected to reduce the extent and level of concern of perceived impacts to low, and the CEMP should reduce the severity and intensity to low. Accordingly, the magnitude is reduced to Minor.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Likelihood</td><td>Very Unlikely</td><td>Unlikely</td><td>Possible</td><td>Likely</td><td>Almost Certain</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Once stakeholders are informed via the SEP about the measures in place to protect the Macdonald River the likelihood of perceived impacts is expected to reduce to Unlikely.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Impact Significance</td><td>Low</td><td colspan="2">Medium</td><td>High</td><td>Very High</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Low.</td></tr>
</table>

6.2.1.2 EMPLOYMENT AND PROCUREMENT

Various employment and procurement impacts were raised during stakeholder engagement conducted for the EIS, SIA and during public exhibition period. In particular, stakeholders identified that increased direct and indirect employment opportunities (refer to **Section 6.2.1.1**), increased local procurement opportunities (refer to **Section 6.2.1.2**), and potential to create skills shortages (refer to **Section 6.2.1.3**), were issues of note with respect to the Project.

Increased Direct and Indirect Employment Opportunities

Key Project benefits perceived by the local community is local jobs, related training opportunities, and local/regional economic benefits more generally. Stakeholders across various stakeholder groups, such as Host Landowners, Local Government and Local/Regional Businesses, suggested that Bendemeer is at risk of experiencing rural decline if new larger-scale projects do not occur within the local area. As one stakeholder noted, *"…the community won't survive without something happening for the future, it's what keeps these little communities ticking"*.

Furthermore, stakeholder engagement revealed that there were suggestions by various stakeholders that families and elderly groups are being forced to relocate to Tamworth due to the lack of economic activity in Bendemeer (refer to **Table 4-3**) and that the improved facilities and support from the Project might prevent this trend.

When considering employment opportunities, it is important to consider that increased demand for labour through large-scale projects not only creates direct employment opportunities but has spill-over effects generating indirect employment in the local community and wider Social Locality within which they occur. During construction, a peak of approximately 307 direct jobs would be created with approximately 70% being sourced from the region. Gillespie Economics' (2025) Economic Assessment indicates that additional employment and economic stimulus across the regional economy[5] would amount to a total of 451 direct and indirect FTE jobs for the region, and 846 direct and indirect jobs in NSW. It is anticipated this will equate to $32 million in annual direct and indirect household income regionally rising to $76 million in annual direct and indirect household income for the NSW economy.

Interviews conducted during SIA engagement, and garnered through the submissions received, demonstrated a desire for local employment opportunities to be realised within the Social Locality, with stakeholders commenting:

> *"What exactly are the employment opportunities for the local workforce who by the way are already employed?" (Submitter ID: SE-61429209)*
>
> *"What jobs are there really for the locals? When I asked the company what jobs were available I was told it would be suitable for someone like me who lives close by and won't be needed all the time – doesn't sound full time." (Submitter ID: SE-61482457)*
>
> *"The community will see improved facilities and support from the project through the community fund as well as increased employment opportunities for both Bendemeer and the Surrounding Community." (Submitter ID: SE-61536958)*

Engagement with Aboriginal Communities also revealed a desire for young Aboriginal people to be provided training and employment opportunities through the Project. Further, it is suggested by Aboriginal stakeholders that the Project should look to consider opportunities for the Applicant and/or EPC Contractor to work with local organisations to involve Aboriginal Communities and young Aboriginal people in construction related work.

[5] Gillespie Economics' (2025) Economic Assessment defines the region as the combined LGAs of Tamworth, Armidale, Uralla and Walcha.

It is important to note however, that the extent to which direct localised employment will be realised within the Social Locality will be constrained by the availability of labour, and the compatibility of skillsets as relative to those required by the Project. A high portion of the Social Locality's workforce have relevant occupations and skills required for the Construction Phase of the Project (skills as outlined in **Section 1.1.1**) with the workforce in the Tamworth LGA including Labourers (4,024), Technicians and Trades Workers (4,000) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (2,009), and those within the Armidale UCL including Labourers (1,037), Technicians and Trades Workers (1,030) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (348).

Furthermore, both regional centres have higher unemployment rates than the state average (refer to **Table 5-4**), which provides an indicator that there are opportunities for employment that can be appropriately cultivated within the Social Locality. Additionally, as more renewable energy projects are approved for development in the New England REZ there will likely be opportunities for construction workers to transition to other Project and therefore creating long-term career pathways.

Enhancement Measures

To maximise employment benefits associated with the Project, with following enhancement measures will be adopted:

- Develop and implement a Local Employment Plan (LEP) for the Project. The LEP is to include measures to encourage and set targets for local employment for the EPC Contractor;
- Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA; and
- Work with the EPC Contractor during the Construction Phase to achieve maximum local employment targets set.

The LEP for the Project is to include the following measures:

- Host information sessions to engage with the community and Local/Regional Businesses who can provide inputs or services and other prospective contractors/subcontractors, regarding construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements;
- Engage local media including radio, newspaper and social media to advertise expressions of interest for employment or provision of services or materials;
- Engage with the local employment agencies to identify access pathways for local workers. Assess the candidate pool to determine suitable labour, trade or other employment on the Project;
- Investigate any local and regional community social media channels which can disseminate information to the community and Local/Regional Businesses which can provide inputs or services and prospective subcontractors;
- Set up a dedicated employment opportunity platform on the Project's website in consultation and coordination with the EPC contractor;

- Consult with the Tamworth Business Chamber, Walcha Council, Uralla Shire and Armidale Business Chamber and the New England North West Business Enterprise Centre to provide their members with relevant details such as Project construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements;
- Implement shuttle bus services where practical to enable local workforce in the respective locations to easily commute to the project site;
- Encourage businesses with an ABN register their business and submit expressions of interest on the Industry Capability Network (ICN) Gateway;
- Provide opportunities for Local/Regional Businesses to submit proposals and tenders and prioritise the use of goods and services that can be sourced locally and are competitive for price and quality;
- Define and distinguish between approaches for the local community and regional economy;
- Encourage subcontractors to employ local workers wherever practicable and reasonable;
- Use local presence and content as a criterion when awarding contracts to subcontractors; and
- Identify positions where training would allow additional local workers, and encourage local workers and businesses to undertake training to provide for specialist works.

TABLE 6-5 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: INCREASED DIRECT AND INDIRECT EMPLOYMENT

Impact		**Increased Direct and Indirect Employment**				
Potential Impact		Increased demand for labour creates direct and indirect employment opportunities for the local community.				
Social Impact Category		Livelihoods				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Local Workforce				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The Project will provide opportunities for direct and indirect employment across the Social Locality and for a range of industries. Gillespie Economics' (2025) Economic Assessment indicated that the extent of direct and indirect employment opportunities are 451 direct and indirect jobs for the region.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months, and therefore opportunities for employment will be time limited.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Engagement data revealed trends of rural decline (refer to **Table 4-3**), which was explained as partiality result of the pull factor of employment opportunities in Tamworth.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There were suggestions by various stakeholders that families and elderly groups are being forced to relocate to Tamworth due to the lack of economic activity in Bendemeer.				
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

Impact		Increased Direct and Indirect Employment				
	Level of Concern / Interest	There was a strong desire to bring employment opportunities to Bendemeer expressed during stakeholder engagement and in the submissions received.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		There are a range of employment opportunities that can be sourced from the local workforces in the Social Locality and therefore the likelihood is Possible.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**		**Very High**
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement a Local Employment Plan (LEP) for the Project. The LEP is to include measures to encourage and set targets for local employment for the EPC Contractor. • Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA. • Work with the EPC Contractor during the Construction Phase to achieve maximum local employment targets set.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The post-enhancement magnitude is expected to remain as Major as most of the magnitude characteristics remain unchanged.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to remain as Likely as enhancement measures will increase the likelihood of local community opportunities, but access will still be skills based.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**		**Very High**
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.				

Increased Local Procurement Opportunities

In addition to providing employment opportunities, the Project has the potential to provide opportunities for the local procurement of goods and services during the Construction Phase, which will benefit local and Local/Regional Businesses.

As stated in **Section 6.2.1.2**, the Bendemeer township and surrounding areas are at risk of experiencing rural decline if new larger-scale projects do not occur within the local area which can help to bolster Local/Regional Businesses. The flow-on effects of the Construction Phase are anticipated to include increased demand for goods and services, accommodation, warehousing/storage, transport/logistics, and administrative support. Where possible, these demands are sought to be met through Local/Regional Businesses and organisations within the Social Locality.

Stakeholder engagement conducted within the Social Locality identified that the community already has expectations to experience local economic benefits, with comments including:

> *"I have seen and continue to see growth in a diverse range of business opportunities arising from renewables development in this area, from ecologists, to electricians, security, transport, hospitality, waste management and many more - they are all prospering" (Submission ID: SE-61508460)*

Enhancement Measures

To maximise local procurement opportunities, the following enhancement measures will be adopted:

- Develop and implement local content initiatives which includes measures to encourage local procurement for the EPC Contractor;
- Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council, Tamworth Business Chamber and/or other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways Local/Regional Businesses may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA;
- Work with the EPC Contractor during the Construction Phase to track and report on the local content used for the Project to demonstrate the extent to which local content is being accessed; and
- Assist respective Local/Regional Businesses in becoming 'job ready' by:
  - ensuring lead contractors are encouraged to hire regional residents where they have the required skills and experience and can demonstrate a cultural fit with the organisation;
  - participation in business group meetings, events or programs in the regional community to increase transparency in relation to upcoming opportunities; and
  - encouraging lead contractors to purchase local non-labour inputs to production, where local producers can be cost and quality competitive, to support local industries.

The Project will also implement measures to encourage local content where importance is placed on procurement of local non-labour inputs to production where local producers can be cost and quality competitive.

The measures would include the following three steps:

- **Step #1 Expressions of Interest:** Businesses with an ABN register their business and submit expressions of interest on the ICN Regional Gateway. Businesses which have registered their interest with the Applicant, or the EPC Contractor prior, will be directly contacted by the EPC Contractor and notified of the Expression of Interest process.
- **Step #2 Further Information:** The EPC Contractor with the Applicant's support will hold information sessions in Tamworth, Armidale, Uralla and Walcha to provide Local/Regional Businesses with additional information about the available work packages and the process of bidding for subcontracting or supply opportunities with the main subcontractor(s). The database prepared by the EPC Contractor in Step 1 will be used to contact interested business to participate in the information sessions.

- **Step #3 Engagement of Suppliers and Subcontractors:** The EPC Contractor and main subcontractor(s) engage the suppliers and subcontractors directly according to their procurement processes. A target local worker ratio may be imposed to allow an estimate of non-local workers and to measure effectiveness of the local procurement initiatives.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for increased direct and indirect employment opportunities is provided in **Table 6-6**.

TABLE 6-6 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: INCREASED LOCAL PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Impact		**Increased Local Procurement Opportunities**				
Potential Impact		Increased demand for goods and services helps to stimulate the local economies. Businesses within the Social Locality benefit from increased economic activity associated with the construction workforce and Project material requirements.				
Social Impact Category		Livelihoods				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Regional businesses				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	**High**	Very High
		Opportunities for local procurement not only extends throughout the Social Locality, but also to outlying LGAs.				
	Duration	Very Low	**Low**	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months, and therefore opportunities for local procurement will be time limited.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	**High**	Very High
		Stakeholder groups identified procurement opportunities as being important to the Social Locality. A high portion of the Social Locality have relevant occupations and industries to those required for construction.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	**High**	Very High
		Various stakeholders referenced desires for economic growth in Bendemeer and Tamworth as a priority to arrest rural social and economic decline.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	**High**	Very High
		Several stakeholder groups were interested in procurement opportunities at a community-level.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	**Major**	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	**Possible**	Likely	Almost Certain
		The pre-mitigation likelihood is Possible given the prospective use of local/regional businesses and contractors.				
		Low	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Impact</th><th colspan="5">Increased Local Procurement Opportunities</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Impact Significance</td><td colspan="5">With the magnitude being Major and the Possible likelihood of this impact occurring, the significance of this impact is High.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities</td><td colspan="5">• Develop and implement local content initiatives which includes measures to encourage local procurement for the EPC Contractor.
• Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways local/regional businesses may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA.
• Work with the EPC Contractor during the Construction Phase to track and report on the local content used for the Project in order to demonstrate the extent to which local content is being accessed.
• Assist respective local/regional businesses in becoming ‘job ready’ by:
° ensuring lead contractors are encouraged to hire regional residents where they have the required skills and experience and are able to demonstrate a cultural fit with the organisation;
° participation in business group meetings, events or programs in the regional community in order to increase transparency in relation to upcoming opportunities; and
° encouraging lead contractors to purchase local non-labour inputs to production, where local producers can be cost and quality competitive, to support local industries.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Post-Mitigation / Enhancement</td><td>Magnitude</td><td>Minimal</td><td>Minor</td><td>Moderate</td><td>Major</td><td>Transformational</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The post-mitigation magnitude will remain Major as most of the magnitude characteristics remain unchanged.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Likelihood</td><td>Very Unlikely</td><td>Unlikely</td><td>Possible</td><td>Likely</td><td>Almost Certain</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The likelihood of the impact is expected to be Likely once enhancement initiatives have been implemented by the Applicant and EPC Contractor.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Impact Significance</td><td>Low</td><td>Medium</td><td>High</td><td>Very High</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.</td></tr>
</table>

Potential to Create Skills Shortages

Economic benefits notwithstanding (refer to **Section 6.2.1.1** and **Section 6.2.1.2**), the Project also has the potential to negatively impact the availability of skilled workers within the Social Locality and wider region. This impact is typically recognised when a considerable proportion of skilled workers available in a region are employed on a single large Project, meaning that other businesses and/or operations are unable to draw from the same pool of skilled workers to fulfil their job requirements.

A portion of the Social Locality’s workforce have relevant occupations and skills required for the Construction Phase of the Project (skills as outlined in **Section 1.1.1**). This crossover of relevant skillsets increases the possibility that workers may decide to leave their current employer and accept an opportunity with the Project for the duration of the Construction Phase. Where this occurs, Local/Regional Businesses may be negatively impacted as they are unable to hire and/or retain suitable staff, and in-turn their economic output is diminished as they cannot fulfil contracts and business commitments.

Despite this however, the risk the Project will contribute to skills shortages within the Social Locality and impact Local/Regional Businesses is lessened by the existing mobility of

prospective employees. Nationally, 'Technicians and Trades Workers' and 'Labourers' have the largest proportion of independent contractors (17% and 11%, respectively). The tendency for workers within these industries of employment to operate as independent contractors is an indicator for existing employee mobility within the workforce, with the potential for these independent contractors to align themselves with an EPC Contractor rather than be already employed long-term by Local/Regional Businesses (ABS, 2023b).

The Project also has the potential to generate competition for local/regional goods and service providers within the Social Locality, particularly those of direct relevance to the resourcing requirements specified in **Section 1.1.1** (e.g., fencing, landscaping, general site works, etc.). This competition may reduce the ability of Local/Regional Businesses to work on smaller-scale projects within the Social Locality, and by consequence neglect local community members. This lessened accessibility to goods and services within the local community may result in these goods and services becoming more expensive, and out of reach of vulnerable members of the community, such as the elderly or those of limited financial means.

Management and Mitigation

To address the potential creation of skills shortages within the Social Locality, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement the LEP for the Project, including the proposed mitigation and management measures contained therein;
- Monitor for skills shortages within the region and take this into consideration with EPC Contractor recruitment objectives;
- Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement to maintain ongoing communication with Tamworth Regional Council and Local/Regional Business groups; and
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders, including in relation to skills shortages and Local/Regional Business impacts, are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for the potential creation of skills shortages is provided in **Table 6-7**.

TABLE 6-7 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: POTENTIAL TO CREATE SKILLS SHORTAGES

Impact		**Potential to Create Skills Shortages**				
Potential impact		Increased demand for labour contributes to skills shortages				
Social Impact Category		Livelihoods				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Local Workforce				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Skill shortages have potential to generate impacts throughout the social locality across a range of industries.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months and therefore impacts will be time limited.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

Impact		Potential to Create Skills Shortages				
		The Project demands on the Social Locality are moderate relation to the workforce population. The Social Locality contains a high portion of occupations relevant to the skill requirements of the Project.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The Social Locality is located adjacent to large regional centres with large labour markets capable of adapting to shifting labour dynamics.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		This concern was not raised as a concern during stakeholder engagement; however, it is a known concern for other solar farm developments in regional areas.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		It is possible that the Project may contribute to skills shortages prior to mitigation measures, and therefore the likelihood is Possible.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood being Possible, the significance of this impact is Medium.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement the LEP for the Project, including the proposed mitigation and management measures contained therein. • Monitor for skills shortages within the region and take this into consideration with EPC Contractor recruitment objectives. • Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement to maintain ongoing communication with Tamworth Regional Council and Local/Regional Business groups. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders, including in relation to skills shortages and Local/Regional Business impacts, are identified and acted upon.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The post-mitigation magnitude is expected to be Minor as most of the magnitude characteristics remain unchanged by these mitigations.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to be Unlikely once the LEP is implemented and skill shortage monitoring is undertaken.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Low.				

6.2.1.3 LOCAL DISRUPTIONS

During stakeholder engagement several concerns were raised regarding local disruptions during the Construction Phase. These included impacts related to social amenity resulting primarily from noise and vibration, dust, and visual impact (refer to **Section 6.2.1.3**), as well as construction traffic, increased vehicle movements, and local road conditions/deterioration (refer to **Section 6.2.1.4**).

Changes in Social Amenity

The issues of construction noise, vibration, dust, and visual amenity were key concerns that were raised by Immediate Neighbours but were not a key concern for the surrounding community living in Bendemeer. Generally, concerns stemmed from the extent of construction works that would need to be caried out on land that that has been primarily used for agriculture in the past, aside from road construction and property maintenance activities, and therefore the perception that there would be impacts on their general health and wellbeing for the duration of the Construction Phase.

Immediate Neighbours and the Surrounding Community both raised concerns about the potential visual impacts that would results for construction activities within the Project Area. Whilst it is anticipated that the direct neighbouring properties would experience a visual impact, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Addendum to Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Ad. LVIA) conducted by Moir Landscape Architecture (2023, 2025) identified that impacts would generally be limited to the Immediate Neighbours, but even this will be mitigated by existing landscape features (hills and tree lines) that will reduce exposure to construction environmental impacts.

With respect to noise related construction impacts, the Applicant has committed to undertaking works during the recommended standard daytime hours, with the project-specific construction Noise Management Levels (NMLs) presented in the Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) (ERM 2023). These NMLs have been established with due regard to the requirements of the NSW Interim Construction Noise Guideline for all identified residential (dwelling) and other sensitive (non-residential) receptors.

Stakeholders also raised concern around Construction Phase air quality impacts, such as the stirring up of dust and increased emissions from construction vehicles. Whilst it is anticipated that there will be air quality emissions during the Construction Phase these will be temporary and limited in nature. Furthermore, the Applicant has committed to applying suitable management measures, such as watering and rehabilitation, to minimise the potential for offsite air quality impacts.

Given the rural nature of the Project, submitters were also concerned about the potential for the Project to cause a bushfire that may threaten their homes and livelihoods, even during the Construction Phase, with one submitter commenting that:

> *"If a fire gets to the BESS we will have an electrical fire which will not be able to be put out, emitting toxic fumes, and if the wind is blowing towards Bendemeer, we will have to evacuate" (Submission ID: SE-61454959)*

The Bushfire Assessment Report (BFAR) identified that the Project Area is located on land designated bushfire prone by Tamworth Regional Council and the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS). As such a range of bushfire protection measures are to be incorporated into the construction management processes for the Project and will need to be followed by the EPC Contractor to reduce the potential for a bushfire to occur as a result of construction works carried out. Risk of fire propagation has decreased due to LiFePO4 (Lithium Iron Phosphate - LFP) BESS technology commitment over Nickel-Manganese-Cobalt (NMC) technology. This is due to the lower peak temperature in a thermal runaway scenario of the LFP compared to NMC battery technology (refer Appendix M of the Amendment Report). The mitigation and management measures (refer Appendix B of the Amendment Report) for the Project are considered adequate to minimise any risks from the BESS and exceed the minimum requirements of the NSW RFS Guidelines.

Management and Mitigation

To address the potential negative changes in social amenity, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours and the Surrounding Community.
- Continue to engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that suitable landscaping solutions are implemented to minimize visual impact, where required.
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon.
- Develop and implement a CEMP that will include specific mitigations for construction phase impacts, including:
  - Dust management;
  - Construction hours align with statutory requirements / approvals;
  - Conduct Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) awareness training where appropriate;
  - Bushfire risk management; and
  - Biosecurity risk management.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for increased changes in social amenity is provided in **Table 6-8** .

TABLE 6-8 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: CHANGES IN SOCIAL AMENITY

Impact	Changes in Social Amenity
Potential Impact	Construction impacts including noise, vibration, dust, visual amenity, and increased risk of fire which influence social amenity and potentially cause an impact on community health and wellbeing.
Social Impact Category	Health and Wellbeing
Affected Stakeholder/s	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Community

Impact		Changes in Social Amenity				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Impacts are mostly at the local level with direct impacts to Immediate Neighbours, with indirect impacts experienced by the Surrounding Community.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months, which means that impacts will be time limited.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The social amenity disruptions expected during construction are not likely to be experienced by other stakeholders in the Social Locality, but will be more acutely experienced by Immediate Neighbours.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Most of the impacts likely to be experienced by Immediate Neighbours. There were no vulnerable or sensitive receptors identified as being impacted.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There was a low level of concern regarding Construction Phase amenity impacts raised by stakeholders.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		Social amenity impacts are Likely to occur to Immediate Neighbours during the Construction period.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**		**Very High**
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours and the Surrounding Community. • Continue to engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that suitable landscaping solutions are implemented to minimize visual impact, where required. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon. • Develop and implement a CEMP.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The post-mitigation magnitude is expected to remain Moderate. Construction activities are anticipated to impact the social amenity of Immediate Neighours despite mitigation measures put in place.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to reduce to Possible once the CEMP and other management measures are implemented.				
		Low	**Medium**	**High**		**Very High**

Impact		Changes in Social Amenity
	Impact Significance	With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood being Possible, the significance of this impact is Medium.

Traffic Congestion, Community Safety Concerns, and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions

The Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) (Amber 2023) identified that during the peak construction period the Project has the potential to generate up to 206 vehicle movements per day, with 69 vehicle movements to be generated during peak hours (i.e. 8:15 am to 9:15 am; and 4:45 pm to 5:45 pm).

Stakeholders and submitters raised the potential for the increase in construction traffic to impact upon their way of life and health and wellbeing (including community safety). Concerns raised by stakeholders and submitters included:

> *"The Oxley Highway is already a busy road, and turning in from the New England Highway will cause considerable dangerous conditions for motorists and the many truck drivers." (Submission ID: SE-61420238)*
>
> *"Will cause traffic congestion through the small village and surrounds, and possibly lead to higher pedestrian risk, including to school children who are not used to large vehicles on their narrow rural roads, and dust and pollution from increase traffic volume" (Submission ID: SE-61584957*
>
> *"The impact of additional traffic on our roads will destroy the quality of our roads." (Submission ID: SE-61188304)*
>
> *"The roads are not built to withstand large machinery continually the Oxley Highway is only 2 narrow lanes that aren't in good condition already." (Submission ID's: SE-61093977, SE-61161015, SE-60991709, SE-61160970)*

These concerns can be grouped into three main categories:

- **Traffic Congestion** – congestion arising from an increased volume of traffic between the regional centres of the Social Locality. Ongoing construction activities will necessitate the movement of workers and materials to/from the Project Area. Traffic congestion caused by increased vehicle movements, and the potential establishment of detours or other road blockages, may cause disruptions to daily commutes and Local/Regional Business operations which may impact on stakeholder way of life, or increase stress and anxiety, impacting on their health and wellbeing.
- **Community Safety** – an increased volume of daily traffic may result in compromised emergency response times, a higher potential for unsafe driving (i.e. speeding, distracted driving etc) to occur, resulting in an accident, and a heightened exposure to air pollution from vehicle dust and exhaust emissions – all of which can impact upon community health and wellbeing. In addition, the use of roads frequented by school buses for material transport will increase the frequency of larger vehicles interacting with children walking to/from bus stops, which poses a safety concern.
- **Road Surface Conditions** – the use or larger vehicles (i.e. B-Doubles) and the high volume of traffic has the potential to cause a deterioration of road pavement conditions, which in turn, increases the risk of a traffic accident occurring.

The TIA for the Project determined that the current road network has sufficient capacity to handle the additional construction traffic associated with the Project. Despite this however, stakeholder engagement undertaken for the Project identified three main locations of particular concern that will need to be suitably managed to address the current road conditions and potential traffic impact:

1. Havannah Street turning into Bendemeer from New England highway;
2. Intersection of Oxley and New England Highway; and
3. The New England Highway passing through Moonbi.

The Havannah street turn into Bendemeer is not a part of the transport route for the Project, therefore any traffic impacts would indirectly result from the Project (i.e., workforce accessing Bendemeer township). The closest public transport service to the Project Area is Bus Route 444 (Bendemeer to Tamworth), with the nearest bus stops located on Havannah Street in Bendemeer, approximately 1.8 km west of the Project Area. Seven daily bus services are provided Monday to Friday, which operate from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. Accordingly, there is the potential for bus services that traverse the Oxley and New England Highways to be impacted by increased construction traffic flows to/from the Project Area.

There are several school buses, managed by Oxley Explorer, that operate along Oxley and New England Highways. These buses ferry students to/from schools within the Social Locality, such as Moonbi, Kootingal and Tintinhull Public Schools, which are located on roads adjoining the New England Highway, as well as Walcha Central, Woolbrook Public, Kentucky Public, Bendemeer Public, Rocky River Public and Uralla Central Schools. To avoid impacts to school bus routes, the TIA has recommended that heavy vehicle movements avoid peak school bus times to limit the interaction with these larger vehicles and vulnerable road users (i.e., youth).

Management and Mitigation

To address traffic and transport related disruptions to stakeholders, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) which draws on the Project TIA. The TMP should include the following measures to manage the social dimension of the impact:
  - Ensure drivers observe road traffic rules and speed limits;
  - Ensure all vehicle drivers have a relevant licence and training before mobilisation;
  - Use road signs at strategic points, sirens and public announcements where necessary to warn people of oncoming heavy vehicles;
  - Ensure all vehicles are certified roadworthy and well maintained;
  - Avoid night driving to the extent possible; and
  - Heavy vehicle movements should avoid peak school bus times to limit the interaction with these larger vehicles and vulnerable road users.
- Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours and the Surrounding Community.
- Continue to engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that matters raised in relation to traffic concerns, including school bus routes, are appropriately considered and incorporated into construction management processes and procedures.

- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment related to traffic congestion, community safety concerns, and deterioration of road surface conditions is provided in **Table 6-9** .

TABLE 6-9 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: TRAFFIC CONGESTION, COMMUNITY SAFETY CONCERNS AND DETERIORATION OF ROAD SURFACE CONDITIONS

Impact	Traffic Congestion, Community Safety Concerns and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions
Potential Impact	Transportation of materials and equipment to the Project Area has the potential to cause wear and tear on roads, road traffic congestion and community safety impacts for road users along the haulage routes and on local roads. Risk of traffic injury or in the worst case a fatality, resulting from increased vehicle movements during the transportation of goods and workers to and from the Project Area.
Social Impact Category	Way of Life; Health and Wellbeing
Affected Stakeholder/s	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Community, Local Workforce, Visitors to the Region

Impact		**Traffic Congestion, Community Safety Concerns and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions**				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		It is anticipated that traffic disruptions will be experienced in the Social Locality.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months, which means that impacts will be time limited.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The TIA identified that the current road network has adequate capacity to handle the additional construction traffic. Construction traffic does have the potential to impact upon stakeholders through delays due to congestion, the potential for a traffic accident, and increased road surface deterioration.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There is a possibility that vulnerable groups who direct and/or indirectly use the roads (i.e. elderly, emergency services, youth, etc.) may be affected.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours and submitters voiced concern about traffic related impacts.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		Irrespective of the TIA determination regarding the adequacy of the transport route to cater for the increased traffic flows, impacts to stakeholders from materials and equipment transportation are as having a medium probability of occurring, and therefore are Possible.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood being Possible, the significance of this impact is High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement a TMP which draws on the Project TIA (Amber 2023). • Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours and the Surrounding Community. • Continue to engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that matters raised in relation to traffic concerns, including school bus routes, are appropriately considered and incorporated into construction management processes and procedures. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon.				

Impact		Traffic Congestion, Community Safety Concerns and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The post-mitigation magnitude is Major. While the implementation of the TMP is expected to reduce the extent and severity, and the SEP, the level of concern, the intensity will remain as previously defined. This is because the degree of change caused within the Social Locality if a traffic accident was to occur cannot be mitigated.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to reduce to Unlikely once the mitigation measures are implemented.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Medium.				

6.2.1.4 ACCOMMODATION AND WORKER INFLUX

Large construction projects have the potential to contribute to tight rental markets if sizeable construction workforces are brought into the area. This can increase the demand for short and long-term accommodation, which in turn can exacerbate accommodation shortages and cost of living pressures through increased rents in areas with low vacancy rates.

The Project is anticipated to have a peak workforce of approximately 307 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) (some additional contractor personnel) and average annual workforce of 250 FTE for the peak 12-month of construction of the Project.

As discussed in **Section 5.4**, currently there are limited accommodation options within Bendemeer. However, suitable options to house the non-local workforce during the Construction Phase are readily available within a commutable distance from the Project Area, particularly within Tamworth, Armidale, and Uralla LGAs. Accordingly, it is anticipated that most of the Project's non-local workforce will use the local short-term and long-term rental accommodation in these locations.

Walcha is considered as a low priority accommodation option for the Project, given it has limited housing and accommodation availability compared to other LGAs in the region (refer **Section 5.4**) and it would likely cater for other nearby SSD projects which may have construction phase overlapping with the Project (e.g., Winterbourne Wind Farm). This is further discussed in the revised TIA prepared for the amended Project. In the unlikely scenario where workers may commute from Walcha, traffic movements originating from east of the project along Oxley Highway will be managed in accordance with the TMP. The plan will be prepared prior to commencement of construction of the Project and include measures identified in the revised TIA and this report.

Consideration will need to be given by the Project to the timing of the various festivals and events occurring within Tamworth, Armidale and Uralla (refer to **Table 5-10**), in order to ensure that tourism opportunities are not hindered by the take-up of local short-term accommodation, which may have negative financial and cultural consequences for the local community.

The accommodation priorities for the Project are outlined in **Table 6-10**, along with the approximate total number of available rooms and the potential availability for each accommodation type.

TABLE 6-10 ACCOMMODATION PRIORITIES

Priority	Accommodation Type	Approximate Total	Availability*
1	**Short term local temporary accommodation** such as motels, hotels, bed and breakfasts, and caravan parks in Tamworth.	1,093	547
2	**Rental accommodation** in Tamworth (houses and units).	193	193
3	**Short term local temporary accommodation** (rooms) such as motels, hotels, bed and breakfasts, and caravan parks in Armidale, Uralla and Walcha.	792	475
4	**Rental accommodation** in Armidale, Uralla and Walcha (houses and units),	141	141
	Total (Approximate)	2,219	1,355

* Room availability based on an occupancy rate of 50% for Tamworth, and 60% for Walcha, Uralla and Armidale.

The Project aims to recruit 70% of the construction workforce from the Social Locality and Tamworth Regional LGA as well as the neighbouring LGAs of Walcha Council, Uralla Shire and Armidale Regional. In particular, local resources are expected to comprise 100% of those involved in surveying, site works (clearing and grubbing), site works (excavation, grading, and access roads), Landscaping, perimeter fencing, PV module installation, and security (refer to **Table 1-3**).

The local employment target set by the Project is based on assumptions set within the EIA, SIA and EIS regarding what a realistic and reasonable for the region. It is anticipated that through appropriate prioritisation of local accommodation for the construction workforce, a separate Project-specific accommodation camp (or similar) will not be required.

To more fully consider the potential social impacts associated with the influx of workers during the Construction Phase, such as the potential increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation (refer to **Section 6.2.1.4**) and the potential increase in demand for services and recreational facilities (refer to **Section 6.2.1.4**), assessment has been undertaken based on two local employment scenarios. The first scenario is based on the Project meeting the 70% local employment target and the second is based on the Project not meeting the 70% local employment target.

Increased Demand for Short and Long-Term Accommodation

The influx of workers during the Construction Phase has the potential to increase the demand for both short-term and long-term accommodation within the Social Locality, namely in Bendemeer, Tamworth and Armidale.

The reduction in short-term accommodation has the potential to impact upon tourism operations within the Social Locality as the number of accommodation options available to support these ventures will be reduced. A reduction in tourist accommodation availabilities can lead to a loss of revenue for Local/Regional Businesses that heavily depend on the tourism sector. This loss of revenue may also result in those businesses struggling to cover operational costs, subsequently reducing their contribution to the local economy. Tourist ventures typically rely on a steady stream of visitors, and a decrease in accommodation options for travelers may threaten the viability and long-term sustainability of these businesses, and in doing so, negatively affect the social fabric of the community. However, if the tourist and construction workforce are both able to be accommodated simultaneously, there is potential for the worker influx to generate benefits to tourism industry assuming that a portion of the local workforce attend these events outside of work hours. Additionally, the analysis of short-term accommodation found there is capacity in short-term accommodation providers located in Tamworth at an occupancy rate of 50%.

In addition, the loss of short and long-term accommodation options has the potential to more likely impact vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, those facing financial hardship, or those with lesser disposable incomes, within the Social Locality. Similarly, if there is a lack of affordable accommodation options to support short-term rentals this may reduce the accessibility for those more transient lifestyles from residing within the local area.

These potential impacts have been considered across both scenarios in the sections that follow. Notably, the baseline characteristics of the Social Locality and stakeholder engagement findings remain similar across both scenarios, however, the extent, intensity and severity of the impact changes between each scenario.

Scenario #1: 70% Local Employment Target Met

Assuming approximately 70% of the peak construction workforce of 307 workers will originate from the local area, the total number of additional rooms required at peak construction will be approximately 92. With approximately 547 short-term rooms and 193 rentals available in the Tamworth LGA at normal occupancy rates, there is likely to be sufficient accommodation capacity to cater for the peak Construction Phase workforce. Tamworth would be the most appropriate location for construction workforce accommodation given that it is located approximately 40 mins from the Project Area and is a regional centre and able to support a larger number of workers than the Bendemeer township.

If the peak construction workforce overlaps with a significant event (e.g. Tamworth Country Music Festival), there is a further 475 short-term rooms and 141 rentals available in the surrounding LGAs of Uralla, Walcha and Armidale, which can cater for either a temporary or semi-permanent shift the construction workforce location, if required. The Applicant or its EPC Contractor has committed to undertaking a review of available accommodation post-approval to obtain contemporary information to manage options at the time of construction.

Scenario #2: 70% Local Employment Target Not Met

If the Project were to not meet the 70% local employment target, the Project will need to rely more heavily on Fly-In/Fly-Out (FIFO) or Drive-In/Drive-Out (DIDO) workers, which would lead to an increased pressure on accommodation providers and the Surrounding Community.

Assuming approximately 70% of the peak construction workforce of 307 workers will not originate from the local area, the total number of additional rooms required at peak construction will be more than 92. However, with approximately 547 short-term rooms and 193 rentals available in the Tamworth LGA at normal occupancy rates, there is likely to be sufficient accommodation capacity to cater for the peak Construction Phase workforce.

If local employment target is not met and the peak construction workforce overlaps with a significant event, there is a further 475 short-term rooms and 141 rentals available in the surrounding LGAs of Uralla, Walcha and Armidale to temporarily shift the workforce, if required. The Applicant or its EPC Contractor will undertake a review of available accommodation post-approval to obtain contemporary information to manage options at the time of construction.

The Tamworth UCL has demonstrated a capacity to servicing fluctuating populations as result of hosting the major tourist events (refer to **Table 5-10**), however, if peak construction overlaps with these major tourist events there is potential for the Project to generate social impacts. The potential social impacts in this scenario include presenting barriers for tourists that are seeking short-term accommodation to attend events and a loss of revenue for tourist businesses that rely on tourist accommodation availabilities. If there are overlaps it is possible for the Project to shift the workforce to surrounding LGAs of Uralla, Walcha and Armidale, whilst also considering alignment with major tourist events in those areas.

Management and Mitigation

To address the potential increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation as a result of worker influx during the Construction Phase, the Project will adopt a suite of management measures comprising:

- Develop and implement a LEP for the Project. The LEP is to include measures to encourage and set targets for local employment for the EPC Contractor.
- Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and accommodation.
- If required, relocate workers to short-term accommodation available in surrounding regional centres when there are key tourism events.
- Develop and implement a Workforce Accommodation Strategy (WAS) for the Project, that will:
    - Explore available accommodation options in Tamworth, Uralla, Walcha and Armidale;
    - Prioritise local accommodation options, where available;
    - Investigate local and regional community social media options to disseminate information to local accommodation operators and rental property owners, such as construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements;

- Require ongoing contact with local accommodation operators to provide Project information such as construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements;
- Provide a register of local accommodation options and contact details to contractors and subcontractors;
- Provide and maintain register of local property owners who have expressed interest in offering dwellings for rent, with the intent to provide to the EPC Contractors and subcontractors;
- Include a requirement to review workforce predictions during construction to ensure that accommodation requirements are met;
- Identify any overlaps with peak demand periods for accommodation and engage with key stakeholders; and
- Stipulate ongoing consultation with local property owners and accommodation providers to manage occupancy and maximise use of local accommodation, without preventing its use for major event and holiday purposes.

- Develop and implement a Worker Code of Conduct to mitigate the potential for increased anti-social behaviour or crime that may potential arise from an increased number of FIFO/DIDO workers. The Worker Code of Conduct should include, at a minimum:
  - **Principles of behaviour:** Guideline for appropriate behaviour that apply to interactions with all workers whether at work or out of work.
  - **Anti-harassment, bullying and discrimination:** Sets out the provisions for appropriate conduct, and outlines potential consequences of breech to these provisions.
  - **Work health and safety:** Requires that all workers understand their obligations to comply with the relevant work health and safety procedures and legislative requirements.
- Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the various stakeholders identified in the WAS.
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A scenario-based summary of the impact assessment related to the potential increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation is provided in the following tables. **Table** 6-11 denotes the relevant impacts associated with Scenario #1, with

Table 6-12 providing the impact assessment summary for Scenario #2.

TABLE 6-11 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: INCREASED DEMAND FOR SHORT AND LONG-TERM ACCOMMODATION (SCENARIO #1)

Impact		**Increased Demand for Short and Long-Term Accommodation (Scenario #1)**				
Potential Impact		Increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation, where the 70% local employment target is met.				
Social Impact Category		Way of Life				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Local/Regional Businesses, Visitors to the Region, Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	Extent	Very Low	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High
		The affected stakeholders are likely to be limited to Tamworth.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months. The period of influx and pressure on short and long-term accommodation will be time limited.				
	Severity	Very Low	**Low**	Medium	High	Very High
		The region has demonstrated a capacity to accommodate fluctuating populations during major tourist events, and therefore the modest increase in population during the Construction Phase will limit the severity.				
	Intensity	Very Low	**Low**	Medium	High	Very High
		There is a low potential for sensitivities in this Scenario despite crossover with the peak construction period for the Project and major tourist events due to the lower worker influx.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	**Low**	Medium	High	Very High
		During engagement stakeholders did not raise this issue. Despite this however, accommodation pressure is a known concern for regional centres, such as Tamworth, who will need to balance large-scale projects with major tourist events.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	**Moderate**	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	**Unlikely**	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		In the scenario that local recruitment goals are met it would be Unlikely that the Social Locality would experience this impact.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Medium.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement a LEP for the Project. • Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and accommodation. • Develop and implement a WAS. • Develop and implement a Worker Code of Conduct. • Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the various stakeholders identified in the WAS. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.				

Impact		Increased Demand for Short and Long-Term Accommodation (Scenario #1)				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	**Minor**	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The post-mitigation magnitude is expected to reduce to Minor after the WAS is implemented, as it will allow the small FIFO/DIDO workforce to shift across the Social Locality to avoid major tourist events.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	**Unlikely**	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The post-mitigation likelihood of the impact is expected to remain Unlikely.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Low.				

TABLE 6-12 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: INCREASED DEMAND FOR SHORT AND LONG-TERM ACCOMMODATION (SCENARIO #2)

Impact		Increased Demand for Short and Long-Term Accommodation (Scenario #2)				
Potential Impact		Increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation, where the 70% local employment target is not met.				
Social Impact Category		Way of Life				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Local/Regional Businesses, Visitors to the Region, Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High
		The affected stakeholders are likely to be limited to Tamworth, however has the potential to extend into Armidale.				
	Duration	Very Low	**Low**	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months. The period of influx and pressure on short and long-term accommodation will be time limited.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High
		The region has demonstrated a capacity to accommodate fluctuating populations during major tourist events. Increased worker influx in this Scenario will create increased pressure on accommodation providers.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High
		Due to this increased worker influx in this Scenario, there is a greater potential for social sensitivities if major tourist events crossover with the peak construction period for the Project.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High
		During engagement stakeholders did not raise this issue. Despite this however, accommodation pressure is a known concern for regional centres, such as Tamworth, who need to balance large-scale projects with major tourist events. Concern about accommodation pressure is typically greater in scenarios where large FIFO/DIDO workforces are required.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	**Moderate**	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	**Likely**	Almost Certain
		In the scenario that local recruitment goals are not met it would be Likely that the Social Locality would experience this impact.				

Impact		Increased Demand for Short and Long-Term Accommodation (Scenario #2)				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**		**Very High**
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement a LEP for the Project. • Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and accommodation. • Develop and implement a WAS. • Develop and implement a Worker Code of Conduct. • Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the various stakeholders identified in the WAS. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The post-mitigation magnitude is expected to remain Moderate, as the mitigations outlined will mainly affect the likelihood.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to reduce to Possible after the WAS is implemented, as it will allow the moderate FIFO/DIDO workforce to shift across the Social Locality to avoid major tourist events.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**		**Very High**
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood being Possible, the significance of this impact is considered to be Medium.				

Increased Demand for Services and Recreational Facilities

Concerns about impacts to services were expressed in submissions received during the Public Exhibition period for the EIS, with submitters commenting

> *"Access to our property will be affected during the build phase and in particular emergency services may not be able to reach their destination." (Submission ID: SE-61537502)*
>
> *"I work in the health sector and the additional developments in the New England region is likely to improve health services and attract more health workers, which is critical issue for my community." (Submission ID: SE-61582716)*
>
> *"Current regional shortage of housing, doctors, nurses and all medical related personal, will the company bring in their own medical team so that we the locals do not go without?" (Submission ID: SE-61578727)*

Section 5.5 outlines public and private health services within the Social Locality. It is anticipated that these medical services will be used by workers during the Construction Phase, when required, to treat illnesses or accidents. There are known pressures and challenges for regional centres across NSW, such as Tamworth, in attracting medical workers. To address this deficiency, the Department of Regional NSW (2023) have introduced incentives, such as free accommodation, to attract medical staff to Tamworth. Regardless however, the influx of workers into regional centres, such as Tamworth, during the Construction Phase, has the

potential to place additional strain on these health services, and in doing so, reduce accessibility for community members within the Social Locality. This in turn, has the potential to more seriously impact vulnerable groups (**Section 5.2.2**), including elderly, youth, and Indigenous peoples. However, the scale of pressure on these health services is expected to be minor given the size and duration of the construction workforce relative to the population of the regional centre.

Worker influx may create pressure on recreational facilities as the increased demand for leisure activities can strain resources and restrict access for the existing community. This demand may lead to overcrowding, extended wait times, and impact on recreational experiences, which may lead to a sense of frustration and dissatisfaction among the community, impacting the health and well-being of residents.

The potential impact on services and recreational facilities has been considered across both scenarios in the sections that follow.

Scenario #1: 70% Local Employment Target Met

Based on the 70% local employment scenario, an additional 92 workers (FIFO/DIDO) will need to be catered for within the Social Locality (notably Tamworth). Accordingly, while the demand for medical and other services will increase it is likely to be absorbed by the existing medical clinics, hospitals, and other social service organisations currently operating within the Social Locality. Similarly, the existing recreational facilities available within the Social Locality should be able to support an increase in 92 workers for a 18 month period of construction.

If the peak construction workforce overlaps with a significant event (e.g., Tamworth Country Music Festival), the level of demand and resultant pressure on these services and recreational facilities will be further increased, however, given prior experience in catering for large-scale events, it is considered likely that the Social Locality would be able to function appropriately with minimal impact. For example, Tamworth Country Music Festival had approximately 30,000 attendees in 2023 (Hawes, 2023).

Scenario #2: 70% Local Employment Target Not Met

If the Project were to not meet the 70% local employment target, the Project will need to rely more heavily on FIFO or DIDO workers, which in turn, would lead to a greater increase in the demand for services and recreational facilities within the Social Locality.

In this scenario, social infrastructure and emergency services would experience increased pressure and may result in shortages of staff members at these facilities, greater waiting times for local residents to access necessary medical or emergency treatment, and reduced access to social infrastructure and facilities. Delays in receiving medical treatment, or reduced access to social services, has the potential to more acutely impact on vulnerable groups within the Social Locality, such as the elderly and Aboriginal persons.

Management and Mitigation

To address the increased demand for services and recreation facilities as a result of worker influx during the Construction Phase, the Project will adopt a suite of management measures comprising:

- Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and local resources;
- Continue to engage with relevant health (e.g., hospitals, medical clinics, etc.) and emergency services (e.g., ambulance, police, fire brigade, State Emergency Service (SES), etc.);
- Develop and implement a SEP; and
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A scenario-based summary of the impact assessment related to the increase in demand for services and recreational facilities is provided in the following tables. **Table 6-13** denotes the relevant impacts associated with Scenario #1, with **Table 6-14** providing the impact assessment summary for Scenario #2.

TABLE 6-13 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: INCREASED DEMAND FOR SERVICES AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (SCENARIO #1)

Impact		**Increased Demand for Services and Recreational Facilities (Scenario #1)**				
Potential Impact		Increased demand for social and emergency services and recreational facilities, where the 70% local employment target is met.				
Social Impact Category		Access				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholders in Tamworth may be impacted by increased pressure on social and emergency services resulting from the 92 expected non-local workers.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months. The period of influx and pressure on services and facilities will be time limited.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Existing social and emergency infrastructure appears to have capacity to service the workforce required for the Construction Phase.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The region has demonstrated a capacity to accommodate fluctuating populations during major tourist events, and therefore the modest increase in population during the Construction Phase will limit severity.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Concerns regarding this impact were not raised by stakeholders during previous engagement for the SIA. However, in the public exhibition comments there were concerns about impacts to health services and existing shortages.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhance	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Minor.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain

Impact		Increased Demand for Services and Recreational Facilities (Scenario #1)			
		The likelihood of the impact is Possible as the non-local Construction Phase workforce will need to have access to services and facilities within Tamworth (and potentially Armidale).			
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is Medium.			
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and local resources. • Continue to engage with relevant health (e.g. hospitals, medical clinics, etc.) and emergency services (e.g. ambulance, police, fire brigade, SES, etc.). • Develop and implement a SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.			
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Magnitude is expected to remain Minor, as the mitigations will not directly address any existing sensitivities or worker shortages in social and emergency services but are more focused on communicating with service users and providers.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood is expected to reduce to Unlikely once mitigation measures have been implemented.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Low.				

TABLE 6-14 CONSTRUCTION PHASE: INCREASED DEMAND FOR SERVICES AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (SCENARIO #2)

Impact		Increased Demand for Services and Recreational Facilities (Scenario #2)				
Potential Impact		Increased demand for social and emergency services and recreational facilities, where the 70% local employment target is not met.				
Social Impact Category		Access				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		A range of stakeholders in Tamworth may be impacted by increased pressure on social and emergency services. In this scenario, it is likely that the extent will shift to Armidale as the worker influx will be over 92.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period is 18 months with peak period of 12 months. The period of influx and pressure on services and facilities will be time limited.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

Impact		Increased Demand for Services and Recreational Facilities (Scenario #2)				
		Existing social and emergency infrastructure appears to have capacity; however, this is likely not sufficient for the influx of workers in this Scenario.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The region has demonstrated a capacity to accommodate fluctuating populations during major tourist events, and therefore the increase in population during the Construction Phase will limit severity.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Concerns regarding this impact were not raised by stakeholders during previous engagement for the SIA. There was concern raised in submissions comments about impacts to health and emergency services.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is Likely as the non-local Construction Phase workforce will need to have access to services and facilities within Tamworth (and likely Armidale).				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood of this impact being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and local resources. • Continue to engage with relevant health (e.g. hospitals, medical clinics, etc.) and emergency services (e.g. ambulance, police, fire brigade, SES, etc.). • Develop and implement a SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Magnitude is expected to remain Moderate, as the mitigations will not directly address any existing sensitivities or worker shortages in social and emergency services but are more focused on communicating with service users and providers.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood is expected to reduce to Possible once mitigation measures have been implemented.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is Medium.				

6.2.2 OPERATION PHASE

The following section details the potential social impacts that may arise during the Operation Phase of the Project. Potential social impacts have groups according to the topical areas to which they relate, comprising:

- Stakeholder and Community (refer to **Section 6.2.1.1**);
- Employment and Procurement (refer to **Section 6.2.1.2**); and
- Land Use and Landscape (refer to **Section 6.2.1.3**).

It is noted however, the relevant impact category, as specified in the Guideline (refer to **Section 2.1**), has been assigned to each potential impact.

6.2.2.1 STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY

Stakeholder and community impacts relating to the Operation Phase of the Project have been raised during stakeholder engagement conducted for the EIS, SIA and by submitters during the Public Exhibition period. Concerns arising from stakeholders include implementation of the Bendemeer CBF (refer to **Section 6.2.1.1**), reduced community cohesion (refer to **Section 6.2.1.2**), and perceived health impacts (refer to **Section 6.2.1.3**).

Implementation of the Bendemeer Community Benefit Fund

During stakeholder engagement there was strong interest in the community benefits associated with the Project. As one stakeholder noted, *"if there was a community fund then the town would benefit enormously."* Stakeholders stated that government investment in infrastructure has reduced over time resulting in rural decline. During fieldwork there was evidence of vacant dilapidated buildings and poorly maintained social infrastructure (i.e., tennis court) which could be addressed through the Bendemeer CBF. There were suggestions that families and elderly people are leaving Bendemeer due to the lack of investment in social infrastructure, which could be abated via implementation of a fund.

Interest in a Bendemeer CBF extended to queries about the nature and purpose of the fund, and eligibility, and suggestions for community funding initiatives such as restoring local social infrastructure, providing health care, childcare and aged-care services, and provision of university and vocational training scholarships. RAPs also identified the possibility of providing National Park Ranger courses for one (1) or two (2) local Aboriginal Youth and free online education courses.

The Project has committed to establishing the Bendemeer CBF wherein the above community initiatives would be included. As discussed in **Section 1.3.3.3**, the CBF will be managed as a part of a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with Tamworth Regional Council, and funds will be awarded to local projects and programs that are successful in applications/proposal process (refer to Section 3.9 of the EIS). The Applicant proposes that a committee comprised of local community members, a representative from the Tamworth Regional Council, and a representative from the Applicant to be established to review applications/proposals for funding. This committee will vote for allocation of funds from the CBF.

The broad intention of the CBF is that funds would be allocated to support local non-profit organisations, community programs/events, Local/Regional Businesses, training, and services/infrastructure. The Applicant intends to provide $250 per MW per annum of Australian Energy Market Operator's and Network Operator approved and commissioned capacity, equating to $50,000 per annum for the life of the Project based on a 200 MW AC development. Additional detail relevant to the Benefit Fund will be developed as the Project progresses.

Enhancement Measures

To maximise access to the Bendemeer CBF the following enhancement measures will be adopted:

- Develop and implement the Bendemeer CBF, consulting with key stakeholders and potential partners (e.g., Tamworth Regional LGA, community groups, etc.); and
- Publish the Bendemeer CBF to the Surrounding Community via community newsletters and other communications channels as per an Operation Phase SEP.
- Ensure that the Bendemeer CBF prioritises local initiatives that foster long-term social, economic and environmental benefits.
- The geographic scope of the CBF is outlined below:
  - Local initiatives refer to those that will directly affect areas or residents within a 5km buffer of the Project, or within the Bendemeer SAL.
  - Initiatives outside of the local area will need to demonstrate direct or indirect benefits to the Bendemeer community.
- Ensure that the Bendemeer CBF prioritises local initiatives that will benefit or mitigate impacts to vulnerable groups (refer to Section 5.2.2).

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for implementation of the Bendemeer CBP is provided in **Table 6-15**.

TABLE 6-15 OPERATION PHASE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BENDEMEER COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

Impact		**Implementation of the Bendemeer Community Benefit Fund**				
Potential Impact		Development and implementation of the Bendemeer CBF, a Project-specific community benefit sharing scheme.				
Social Impact Category		Community				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The extent of the Bendemeer CBF is primarily to comprise the Bendemeer township but may apply to activities or projects in the wider Social Locality.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The Bendemeer CBF will be active for the lifespan of the Project, currently anticipated to be up to 30 years.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholders stated that government investment in infrastructure has reduced over time resulting in rural decline. During fieldwork there was evidence of vacant dilapidated buildings and poorly maintained social infrastructure (i.e. tennis court) which could be addressed through the Bendemeer CBF.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There were suggestions that families and elderly people are leaving Bendemeer due to the lack of investment in social infrastructure, which could be abated via implementation of the Bendemeer CBF.				

Impact		Implementation of the Bendemeer Community Benefit Fund				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholder engagement revealed concerns about the lack of community investment in Bendemeer, and enthusiasm for a CBF.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	**Major**	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The Project will require a CBF under the legislation and regulation outlined in **Section 1.3**.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Major and the Almost Certain likelihood of this impact occurring, the significance of this impact is Very High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement the Bendemeer CBF, consulting with key stakeholders and potential partners (e.g., Tamworth Regional LGA, community groups, etc.) • Publish the Bendemeer CBF to the Surrounding Community via community newsletters and other communications channels as per the SEP.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	**Major**	Transformational
		The listed enhancement measures will ensure that community benefits are publicised but is not expected to increase the magnitude from Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is to remain Almost Certain.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Major and the Almost Certain likelihood of this impact occurring, the significance of this impact remains as Very High.				

Reduced Community Cohesion

During stakeholder engagement it was observed that the community was divided regarding support and opposition to the Project. Mental health impacts may result from social impacts to community cohesion; however, it is not expected that these impacts will persist throughout the entirety of the Operation Phase. Despite this however, one stakeholder stated that community division may eventually result in physical altercations between community members as oppositional groups demonstrated a low to moderate level of empathy and understanding of the alternative viewpoints.

Despite the strong interest in community benefits, community opinions about the desirability of the Project remain divided. This indicates the potential for negative impacts on community cohesion if not managed appropriately. As necessary, the Applicant will engage with non-associated Immediate Neighbours regarding agreements that may be executed to address perceived impacts of the Project.

During the Operation Phase, attention must be given to the equitable distribution of the Bendemeer CBF to prevent any perception of bias or favouritism. Transparent criteria for fund allocation should be established, emphasising fairness and inclusivity. Regular communication about the allocation process and the tangible benefits derived from the Bendemeer CBF will also contribute to enhancing community trust. The intention of the CBF is to support Projects proposed by the community.

In the Operation Phase, consideration should also be given to ensuring that vulnerable groups within the community have access to and benefit from the CBF, such as elderly, youth and Aboriginal persons. Proactive measures, such as outreach programs, training, scholarships, apprenticeships, and collaborations with local organisations, should be implemented to address the specific challenges faced by vulnerable populations. For example, SIA focused engagement revealed a desire for the Aboriginal Groups to connect younger Aboriginal persons within the Social Locality to reconnect with land and cultural knowledge.
Recognising the impacts of temporary disruptions caused by construction activities, a concerted effort is needed to address lingering concerns and rebuild community cohesion. Engaging in open dialogue, providing transparent information about operational activities and Bendemeer CBF benefits, and actively involving the community local initiatives derived from the fund, will be vital for fostering understanding and unity during the Operation Phase.

Management and Mitigation

To manage the potential for the local community to become more deeply divided over the Project and address the mental health and wellbeing of stakeholders involved during the Operation Phase, it will be important to ensure that there is ongoing stakeholder engagement conducted throughout the life of the Project.

Specifically, the following management measures are proposed to be adopted by the Project:

- The implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement.
- The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities.
- Develop and implement the Bendemeer CBF, consulting with key stakeholders and potential partners (e.g., Tamworth Regional LGA, community groups, etc.)
- Publish the Bendemeer CBF to the Surrounding Community via community newsletters and other communications channels as per the Operation Phase SEP.
- Implement proactive measures, such as outreach programs, training, scholarships, apprenticeships, and collaborations with local organisations, to address the specific challenges faced by vulnerable populations.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for reduced community cohesion is provided in **Table** 6-16.

TABLE 6-16 OPERATION PHASE: REDUCED COMMUNITY COHESION

Impact	Reduced Community Cohesion
Potential Impact	Reduced community cohesion and increased social tensions due to divergent opinions related to the desirability of the Project and the resultant negative impacts on the local community.
Social Impact Category	Health and Wellbeing
Affected Stakeholder/s	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Community

Impact		Reduced Community Cohesion				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The loss of community cohesion has the potential to impact all stakeholders within the Social Locality, however given the location of the Project, those stakeholders located in Bendemeer township are likely to be the most impacted.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The duration of this impact is expected in the early stage of the Operational Phase but not persist for the lifespan of the Project.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholder engagement suggested that the scale of community division generated— at least in part— from this Project has not been experienced previously within Bendemeer.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Bendemeer is a small and interconnected community. Accordingly, the loss of community cohesion will elicit a higher degree of change for impacted stakeholders.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Perceptions about the level of community division generally reflected stakeholders' position on the Project. Regardless, most stakeholders suggested that community divisions are mainly related to the wind farm component of the Bendemeer Renewable Energy Hub, not the Project.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		Given that community cohesion has already been impacted by the Project during the Construction Phase, the potential for the impact occurring is considered to be Likely.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• The implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. • The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities. • Develop and implement the Bendemeer CBF, consulting with key stakeholders and potential partners (e.g., Tamworth Regional LGA, community groups, etc.) • Publish the Bendemeer CBF to the Surrounding Community via community newsletters and other communications channels as per the Operation Phase SEP.				

Impact		Reduced Community Cohesion				
Post-Mitigation/ Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	**Major**	Transformational
		The magnitude is expected to remain Major, as the mitigations will not change the perceptions of stakeholders who do want the Project to proceed.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	**Possible**	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to reduce to Possible once the Bendemeer CBF has been published and key stakeholders have been consulted. Scepticism of the Bendemeer CBF was a contributing factor to community division, as was concerns around equitable distribution of funds.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	**High**	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact remains High.				

Perceived Health Impacts

Some stakeholders suggested during stakeholder engagement that there is inadequate scientific evidence regarding the potential negative health impacts from solar farms and therefore were concerned as to the potential negative health impacts associated with the Project. Similarly, submissions received as part of the Public Exhibition of the EIS raised concerns that the full extent of health impacts has not been researched or identified, stating:

> *"Has there been any serious risk assessment done on the physical and psychological effects from the electromagnetic fields and noise given off from this solar wind farm." (Submission ID: SE-61343213)*
>
> *"While solar farms are generally considered safe, opponents might voice concerns about potential health impacts of living in close proximity to a large array of solar panels, such as electromagnetic fields or other factors." (Submission ID: SE-61587231)*

Of particular concern to the stakeholders interviewed was the perceived short and long-term physical and mental health impacts for humans and livestock linked to electromagnetic frequency (EMF) emissions, associated with the substation and BESS. The World Health Organisation (2023) recognise that to date, no adverse health effects from EMF, long-term exposure to radiofrequency or power frequency fields have been confirmed. The typical magnetic field associated with the substation and BESS will be similar based on the material components of the infrastructure. The BESS and the substation for the Project will be designed in accordance with relevant electrical safety standards and codes.

With respect to long-term noise related impacts, a Noise Impact Assessment (ERM, 2023) has been completed for the Project. The existing environment and sensitive receivers were established, and construction and operational noise assessment criteria was developed in accordance with the relevant NSW standards and guidelines. Applicable worst-case construction and operational assessment scenarios were developed based on project information provided by the Applicant.

Construction and operational noise levels were predicted and compared to the established noise limits to evaluate compliance. Operational noise associated with the Project will principally be from fixed plant and equipment including tracker motors, battery cubicles, inverters, Low Voltage/High Voltage transformers and High Voltage transformers. The noise modelling identified compliance with the NPI PTNL at all sensitive receivers under both standard and noise enhancing meteorological conditions. Operation Phase traffic noise impacts have also been assessed, and compliance with Road Noise Policy (RNP) criteria is expected to occur at sensitive receivers.

In addition, submitters also raised concerns in relation to the bushfire risk of the project, and the potential impacts to community health and wellbeing, with comments such as:

- "The fire risks have been glossed over and the total project generates significant risk and there are no suitable properly funded ongoing safety and maintenance regimes proposed for such a major industrial project." (Submission ID: SE-61575707);
- "High fire danger from the development." (Submission ID: SE-61535035); and
- The BFAR identified that the Project Area is located on land designated bushfire prone by Tamworth Regional Council and the NSW RFS. As such a range of bushfire protection measures have been required including designation of asset protection zones (APZs) surrounding Project infrastructure, adequate site access and water supply, and the development of a Bushfire Emergency Management and Operations Plan (BFEMOP) to provide an acceptable level of protection. Additionally, a Strategic Bushfire Study Assessment has been prepared for the Project which confirms the 'Planning for Bush Fire Protection' (PBP 2019) strategic issues have been addressed by the Project.

The potential for solar panels to chemically pollute the Macdonald River and thus impact on community health and wellbeing was also raised by one stakeholder who stated,

> *"It's running along the McDonald River which is the main water source. Concerned about chemicals leaking into the river system. We are also coming to face another drought. Where will all the water come from to clean the panels. What will Bendemeer residents, local farmers and all their animals drink when all the water has been pumped out? Will it be safe to swim in?" (Submission ID: SE-61169004)*

It should be noted that the technology used in the PV modules has not yet been determined. Several comments raised above relate specifically to cadmium. Cadmium telluride panels are severable of potential technologies available from a range of manufacturers, other common technologies include single-crystalline Si (sc-Si), multi-crystalline Si (mc-Si), and copper indium gallium selenide (CIGS). As stated in Section 1.2 of the EIS, the Applicant has committed to integrating internationally recognised environmental standards into their business practices. This will include selection of a manufacturer with robust environmental credentials for their products.

It should be noted however, that another stakeholder suggested that there are existing issues with agricultural run-off and that the Project may provide opportunities for local environmental groups to improve the river health. The technical studies for the Project relevant to chemical pollution include the HHA, Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR), ACHAR and the PHA. These studies do not support the perception raised by one stakeholder in relation to the polluting of the Macdonald River as a result of the Project. Their main findings of these reports are summarised as follows:

- **HHA** – No significant adverse impacts to flood behaviour on the Project Area, downstream properties, and floodplain;
- **BDAR** – Bell's Turtle was identified as having no suitable habitat in the Project Area and did not require further assessment;
- **ACHAR** - Geographic features identified in relation to the creation story of Warabah are not located within the Project Area, but it is noted that outcropping rock across the Project Area and the broader New England Tableland represents the physical state of Warabah (longneck turtle); and
- **PHA** – Lithium-Iron-Phosphate (LFP) batteries are one of the safest battery chemistries within the industry and that the batteries will be enclosed with appropriate bunding to capture a potential leakage of coolant or insulating materials.

Management and Mitigation

To address the perceived health impacts associated with the Project, the following management measures will be adopted:

- Implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement;
- The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities;
- Communicate the outcomes of relevant assessments such as electromagnetic interference, and operational noise assessments and proposed technical mitigation measures (if required);
- If required, installation of screening structures / vegetative screening to mitigate adverse impacts;
- Develop and implement an Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) which will include specific Operation Phase mitigations for the Project, and may include:
    - System and operational monitoring;
    - Site management and maintenance responsibilities;
    - Biosecurity management (including pest control and weed management);
    - Emergency Response Plan; and
    - Waste Management Plan.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for perceived health impacts is provided in **Table 6-17**.

TABLE 6-17 OPERATION PHASE: PERCEIVED HEALTH IMPACTS

Impact		**Perceived Health Impacts**				
Potential Impact		Real or perceived adverse potential health impacts associated with solar farms and exposure to low-level EMF, noise emissions, bushfire, and the polluting of the Macdonald River.				
Social Impact Category		Health and Wellbeing				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Aboriginal Communities and Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The extent of this impact is limited to the Bendemeer community.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The duration of the Project is 30 years.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		It is expected that the severity of health impacts based on the relevant technical studies (HHA, BDAR, ACHAR and PHA) is low.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There were no vulnerable groups identified as being impacted by health impacts associated with the Project.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		A small number of stakeholders appeared to be concerned about these health impacts.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Minor.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		This impact is Possible given that these concerns have been raised by stakeholders during the EIS process.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	Medium	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is Low.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. • The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities. • Communicate the outcomes of relevant assessments such as electromagnetic interference, and operational noise assessments and proposed technical mitigation measures (if required). • Develop and implement an OEMP.				

Impact		Perceived Health Impacts				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The magnitude is expected to decrease to Minimal, as the technical studies of the EIS have revealed negligible risks associated with stakeholder perceptions of health risks.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the perceived impact is expected to be Unlikely once the mitigations have been implemented.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	Medium	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Minimal and the likelihood of this impact being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Low.				

6.2.2.2 EMPLOYMENT AND PROCUREMENT

Employment and Procurement impacts relating to the Operation Phase of the Project have been raised during stakeholder engagement conducted for the EIS, SIA and during the Public Exhibition Period. Opportunities arising from stakeholders include increased direct and indirect employment opportunities (refer to **Section 6.2.3.2**), and increased procurement opportunities (refer to **Section 6.2.3.2**).

Increased Direct and Indirect Employment Opportunities

Ongoing employment during the operation phase of the Project was noted as an interest during stakeholder engagement. According to Gillespie Economics (2025), during operation of the Project, an additional 15 jobs FTE will be created of which 100% are assumed to be sourced regionally. These jobs will be focussed on monitoring and inspections, maintenance, repair and upgrading of infrastructure, much of which is likely to be provided by the local labour force.

The Project will produce 35 direct and indirect jobs regionally and 71 direct and indirect jobs in NSW. It is anticipated this will equate to $3 million in annual direct and indirect household income, regionally rising to $7 million in annual direct and indirect household income for the NSW economy (Gillespie Economics 2025). During engagement one stakeholder mentioned that the Operation Phase workforce, if located in Bendemeer, could be the difference between having a small business, an extra teacher, or a local doctor. Despite this positive sentiment, a small number of stakeholders remained sceptical that the Operation Phase workforce would provide any economic benefits to the area, which was linked to a belief that renewable energy technology is not profitable.

The employment figures expressed by Gillespie Economics (2025) in the Economic Assessment include benefits arising through procurement of goods and services required during the Operation Phase, as well as the benefits of the diversification of income streams for the host landowners who are typically operating as rural businesses. During engagement, several stakeholders identified the Bendemeer economy as being highly dependent on local agricultural businesses. Many stakeholders discussed the vulnerability of local agriculture businesses during the 2020-2022 floods in NSW and suggested that the diversification of income streams will foster a more resilient local economy.

Enhancement Measures

To maximise Operation Phase employment opportunities associated with the Project, the following enhancement measures will be adopted:

- Develop and implement local content initiatives which include local employment goals for the Operation Phase. These initiatives are to be aimed at livelihoods, including people's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business.
- Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council Tamworth Business Chamber, and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA.
- The following measures will be implemented to ensure vulnerable groups have opportunities to benefit from the Project:
  - Ensure equitable employment opportunities for vulnerable groups as defined in **Section 5.2.2**;
  - Provide assistance, such as literacy support and form completion, throughout the application process;
  - Provide General Construction Induction Training (white card) and First Aid Certifications, and
  - Provide mentorship and on-the-job training for hires from vulnerable groups to ensure retention rates.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for increased direct and indirect employment opportunities is provided in **Table 6-18**.

TABLE 6-18 OPERATION PHASE: INCREASED DIRECT AND INDIRECT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Impact		**Increased Direct and Indirect Employment Opportunities**				
Potential impact		Increased demand for labour creates direct and indirect employment opportunities for the local community.				
Social Impact Category		Livelihoods				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Local Workforce				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Gillespie Economics' (2025) Economic Assessment identified that the Project will produce 15 direct and 20 indirect jobs regionally and 71 direct and indirect jobs in NSW.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The Project is currently anticipated to be in operation up to 30 years.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Engagement data revealed trends of rural decline, which was explained as partiality result of the pull factor of employment opportunities in Tamworth.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

Impact		Increased Direct and Indirect Employment Opportunities				
		There were suggestions by various stakeholders that families and elderly groups are being forced to relocate to Tamworth due to the lack of economic activity in Bendemeer.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There was a strong desire to bring economic opportunities to Bendemeer communicated by stakeholders.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-enhancement magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The pre-mitigation likelihood is Possible, as enhancement measures need to be set in place to ensure that the Social Locality is able to capture the employment opportunities provided by the Project.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood being Possible, the significance of this impact is High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement local content initiatives which include local employment goals for the Operation Phase. These initiatives are to be aimed at livelihoods, including people's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business. • Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council Tamworth Business Chamber, and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The magnitude is expected to increase to Major once the local content initiatives are implemented, and community awareness is increased.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood is expected to increase to Likely, as the local content initiatives and awareness will enhance the likelihood that the Social Locality capitalises on the employment opportunities provided by the Project.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Very High**	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact occurring being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.				

Increased Local Procurement Opportunities

A strategic focus on local procurement, both direct and indirect, is paramount for fostering economic growth and community development. Direct local procurement involves sourcing goods and services directly from Local/Regional Businesses, thereby stimulating the regional economy and providing opportunities for local suppliers.

Accordingly, in addition to providing employment opportunities during the Operation Phase, the Project has the potential to provide direct opportunities for the local procurement of goods and services, which will benefit local and Local/Regional Businesses. Indirectly, the Project will also contribute to the local economy by providing opportunities to support businesses that, in turn, benefit from increased economic activity - such as maintenance managers and other service providers.

Enhancement Measures

To maximise Operation Phase procurement opportunities associated with the Project, the following enhancement measures will be adopted:

- Develop and implement local content initiatives which include local procurement goals for the Operation Phase.
- Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council, Tamworth Business Chamber and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective Local/Regional Businesses may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for increased local procurement opportunities is provided in **Table 6-19**.

TABLE 6-19 OPERATION PHASE: INCREASED LOCAL PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Impact		**Increased Local Procurement Opportunities**				
Potential Impact		Demand for locally procured goods and services during the Operation Phase of the Project. There is strong interest in the local economic opportunities associated with Project procurement.				
Social Impact Category		Livelihoods				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Local/Regional Businesses				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Opportunities for local procurement extends throughout the Social Locality, including regional centres.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The Project is currently anticipated to be in operation up to 30 years.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Various stakeholders referenced desires for economic growth in Bendemeer and Tamworth as a priority to arrest rural social and economic decline.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There were suggestions by various stakeholders that families and elderly groups are being forced to relocate to Tamworth due to the lack of economic activity in Bendemeer.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Several stakeholder groups were very interested in ongoing procurement opportunities at a community-level.				

Impact		Increased Local Procurement Opportunities				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-enhancement magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		This positive impact is Possible prior to the local content initiatives being implemented.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	**High**		Very High
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement local content initiatives which include local procurement goals for the Operation Phase. • Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council Tamworth Business Chamber, and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The post-mitigation magnitude will remain Major as most of the magnitude characteristics remain unchanged by the enhancement measures.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to be Likely once the local content initiatives have been implemented.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	**High**		Very High
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.				

6.2.2.3 LAND USE AND LANDSCAPE

A variety of land use and landscape related impacts were raised during stakeholder engagement, reflecting similar concerns voiced across solar farm projects in other regions of NSW and Australia. Overall, there is a perception that some impacts are borne disproportionately between urban and rural areas, with one stakeholder noting that, *"the city has outsourced its energy production issues to the bush, and there's nothing new about that."*

Concerns arising from this stakeholder viewpoint include perceived impacts on land values (refer to **Section 6.2.4.1**), altered rural character arising through installation of industrial infrastructure (refer to **Section 6.2.4.2**), and potential impacts on tangible and intangible Aboriginal Heritage (refer to **Section 6.2.4.3**).

Perceived Impacts to Land Values

Key concerns regarding property values were noted from neighbouring landowners and community members residing on non-agricultural properties in the vicinity of Bendemeer township. Stakeholder engagement revealed that visually impacted receptors who owned small, non-agricultural lifestyle blocks of land perceived themselves as being vulnerable to land devaluation, as was expressed in the following comments:

> *"Negative effect on property prices due to impact on views, peace & quiet to be destroyed with 24/7 noise from industrial plant" (Submission ID: SE-61575995)*
>
> *"It has also been found that Properties in and around the Solar farm have been by devalued 35%." (Submission ID: SE-61065957)*
>
> *"Devaluation of property prices. Who is to compensate the owners for that loss." (Submission ID: SE-61584957)*

The current literature analysing the effect of utility-scale wind and solar farms on property values suggests mixed outcomes for properties based on their underlying land use (Parliament of Australia, 2013; Brinkley and Leach, 2019; Abashidze and Taylor, 2022). There is ongoing debate regarding whether the visual amenity impacts outweigh the positive effects of increased economic activity and community benefits. It is noted that the Gillespie Economics (2025) Economic Assessment for the Project does not anticipate significant changes to property values of Immediate Neighbours that are visually impacted, with the LVIA and Amendment Report, prepared by Moir Landscape Architecture (2023, 2025), noting that all four (4) non-associated dwellings have a low visual impact rating.

The Project can seek to mitigate potential issues of perceived property devaluation through developing and implementing the Bendemeer CBF which will provide opportunities for the Bendemeer township and the wider Social Locality invest in local social and community enhancement initiatives. Considering this possibility, some stakeholders have suggested that the economic opportunities available because of the Project, and the implementation of the Bendemeer CBF may even have a positive long-term impact on their property values.

Management and Mitigation

To minimise perceived land devaluation impacts associated with the operation of the Project, the following management and mitigation measures will be adopted:

- Implement visual impact mitigations for sensitive receptors as identified in the Land Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Amendment Report (Moir Landscape, 2023, 2025).
- Develop and implement the Bendemeer CBF.
- Publish the Bendemeer CBF to the Surrounding Community via community newsletters and other communications channels as per an Operation Phase SEP.
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism, so that community concerns can be identified and actively managed.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for increased local procurement opportunities is provided in **Table 6-20.** The assessment of impact significance considers the perception of property devaluation in addition to technical study findings, which draw on various research methodologies to estimate the realised impacts of the Project.

TABLE 6-20 OPERATION PHASE: PERCEIVED IMPACTS TO LAND VALUES

Impact		**Perceived Impacts to Land Values**				
Potential Impact		Perceived potential impacts to neighbouring land values resulting from altered rural character and amenity.				
Social Impact Category		Livelihoods				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Immediate Neighbours				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The impact is generally limited to Bendemeer township.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The duration of the Project is 30 years. However, the perception of this impact is not likely to persist for the life of the Project.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The Gillespie Economics (2025) Economic Assessment does not anticipate significant changes to property values of Immediate Neighbours that are visually impacted.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholder engagement revealed that visually impacted receptors who owned small, non-agricultural lifestyle blocks of land perceived themselves as being vulnerable to land devaluation.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There was concern about property values by stakeholders whose households would be visually impacted by the Project. Other stakeholders were not concerned about this and suggested that economic opportunities and CBF may even have a positive long-term impact.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The perception of this impact pre-mitigation is Possible despite the Gillespie Economics (2025) Economic Assessment determining low impacts to property values.				
	Impact Significance	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood being Possible, the significance of this impact is Medium.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Implement visual impact mitigations for sensitive receptors as identified in the Land Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Amendment Report (Moir Landscape, 2023, 2025). • Develop and implement the Bendemeer CBF. • Publish the Bendemeer CBF to the Surrounding Community via community newsletters and other communications channels as per an Operation Phase SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism, so that community concerns can be identified and actively managed.				

Impact		Perceived Impacts to Land Values				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Subsequent to the implementation of the proposed management and mitigation measures the magnitude of the perception is anticipated to reduce to Minor.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to be Unlikely once LVIA mitigations, grievance mechanism, and CBF have been implemented.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	Medium	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Low.				

Altered Rural Character (Visual Amenity)

Due to the placement of solar arrays, it is anticipated that the Project will generate a visual impact which will disrupt the existing rural landscape. This visual impact will be experienced over the life of the Project and will be most apparent to the Immediate Neighbours and those driving past the Project Area on the Oxley Highway.

The main concern associated with the visual impact is the contrast between the existing rural character of the Social Locality and the infrastructure and buildings required for a solar farm, which has the potential to cause stress and anxiety for those who can view the Project from their properties – particularly when seeking to sell their properties (refer to **Section 6.2.2.4.1** regarding property values). This sentiment was expressed in submissions received, which stated:

> *"Highly visible - high negative impact on landscape and residences/properties." (Submission ID: SE-61575995)*
>
> *"I live on my property not just in my home and this project will impact on my views with its ugliness spread across the landscape." (Submission ID: SE-61428462)*
>
> *"The visual impact for neighbouring properties will cause increase stress to residents." (Submission ID: SE-61188304)*

Despite these concerns, other stakeholders engaged were not concerned about the visual impact of the Project. This sentiment was also observed in the submissions received for the Project; wherein other submitters stated the following:

> *"I cannot see any problem with visual impacts of the project from the Oxley Highway" (Submission ID: SE-61529254)*
>
> *"I think the solar project is well sited in regards to the village of Bendemeer, and with multi row tree plantings to screen "over looking" of the site by other landholders it should be relatively unseen by most."(Submission ID: SE-61488965)*

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was conducted by Moir Landscape Architecture (2023) to determine the visual influence of the Project. Views towards a greater portion of the Project are likely from a small number of isolated and elevated portions surrounding the Project Area. The LVIA identified 91 non-associated dwelling receptors within 4 km of the Project Area and 9 public viewpoints within 2.5 km that required assessment. The assessment considered visual impacts from these locations and deemed all to have a very low to low visual impact.

Consultation with Immediate Neighbours to manage the visual impact from neighbouring properties has occurred and did not reveal a requirement for screening. The suggestions of Moir Landscape resulting from the localised visual impact assessment will be adopted by the Applicant.

Management and Mitigation

To minimise the real or perceived visual impacts associated with the Project, and the resultant impact on stakeholders, the following mitigation measures will be adopted:

- Ongoing consultation with Immediate Neighbours to provide screen planning to manage the visual impact from neighbouring properties. This work may include completion of a localised visual impact assessment where merited.
- Work with Local/Regional Businesses and groups to supply, plant, and maintain (for an initial establishment period) landscape screening.
- The implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement.
- The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for increased local procurement opportunities is provided in **Table 6-21**.

TABLE 6-21 OPERATION PHASE: ALTERED RURAL CHARACTER (VISUAL AMENITY)

Impact		**Altered Rural Character (Visual Amenity)**				
Potential Impact		Altered rural character as a result of the Project has the potential to cause stress and anxiety amongst the local community.				
Social Impact Category		Surroundings				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Community, Visitors to the Region				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The impact is primarily limited to the neighbouring properties and those passing on the Oxley Highway.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The duration of the Project is 30 years.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

Impact		Altered Rural Character (Visual Amenity)				
		The LVIA identified 91 non-associated dwelling receptors within 4 km of the Project Area and 9 public viewpoints within 2.5 km that required assessment and deemed all to have a very low to low visual impact.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		A total of 91 dwellings within the Bendemeer community were identified as receptors through the LVIA.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Whilst there is a mixed reaction from stakeholders in relation to the visual impact of the Project, with stakeholders located in the immediate surrounds of the Project Area voicing stronger concern.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Minor.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the altered rural character impacting stakeholders is Likely prior to implementation of mitigation measures.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**		**Very High**
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact being Likely, the significance of this impact is Medium.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Work with Local/Regional Businesses and groups to supply, plant, and maintain (for an initial establishment period) landscape screening. • The implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. • The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The magnitude of the impact is predicted to be reduced to Minimal subsequent to the implementation of the mitigation and management measures.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to reduce to Unlikely once the mitigations have been implemented, as the visibility of the Project will be reduced through landscaping elements.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**		**Very High**
		With the magnitude being Minimal and the likelihood being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Low.				

Potential Impact on Tangible and Intangible Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Impacts or changes to tangible or intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage have the potential to cause emotional stress and anguish to Aboriginal Community members, as well as result in a mutual shared loss of values and/or artefacts of importance across the wider community.

The Project Area has been subject to an ACHAR (Ozark 2023), which suggests that the Project presents low risks to both tangible and intangible heritage. In terms of tangible heritage, the AHIMS database revealed 22 Aboriginal sites within a 20 km by 20 km area centred on the Project Area, none of which are located within the Project Area. These sites comprise artefact scatters, isolated finds, and two riverside PADs which were assessed as having low to moderate significance (in relation to scientific, aesthetic and historical values), and high significance (in relation to social/cultural values). The only sites that have potential to be impacted by the Project are the two riverside PADs, which are located outside of the disturbance boundary (refer to Section 10 of the ACHAR).

To manage these potential impacts, a Cultural Heritage Management Plan will be developed and implemented and include the following mitigations: cultural awareness inductions for workers, surface collection of artefact scatters, staged salvage excavation, archaeological monitoring, chance finds procedure, repatriation of archaeological material post-construction, fencing and erosion control measures around two riverside PADs, and consultation with the local Aboriginal community to seek endorsement of these recommendations (ERM 2023).

With regard to intangible heritage, the two RAPs interviewed as a part of the SIA engagement (refer to **Section 4.2**) also sought assurance that the operation of the Project would not impact the health of the Macdonald River. The local Aboriginal Dreaming story of Warabah (refer to ACHAR, and **Section 5.7**) is associated with water quality and therefore would be impacted if the Project were to impact water quality. Regarding intangible heritage, neither RAPs were concerned that the physical presence of the Project itself would impact on intangible heritage (refer to **Table 4-3**).

Management and Mitigation

To minimise impacts on the tangible and intangible Aboriginal heritage associated with the Project, the following mitigation measures will be adopted:

- Develop and Implement a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) which includes but is not limited to:
  - Cultural awareness inductions for workers;
  - Surface collection of artefact scatters;
  - Staged salvage excavation;
  - Archaeological monitoring;
  - Chance finds procedure;
  - Repatriation of archaeological material post-construction; and
  - Consultation with the local Aboriginal community.
- The implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement; and
- The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment associated with the potential impact on tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage is provided in **Table 6-22**.

TABLE 6-22 OPERATION PHASE: POTENTIAL IMPACT ON TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Impact		**Potential Impact on Tangible and Intangible Aboriginal Cultural Heritage**				
Potential Impact		Altered landscapes have the potential to impact tangible and intangible Aboriginal heritage				
Social Impact Category		Culture				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Aboriginal Communities				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The impact is limited to the Social Locality.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The duration of the Project is 30 years.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The ACHAR suggests that the Project presents low risks to tangible and intangible heritage (refer to ACHAR and **Table 4-3**).				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Aboriginal Communities are culturally vulnerable to Project impacts that will affect tangible and intangible heritage as they contain important cultural knowledge.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There was a low level of concern the RAPs interviewed for the SIA regarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The pre-mitigation impact is Possible as chance finds can occur during Construction activities.				
	Impact Significance	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is Medium.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and Implement a CHMP. • The implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. • The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities.				

Impact		Potential Impact on Tangible and Intangible Aboriginal Cultural Heritage				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The magnitude is expected to remain Moderate, as the mitigation measures do not change the impacts to intangible heritage or the magnitude of chance finds.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to be Unlikely once the CHMP has been implemented.				
	Impact Significance	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood of this impact being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Medium.				

6.2.3 DECOMMISSIONING PHASE

After a 30-year operational life, the Project will either be upgraded to prolong the life of operation (based on technology available at the time and receipt of the relevant approvals) or decommissioned and the land returned to the original land use. If the Project is to be decommissioned there is the potential for social impacts to be experienced by stakeholders, including:

- Intergenerational equity through waste management (refer to **Section 6.2.3.1**); and
- A short-term increase in employment and procurement opportunities (refer to **Section 6.2.3.2**);
- Retrenchment of the operational workforce (refer to **Section 6.2.3.3**);
- Traffic inconvenience, community safety concerns, and deterioration of road surface conditions (refer to **Section 6.2.3.4**); and
- A loss of the Bendemeer CBF (refer to **Section 6.2.3.5**).

It should be noted that given the substantial period before the commencement of the Decommissioning Phase, the potential social impacts in this section have been considered at a high level, with the knowledge that the social impacts of the Decommissioning Phase will be considered in greater detail as part of a future Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan (DRP). This DRP will be prepared closer to the decommissioning date to ensure that the most up to date best practice measures are incorporated.

6.2.3.1 INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

During engagement activities several stakeholders stated a desire for more information about how the Project would be decommissioned. In particular, the focus was on how the solar panels will be disposed and/or recycled and whether infrastructure will fall into disrepair after decommissioning (refer to **Table 4-3**). Stakeholders further raised concerns about ensuring that decisions made today about the Project, will not come to impact future generations within the Social Locality.

Stakeholders remarked:

> *"The future decommissioning of the project and its impacts will be determined in the future – it will be an enormous burden of waste to be disposed of." (Submission ID: SE-61429209)*
>
> *"Will put the residents of Bendemeer at risk when the solar panels and turbines reach their use by date and have to be disposed of as they will be TOXIC waste" (Submission ID: SE-61341966)*

The DRP for the Project will prioritise site restoration (along with workforce transition, refer to **Section 6.2.3.3**) and will establish relevant sustainability requirements and parameters for decommissioning. To ensure appropriate waste management, the Applicant will recycle the dismantled and decommissioned infrastructure and equipment and remove it from the Project Area, where possible. Opportunities to reuse material by local groups and/or organisations will be considered. For instance, certain materials could be reused by the Tamworth and Armidale Men's Shed. Materials that cannot be recycled will be disposed of at a licensed waste management facility (refer Section 6.13 of the EIS).

Following decommissioning, the final land use will revert to the preference of the Host Landholder, with consideration of the land use objectives of the RU1 zone. In doing so, the Applicant will ensure that the land retains its long-term role within the region.

Management and Mitigation

To address the intergenerational equity and waste management impacts associated with the Project, the following management measures will be adopted:

- Development and Implementation of a DRP which will outline how waste streams derived from decommissioning activities will be appropriately managed, including ensuring adherence to a waste hierarchy that considers recycling before general waste disposal;
- Engagement with community groups and/or organisations within the Social Locality regarding the potential donation of materials salvaged through decommissioning works for reuse on community projects where no tangible value is assigned to the materials;
- Engagement with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understand the potential options to dispose of materials through licenced Council refuse facilities; and
- Maintenance of the grievance mechanism throughout the Decommissioning Phase to manage concerns that may arise during decommissioning activities.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for intergenerational equity and waste management is provided in **Table 6-23**.

TABLE 6-23 DECOMMISSIONING PHASE: INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

Impact		**Intergenerational Equity and Waste Management**				
Potential Impact		Intergeneration inequity may occur if the current stakeholders receive the benefits of the Project, and future generations inherit the waste and environmental issues generated by an improperly decommissioned Project.				
Social Impact Category		Livelihoods				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours and Surrounding Community.				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The extent is limited to the Host Landowner, Immediate Neighbours and the Surrounding Community.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		If not decommissioned appropriately, the period of time required to restore the landscape through proper waste management may be substantial.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Post-decommissioning the land is intended to revert to the Host Landowner preference, with the intent being a land use commensurate with the RU1 zone. If waste is not appropriately managed this potential reversion may be jeopardised.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Improper decommissioning may cause associated environmental impacts on surrounding agricultural land users and Macdonald River, which is of importance to the Surrounding Community.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholders expressed a desire for more information and certainly around the decommissioning process during previous stakeholder engagement and public submissions.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The impact pre-mitigation is Possible if the appropriate decommissioning practices are not implemented.				
	Impact Significance	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is Medium.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Development and Implementation of a DRP which will outline how waste streams derived from decommissioning activities will be appropriately managed, including ensuring adherence to a waste hierarchy that considers recycling before general waste disposal. • Engagement with community groups and/or organisations within the Social Locality regarding the potential donation of materials salvaged through decommissioning works for reuse on community projects. • Engagement with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understand the potential options to dispose of materials through licenced Council refuse facilities. • Maintenance of the grievance mechanism throughout the Decommissioning Phase in order to manage concerns that may arise during decommissioning activities.				

Impact		Intergenerational Equity and Waste Management				
Post-Mitigation/ Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		If best practice decommissioning is undertaken for the Project, the post-mitigation magnitude will be reduced to Minor.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		If appropriate decommissioning is undertaken for the Project via the application of the DRP, the post-mitigation likelihood will reduce to Unlikely.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	Medium	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Low.				

6.2.3.2 SHORT-TERM INCREASE EMPLOYMENT AND PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Decommissioning the Project will involve taking apart the solar panels and related equipment, addressing any environmental risks, and restoring the site to its original condition.

The Decommissioning Phase is intended to last approximately three months, with a short-term workforce will be required to disassemble and transport waste products, including cable, concrete, batteries and solar panel components. The decommissioning process offers an opportunity for direct employment within the local community through various roles essential to the project, spanning from skilled labourers to truck drivers. Furthermore, Local/Regional Businesses stand to benefit from procurement opportunities, fostering a period of short-term economic gain within the community.

Enhancement Measures

To maximise Decommissioning Phase employment and procurement opportunities associated with the Project, the following enhancement measures may be adopted:

- Develop and implement local content initiatives and local employment targets for the Decommissioning Phase;
- Work with the contractor engaged to undertake the decommissioning to achieve maximum local employment targets set, and report on the local content used; and
- Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council Tamworth Business Chamber, and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for the short-term increase in employment and procurement opportunities is provided in **Table 6-24**.

TABLE 6-24 DECOMMISSIONING PHASE: SHORT-TERM INCREASE IN EMPLOYMENT AND PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Impact		**Short-Term Increase in Employment and Procurement Opportunities**				
Potential Impact		Short-term increased in the demand for labour and local goods and services, creates employment and procurement opportunities for the local community.				
Social Impact Category		Livelihoods				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Local Workforce				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The extent of employment will likely be limited to the surrounding areas of Bendemeer, Tamworth, and Armidale, depending on the availability of workers at the time.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The duration of employment opportunities is approximately 3 months.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		It is expected that the decommissioning period for the Project will require the employment of a limited number of local workers and result in a short-term increase in economic growth for the Social Locality.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		It is not anticipated that a large workforce will be required to facilitate decommissioning, however this will provide a number of short-term jobs for people within the Social Locality.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There was no community interest about this specific impact, however stakeholders were interested to understand possible employment opportunities more broadly.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-enhancement magnitude is ranked as Minor.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		It is considered Likely that the decommissioning workforce will be drawn from the Social Locality and contribute to short-term economic benefit.				
	Impact Significance	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact being Likely, the significance of this impact is Medium.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement local content initiatives and local employment targets for the Decommissioning Phase. • Work with the contractor engaged to undertake the decommissioning to achieve maximum local employment targets set, and report on the local content used. • Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a				

Impact		Short-Term Increase in Employment and Procurement Opportunities				
		Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Despite the application of enhancement measures, it is anticipated that the magnitude will not increase, given the limited number of workers likely to be required.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood is expected to increase to Almost Certain, as the local content initiatives and awareness will enhance the likelihood that the Social Locality capitalises on the employment opportunities provided via the decommissioning of the Project.				
	Impact Significance	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact being Almost Certain, the significance of this impact is Medium.				

6.2.3.3 RETRENCHMENT OF THE OPERATIONAL WORKFORCE

The DRP prepared for the Project will prioritising workforce transition (along with site restoration, refer to **Section 6.2.3.1**), with Project decommissioning viewed as a responsible and positive step in the Project's overall sustainability strategy. According to Gillespie Economics (2025), the Operation Phase catered for 15 direct and 20 indirect jobs regionally, and 71 direct and indirect jobs in NSW. It is therefore assumed that those employed in these direct and indirect jobs would be made redundant. The consideration of transitioning of the Operational workforce to other local employment opportunities will be planned within the final three years of operation.

Redundancies within the Operation Phase workforce has the potential to result in an increase in unemployment, out-migration to regional centres or major cities for employment opportunities, a reduction in localised economic activity, and the potential loss of housing due to the inability to pay mortgages or make rental payments, all of which will pose mental health and wellbeing impacts to members of the Surrounding Community.

To make sure that this process socially sustainable, the Project will provide opportunities to the Operation Phase workforce to transition into new roles to assist with the decommissioning or alternatively provide employees with support to find new jobs. Given the location of the Project within the New England REZ there is the possibility that employees with suitable skillsets would be able to transition to other renewable energy projects.

Management and Mitigation

To address the impacts associated with the retrenchment of the operational workforce for the Project as part of the Decommissioning Phase, the following management measures will be adopted:

- Development and Implementation of a DRP which will outline the priority for workforce transition, and provide additional detail as to the retrenchment process, and the potential opportunities for employees to transition into new roles.
- Create awareness within the local community as the availability of a skilled workforce and provide opportunities to connect the operational workforce with other local employment opportunities within the Social Locality.
- Engagement with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to discuss opportunities to support workers in finding new jobs that match their acquired skillsets.
- Maintenance of the grievance mechanism throughout the Decommissioning Phase to manage concerns that may arise, including issues associated with workforce transition.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for the retrenchment of the operational workforce is provided in **Table 6-25**.

TABLE 6-25 DECOMMISSIONING PHASE: RETRENCHMENT OF OPERATIONAL WORKFORCE

Impact		**Retrenchment of Operational Workforce**				
Potential Impact		Decommissioning of the Project will require the retrenchment of the operational workforce.				
Social Impact Category		Livelihoods				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Local Workforce				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		A decrease of 15 direct and 20 indirect jobs regionally and 71 direct and indirect jobs in NSW.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The consideration of transitioning of the Operational workforce to other local employment opportunities will be planned in the final three years of operation.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		It was noted during engagement that even the small workforce of the Operation Phase is important for the local community, and therefore there is the potential that the impact of losing the operational workforce will be felt more acutely, particularly if the workforce is located in the Bendemeer township.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Given the low population of Bendemeer, a reduction in employment opportunities caused by Project decommissioning is important for the local community.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholders held a strong desire to keep economic opportunities in Bendemeer, including employment opportunities.				

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Impact</th><th colspan="5">Retrenchment of Operational Workforce</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement</td><td>Magnitude</td><td>Minimal</td><td>Minor</td><td>Moderate</td><td>Major</td><td>Transformational</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Likelihood</td><td>Very Unlikely</td><td>Unlikely</td><td>Possible</td><td>Likely</td><td>Almost Certain</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The likelihood of this impact occurring is Possible, as it is currently unclear of the economic situation of the Social Locality at the time of decommissioning.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Impact Significance</td><td>Low</td><td colspan="2">Medium</td><td>High</td><td>Very High</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is Medium.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities</td><td colspan="5">• Development and Implementation of a DRP which will outline the priority for workforce transition, and provide additional detail as to the retrenchment process, and the potential opportunities for employees to transition into new roles.
• Create awareness within the local community as the availability of a skilled workforce and provide opportunities to connect the operational workforce with other local employment opportunities within the Social Locality.
• Engagement with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to discuss opportunities to support workers in finding new jobs that match their acquired skillsets.
• Maintenance of the grievance mechanism throughout the Decommissioning Phase in order to manage concerns that may arise, including issues associated with workforce transition.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Post-Mitigation / Enhancement</td><td>Magnitude</td><td>Minimal</td><td>Minor</td><td>Moderate</td><td>Major</td><td>Transformational</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The magnitude post-mitigation is Minor, as the mitigation measures paired with the skillsets of the operational employees may allow for smoother transition into other employment opportunities, which will reduce severity and intensity of the impact on the Bendemeer township or within the wider Social Locality.’</td></tr>
<tr><td>Likelihood</td><td>Very Unlikely</td><td>Unlikely</td><td>Possible</td><td>Likely</td><td>Almost Certain</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The likelihood of the impact occurring is expected to be Unlikely as there is expected to be significant growth in the renewable energy sector over the coming 30 years, and the skills required for the Project are translatable to other occupations present in the Social Locality.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Impact Significance</td><td>Low</td><td colspan="2">Medium</td><td>High</td><td>Very High</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact occurring being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is considered to be Low.</td></tr>
</table>

6.2.3.4 TRAFFIC CONGESTION, COMMUNITY SAFETY CONCERNS, AND DETERIORATION OF ROAD SURFACE CONDITIONS

Decommissioning of the Project is anticipated to occur over a 12-month period and will entail the termination and removal of PV modules, transformers and batteries. These components will be stacked and forked onto flat-bed semi-trailers for transport to nearby recycling facilities in NSW.

As such, there is the potential that decommissioning of the Project may impact stakeholders within the Social Locality in the following manner:

- **Traffic Congestion** – arising from the short-term increase in the volume of traffic between the regional centres of the Social Locality. Decommissioning activities will require the frequent movement of workers and materials to/from the Project Area. Traffic congestion caused by increased vehicle movements, and the potential establishment of detours or other road blockages, may cause disruptions to daily commutes and Local/Regional Business operations.
- **Community Safety** – an increased volume of daily traffic during the period of decommissioning may result in compromised emergency response times, a higher potential for unsafe driving (i.e., speeding, distracted driving etc.) resulting in an accident, and a heightened exposure to air pollution from vehicle dust and exhaust emissions. In addition, the use of roads frequented by school buses for material transport will increase the frequency of larger vehicles interacting with children walking to/from bus stops.
- **Road Surface Conditions** – the use or larger vehicles and the higher than usual volume of traffic has the potential to cause a deterioration of road pavement conditions, which in turn, increases the risk of a traffic accident occurring.

Management and Mitigation

To address traffic and transport related disruptions to stakeholders during the Decommissioning Phase, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement a Decommissioning TMP which should include the following measures to manage the social dimension of the impact:
  - Ensure drivers observe road traffic rules and speed limits;
  - Ensure all vehicle drivers have a relevant licence and training before mobilisation;
  - Use road signs at strategic points, sirens and public announcements where necessary to warn people of oncoming heavy vehicles;
  - Ensure all vehicles are certified roadworthy and well maintained; and
  - Avoid night driving to the extent possible; and
  - Limit heavy vehicle movements during peak school bus times to limit the interaction of larger vehicles and vulnerable road users.
- Engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that matters raised in relation to traffic concerns, including school bus routes, are appropriately considered and incorporated into the DRP;
- Repair damaged Council roads and/or upgrade roads as required in accordance with Council Engineering Standards; and
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during decommissioning are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment related to traffic inconvenience, community safety concerns, and deterioration of road surface conditions for the Decommissioning Phase is provided in **Table 6-26**.

TABLE 6-26 DECOMMISSIONING PHASE: TRAFFIC CONGESTION, COMMUNITY SAFETY CONCERNS, AND DETERIORATION OF ROAD SURFACE CONDITIONS

Impact		**Traffic Congestion, Community Safety Concerns, and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions**				
Potential Impact		Transportation of materials and equipment to has the potential to cause wear and tear on roads, road traffic congestion and community safety impacts for road users along the routes and on local roads. Risk of traffic injury or in the worst case a fatality, resulting from increased vehicle movements during the transportation of goods and workers from the Project Area.				
Social Impact Category		Way of Life, Health and Wellbeing				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Community, Local Workforce, Visitors to the Region				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		It is anticipated that traffic disruptions will be experienced in the Social Locality.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The decommissioning period is approximately three months, which means that the impact is time limited.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There is currently limited visibility as to the capacity of the road network in approximately 30 years' time. There is the potential for additional road upgrades to have occurred, but also for other projects to occur within the Social Locality that may influence the degree of change experienced.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There is a possibility that vulnerable groups who direct and/or indirectly use the roads (i.e. elderly, emergency services, etc.) may be affected by traffic impacts.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Host Landowners and Immediate Neighbours voiced concern about traffic related impacts, and therefore may also be concerned during decommissioning.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		Impacts to stakeholders from increased traffic to/from the Project Area as having a medium probability of occurring and therefore are Possible.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	**High**	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is High.				

Impact		Traffic Congestion, Community Safety Concerns, and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement a Decommissioning TMP. • Engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that matters raised in relation to traffic concerns, including school bus routes, are appropriately considered and incorporated into the DRP. • Repair damaged Council roads and/or upgrade roads as required in accordance with Council Engineering Standards. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during decommissioning are identified and acted upon.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	**Major**	Transformational
		The post-mitigation magnitude is Major. The Decommissioning TMP is expected to reduce the severity, and engagement with stakeholders is anticipated to reduce the level of concern, however the intensity will remain as previously defined. The rationale for this is because the degree of change caused within the Social Locality if a traffic accident was to occur cannot be mitigated.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	**Unlikely**	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to be Unlikely once mitigation measures have been implemented.				
	Impact Significance	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact occurring being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Medium.				

6.2.3.5 LOSS OF THE BENDEMEER COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

Upon the decommissioning of the Project, the local community, particularly those stakeholders located in the Bendemeer township will no longer be able to rely on funding for social initiatives or community development projects through the Bendemeer CBF.

The absence of the Bendemeer CBF may result in reduced social infrastructure or in the loss of community services and/or facilities, dependent upon what initiatives or projects were funded during the 30 year period of Project operation.

To ensure that the overall community well-being is maintained it will be important for appropriate strategies to be adopted by the managers of the Bendemeer CBF in the years leading up to decommissioning. In particular, the Bendemeer CBF should look to prioritise localised initiatives or projects that will foster a longer-term mindset, and encourage self-reliance for the local community, particular those within the Bendemeer township. Doing so will help stakeholders to adapt to the change when the Bendemeer CBF comes to an end and ensure ongoing socio-economic stability and resilience.

Management and Mitigation

To address the impacts associated with the loss of the Bendemeer CBF, the following management measures will be adopted:

- Ensure that the Bendemeer CBF prioritises local initiatives that foster long-term social, economic and environmental benefits; and
- Ongoing engagement with Tamworth Regional Council and local community in relation to Bendemeer CBF in order to facilitate local community self-reliance of initiatives/projects upon the discontinuation of the CBF.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for the loss of the Bendemeer CBF is provided in **Table 6-27**.

TABLE 6-27 DECOMMISSIONING PHASE: LOSS OF THE BENDEMEER COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

Impact		**Loss of the Bendemeer Community Benefit Fund**				
Potential Impact		Loss of the Bendemeer CBF which will result in a change to how local organisations and community groups are able to source funding opportunities.				
Social Impact Category		Community				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The extent of the Bendemeer CBF is primarily to comprise the Bendemeer township but may apply to activities or projects in the wider Social Locality.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		If the Project is decommissioned the Bendemeer CBF will no longer be available for stakeholders.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Dependent upon the initiatives and/or social infrastructure that requires ongoing funding from the Bendemeer CBF at the time of decommissioning, the degree of change is unknown but may be considerable.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The reduction in social or community initiatives or projects may result in a reduction in support for vulnerable groups (e.g. elderly or youth programs, Aboriginal-focused programs, etc.) as well as the wider community.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Stakeholder engagement revealed concerns about the lack of community investment in Bendemeer and existing impacts to social infrastructure. Upon decommissioning it is possible that this concern may once again be prevalent amongst the community.				

Impact		Loss of the Bendemeer Community Benefit Fund				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	**Major**	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	**Possible**	Likely	Almost Certain
		This impact pre-mitigation is Possible, as the community may experience some challenges in source funding post-Bendemeer CBF but the potential is unclear given the 30 year time period.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	**High**	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Ensure that the Bendemeer CBF prioritises local initiatives that foster long-term social, economic and environmental benefits. • Prior to decommissioning the Project, the Project will engage with the Tamworth Regional Council to consider ways to transition the Bendemeer community to provide an opportunity for social infrastructure funded through the Bendemeer CBF to be maintained post-decommissioning. • Ongoing engagement with Tamworth Regional Council in relation to Bendemeer CBF spendings to facilitate a seamless transition of funding and/or spending (dependent upon initiatives funded).				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	**Moderate**	Major	Transformational
		The post-mitigation magnitude will reduce to Minor, as the management and mitigation measures should help to alleviate severity and intensity of the change.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	**Unlikely**	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact occurring is expected to be Unlikely once the appropriate transition strategy is in place and long-term initiatives are prioritised.				
	Impact Significance	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood of occurrence being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is reduced to Medium.				

6.2.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative social impacts arising from the accumulation of projects in the wider New England Region, including the Social Locality, are a possibility as the NSW Government pursues a largescale transition to renewable energy sources (NSW Government 2019, 2020, 2021).

The cumulative nature of impacts was an area of particular concern to stakeholders, with the issue raised during ongoing community engagement activities carried out for the EIS and SIA, and in the Submissions received during the Public Exhibition Period. In relation to the latter, Submissions received included comments such as:

> *"I object to this project going ahead due to culminative impact, too many in too short a space." (Submission ID: SE-61575995)*
>
> *"This adds another RE project to the already numerous and large RE rollout that has been forced onto the NE Region, its inhabitants and its environment."(Submission ID: SE-61584957)*

Consideration of the geographical context of the Project is crucial when considering the potential for cumulative impacts to be experienced from stakeholders within the Social Locality. The Project is situated on the south-western perimeter of the New England REZ and is relatively isolated with only a few other renewable developments in the REZ overlapping the Social Locality and within the timeline of the Project. As such, where the New England REZ has cumulative social impacts that span beyond the scope of this Project, these impacts have not been assessed in this section. Additionally, the Project is expected to commence and complete construction before the New England REZ transmission line is constructed and therefore is anticipated to precede many of the Projects outlined in **Table 6-28.**

Furthermore, the assessment of cumulative impacts provided in this section only considers those SSD projects in the Social Locality and New England REZ that are reasonably foreseeable in that they either are currently progressing through the regulatory approval pathway.

The SSD projects identified using these parameters and having the potential to generate impacts that intersect with the Social Locality of the Project, are outlined in **Table 6-28.**

TABLE 6-28 SSD PROJECTS WITH CUMULATIVE IMPACT POTENTIAL

Project	Description	LGA	Current Status[6]	Distance (km)[7]	Potential Cumulative Impact Areas
Bendemeer Wind Farm	Development of a wind farm, with up to 51 WTGs, as part of the Bendemeer Renewable Energy Hub, with ancillary infrastructure.	Tamworth Regional LGA	• Planning Portal - Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 24 months, anticipated to start in 2026 • Operational life of 30 years	Adjacent	• Landscape and Visual • Traffic • Economic • Social
New England REZ Transmission Project	Development of new transmission lines between Bayswater Power Station Substation and the New England REZ, new energy hubs within the New England REZ, and ancillary infrastructure.	LGAs of Muswellbrook Shire, Upper Hunter Shire, Liverpool Plains Shire, Tamworth Regional, Walcha Shire, Armidale Regional, Uralla Shire	• Planning Portal - Prepare EIS • Network operator procurement anticipated to start in 2025, Stage 1 expected to be operational in 2031 with Stage 2 in 2033	2	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Thunderbolt Wind Farm	Development of a 192 MW wind farm, with up to 32 WTGs, as part of the Thunderbolt Energy Hub, with ancillary infrastructure.	Tamworth Regional LGA Uralla Shire LGA	• Planning Portal- Approved (May 2024) • Construction duration of 18-24 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life of 25 - 30 years	16	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Calala Battery Energy Storage System	Development of a battery energy storage system (300 MW/ 1200 MWh) and underground transmission lines connecting to Tamworth substation plus ancillary works.	Tamworth Regional LGA	• Planning Portal – Approved (June 2024) • Construction duration of 12 months, with commissioning expected to be completed within 15-18 months, start date unknown • Operational life of 25 years	28	• Traffic • Economic • Social

[6] *Project status current as of March 2024 based on DPHI's Major Projects website.*
[7] *Indicative direct-line distances from the Project boundary.*

Project	Description	LGA	Current Status[6]	Distance (km)[7]	Potential Cumulative Impact Areas
Tamworth Battery Energy Storage System	Development of a 200 MW battery energy storage facility with ancillary infrastructure	Tamworth Regional LGA	• Planning Portal - Response to Submissions • Construction duration of 12 months, start date unknown • Operational life of 25 years	34	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Kingswood Battery Energy Storage System	Development of a battery energy storage system (270 MW/ 1,080 MWh), grid connection and associated infrastructure	Tamworth Regional LGA	• Planning Portal – Response to Submissions • Construction duration of 12-15 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life of 20 years	38	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Lambruk Solar Farm	Development of a 500 MW solar farm and 300 MW / 1,200 MWh BESS	Tamworth Regional LGA	• Planning Portal - Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 24 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life of 30 years	42	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Deeargee Solar Farm	Development of a 320MW solar farm, ancillary infrastructure, and BESS with a capacity of either 1,400 MW / 2,800 MWh or 700 MW / 2,800 MWh.	Uralla Shire LGA	• Planning Portal - Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 24 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life of 30 years	42	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Hillview Solar Farm	Development of a 272 MW solar farm and ancillary infrastructure.	Uralla Shire LGA	• Planning Portal - Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 24 months, anticipated to start in 2027 • Operational life of 40 years	42	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Hillview Wind Farm	Development of a 200-300 MW wind farm with up to 55 WTGs and associated infrastructure.	Uralla Shire LGA	• Planning Portal - Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 30 months, anticipated to start in 2028 • Operational life of 35 years	42	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Eastern Hub Firming Battery	Development of a 1000MW battery energy storage system and associated infrastructure.	Uralla Shire LGA	• Planning Portal - Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 18 months, anticipated to start in 2027 • Operational life of 20 years	42	• Traffic • Economic • Social
New England Solar Farm	Development of 720 MW solar farm with energy storage and ancillary infrastructure.	Uralla Shire LGA	• Planning Portal - Approved (March 2020) • Stage one (400 MW) operational • Stage 2 (320 MW + BESS) construction commenced in 2024 • Operational life of 30 years	45	• Traffic • Economic

Project	Description	LGA	Current Status[6]	Distance (km)[7]	Potential Cumulative Impact Areas
Nottingham Park Solar Farm	Development of a 250 MW solar farm and ancillary infrastructure	Tamworth Regional LGA	• Planning Portal – Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 12-18 months, anticipated to start in Q1 2025 • Operational life of 35 years	45	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Middlebrook Solar Farm	Up to 500 MW proposed solar farm, battery storage (100 MW) and ancillary infrastructure.	Tamworth Regional LGA	• Planning Portal – Approved (November 2024) • Construction duration of 18-24 months, anticipated to start in Q2 2025 • Operational life of 30 years	47	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Tamworth Solar Farm	Development of a 65 MW solar farm with energy storage and ancillary infrastructure.	Tamworth Regional LGA	• Planning Portal - Approved (November 2020) • Construction timeframe 12 months, start date unknown • Operational life of 30 years	51	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Winterbourne Wind Farm	Development of a 700 MW wind farm, with up to 118 WTGs, BESS up to 100 MW/ 200 MWh and ancillary infrastructure.	Walcha LGA Uralla Shire LGA	• Planning Portal – Response to Submissions • Construction duration of 24-30 months, with peak construction of 9 to 10 months, anticipated to start 2025 • Operational life of 30 years	51	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Eathorpe Battery	Development of a 100 MW/ 200 MWh battery energy storage facility with ancillary infrastructure	Armidale Regional LGA	• Planning Portal - Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 12-18 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life of 20 years	59	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Armidale Battery Energy Storage System	Development of a 150 MW battery energy storage facility with ancillary infrastructure	Armidale Regional LGA	• Planning Portal – Assessment • Construction duration of up to 24 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life of 20 years	60	• Traffic • Economic • Social

Project	Description	LGA	Current Status[6]	Distance (km)[7]	Potential Cumulative Impact Areas
Oxley Solar Farm	Approx. 225 MW photovoltaic (PV) energy generation facility, BESS, and ancillary infrastructure.	Armidale Regional LGA	• Planning Portal – Approved (December 2023) • Construction duration of 12-18 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life of 30 years	64	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Gara Battery Energy Storage System	Development of a 400 MW / 1,760 MWh battery energy storage facility and associated infrastructure.	Armidale Regional LGA	• Planning Portal - Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 11 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life of 40 years	66	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Tilbuster Solar Farm	Development of a 150 MW solar farm, energy storage facility and ancillary infrastructure.	Armidale Regional LGA	• Planning Portal - Approved (March 2019) • Construction duration of 12 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life of 30 years	68	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Tilbuster 2 Solar Farm	Development of a solar farm adjacent to Tilbuster Solar Farm.	Armidale Regional LGA	• Planning Portal – Prepare EIS • Construction start and duration unknown	68	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Wallabadah Battery Energy Storage System	Development of a 400 MW / 800 MWh battery energy storage facility and ancillary infrastructure.	Tamworth Regional LGA	• Planning Portal - Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 18-24 months, anticipated to start in 2026 • Operational life of 25 years	70	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Metz Solar Farm	Development of a 100 MW solar farm and ancillary infrastructure.	Armidale Regional LGA	• Planning Portal - Approved (July 2017) • Currently operational • Operational life of 30 years	73	• Economic
Orange Grove Solar Farm	Development of a 110 MW solar farm and ancillary infrastructure.	Gunnedah Shire LGA	• Planning Portal - Approved (March 2019) • Construction duration of 9 months, start date unknown • Operational life of 30 years	75	• Traffic • Economic • Social

Project	Description	LGA	Current Status[6]	Distance (km)[7]	Potential Cumulative Impact Areas
Armidale East Battery Energy Storage System	Development of a 500 MW / 1000 MWh battery energy storage facility with ancillary infrastructure.	Armidale Regional LGA	• Planning Portal – Prepare EIS • Construction duration of 18 months, anticipated to start in Q1 2026 • Operational life of 40 years	75	• Economic
Gunnedah Solar Farm	Development of a 153 MW solar farm and ancillary infrastructure.	Gunnedah Shire LGA	• Planning Portal - Approved (March 2019) • Currently operational • Operational life of 30 years	79	• Economic
Hills of Gold Wind Farm	Development of a wind farm with up to 62 WTGs each with a generating capacity of approximately 6 MW, BESS up to 100 MW/400 MWh, and ancillary infrastructure.	Tamworth Regional LGA Liverpool Plains Shire LGA Upper Hunter Shire LGA	• Planning Portal – Approved (September 2024) • Construction duration of 18-24 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life between 25- 35 years	80	• Traffic • Economic • Social
Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Energy Storage Project	Development of a 600 MW pumped hydro energy storage and generation project and ancillary infrastructure	Armidale Regional LGA	• Planning Portal – Assessment • Construction duration of 36-48 months, anticipated to start in 2025 • Operational life over 50 years	90	• Traffic • Economic • Social

Based on the SSD projects outlined in **Table 6-28** there is the potential for cumulative impacts to be experienced by stakeholders within the Social Locality. The social impacts derived from these cumulative impacts comprise:

- Increased traffic congestion during the Construction Phase of the Project, resulting in road traffic inconvenience, community safety concerns, and a deterioration of road surface conditions (refer to **Section 6.2.4.1**);
- A change to the rural character of the New England Tablelands that may diminish local community connections and sense of place (refer to **Section 6.2.4.2**); and
- An influx of workers to the New England REZ which has the potential to increase demand for short and long-term accommodation, as well as place pressure on social services and recreational facilities (refer to **Section 6.2.4.3**).
- Several stakeholders discussed the possibility of cumulative socio-economic benefits to the region if the New England REZ results in increased economic tourism from the increasing number of Australians who are interested in renewable technology.

6.2.4.1 TRAFFIC CONGESTION, COMMUNITY SAFETY CONCERNS, AND DETERIORATION OF ROAD SURFACE CONDITIONS

Based on the available information regarding development timeframes of the SSD projects and the Construction Phase the Project there is the potential for cumulative traffic impacts to be experienced by stakeholders living along the Oxley Highway, New England Highway, and within the Bendemeer township. Concern surrounding the number of vehicles movements within the Social Locality, and traversing near or through Bendemeer township, was expressed in the Submissions received, with examples including:

> *"Our highway will be clogged up with non stop trucks and mega trucks holding up people going to work, appointments and emergency vehicles. They say 120 per day X 6 days a week with 1 year of construction -37,440. Add to this Winterbourne and Ruby Hills -724,179. That is over three quarters of a million vehicles going past Bendemeer in one year. That is only taking into account three construction sites." (Submission ID: SE-61426965)*
>
> *"The additional 200 plus trucks using our roads will not only damage the quality causing hazards for motorists and locals who use these roads but will also cause congestion on our roads. Living within close proximity to the road, the additional noise, dust and vehicle traffic will impact my quality of life." (Submission ID: SE-60960724)*
>
> *"The CUMULATIVE IMPACTS of all the project for us wind, solar, powerlines and all those surround our area and all having to travel through Bendemeer is unbelievably unfair and irresponsible - we may be few in number but that doesn't mean we matter less." (Submission ID: SE-61428462)*
>
> *"Cumulative impact - Bendemeer straddles the New England Highway and at the junction of the Oxley Highway therefore all NE projects will travel through Bendemeer."(Submission ID: SE-61575995)*

Given the location of the SSD Projects identified in **Table 6-28**, those projects that have the greatest potential to use the surrounding road network in a similar period to that of the Project will include the Oxley and Tilbuster Solar Farms; the Thunderbolt, Doughboy, Rangoon, Bendemeer, and Winterbourne Wind Farms, and the Eathorpe BE*SS.*

The potential cumulative social impacts associated with traffic and transport are anticipated to occur across three main areas:

- **Congestion** – a cumulative increase in the volume of traffic between the regional centres of the Social Locality has the potential to cause inconvenience in stakeholders' way of life through an increase in traffic congestion on roads used for daily activities. This congestion has the potential to cause disruption to daily commutes and impact nearby business operations through time delays and reduced customer access, particularly if morning and evening peak commute periods overlap. The TIA (Amber 2023) notes the existing network has adequate capacity and with respect to the crossover of peak traffic periods that the majority of traffic generated by projects will be prior to 7 am and after 6 pm, which falls outside of the peak times for the road network.
- **Community Safety** – a cumulative increase in the volume of traffic using the surrounding road networks may also impact community health and wellbeing, as a result of compromised emergency response times for police, fire and ambulance services; and exposure to a higher incidents of unsafe driving activity (i.e. speeding, distracted driving, etc.) that could lead to an accident. This potential is exacerbated on the roads frequented by school buses and containing associated school bus stops (such as the Oxley Highway), given that these roads may be used for material transport and daily worker commutes.
- **Road Surface Conditions** – the continued use of B-Doubles and the aggregated volume of traffic arising from cumulative material and worker transport requirements has the potential to cause expedited deterioration of road pavement conditions, beyond that of an individual project. This accumulated deterioration may, in turn, impact on community health and wellbeing through an increase in the risk of a traffic accident occurring.

The TIA (Amber 2025) determined that the road network is expected to continue to operate with a good level of service and with ample spare capacity for the duration the Construction Phase of the Project. This assessment considered the prospective cumulative traffic generated by other SSD projects in the surrounding area and determined that the increase in traffic will have a minimal cumulative impact on the road network, including the components of the network that pass through Tamworth, Armidale, and Uralla.

In order to reduce the cumulative impacts of traffic in the Social Locality, particularly in the areas to the north and north-east of the Project Area, the following as also been committed to by the Applicant:

- Heavy vehicle movements are to arrive from the west of the Project Area. Materials will be sourced via nearby regional centres including Tamworth, Kootingal, Moonbi, Nemingha, Uralla and Armidale, which are accessed via New England Highway to the west; and
- Light vehicle movements arriving from the east of the Project Area are to be minimised, with approximately one left turn movement per day. This level of traffic is similar to that of a single residential dwelling, and it is expected that there would be only 18 westbound movements total resulting in a lower probability of vehicular conflict.

Management and Mitigation

To address the cumulative traffic and transport related impacts, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) which draws on the Project Traffic Impact Assessment's analysis (Amber 2025). The TMP should be prepared and implemented in accordance with Australian Standard 1742.3 and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017;
- Heavy vehicle movements should avoid peak school bus times to limit the interaction of larger vehicles and vulnerable road users;
- Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to those within the surrounding community;
- Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding as any particular periods of intense road use by transport vehicles and/or oversized or over dimensioned vehicles. This information can then be disseminated to Project stakeholders as considered relevant; and
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment related to cumulative traffic inconvenience, community safety concerns, and deterioration of road surface conditions is provided in **Table 6-29.**

TABLE 6-29 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS: ROAD TRAFFIC INCONVENIENCE, SAFETY CONCERNS, AND DETERIORATION OF ROAD SURFACE CONDITIONS

Impact		**Road Traffic Inconvenience, Safety Concerns, and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions**				
Potential Impact		Cumulative impacts arising from the transportation of materials and equipment has the potential to cause wear and tear on roads, increase road traffic congestion and impose community safety impacts for road users along the haulage routes and local roads. Risk of traffic injury or in the worst case a fatality, resulting from increased vehicle movements during the transportation of goods and workers to and from the respective project areas.				
Social Impact Category		Surroundings				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The geographical extent of the cumulative impact is across the Social Locality but will be primarily experienced on the Oxley Highway, New England Highway, and Bendemeer township.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The construction period for the Project is 18 months with peak period of 12 months, which means that period that the cumulative impact will experience will be time limited.				

Impact		Road Traffic Inconvenience, Safety Concerns, and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The TIA for the Project considered surrounding SSD projects and suggests there is ample capacity in the road network. Construction traffic does have the potential to impact upon stakeholders through delays due to congestion, the potential for a traffic accident, and increased road surface deterioration.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		There is a possibility that vulnerable groups who direct and/or indirectly use the roads (i.e. elderly, emergency services, youth, etc.) may be affected.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours and submitters voiced concern about traffic related impacts.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The TIA determined there is adequate capacity for the transport route to cater for the increased cumulative traffic flows. Impacts to stakeholders from materials and equipment transportation of a Major magnitude are expected to have a moderate probability of occurring prior to and therefore are Possible.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	**High**	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is High.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Develop and implement a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) which draws on the Project Traffic Impact Assessment's analysis (Amber 2023). The TMP should be prepared and implemented in accordance with Australian Standard 1742.3 and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017. • Heavy vehicle movements should avoid peak school bus times to limit the interaction of larger vehicles and vulnerable road users. • Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to those within the surrounding community. • Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding as any particular periods of intense road use by transport vehicles and/or oversized or over dimensioned vehicles. This information can then be disseminated to Project stakeholders as considered relevant. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The post-mitigation magnitude is Major. While the implementation of the TMP is expected to reduce the extent and severity, and the SEP, the level of concern, the intensity will remain as previously defined. This is because the degree of change caused within the Social Locality if a traffic accident was to occur as a result of the cumulative increase in traffic cannot be mitigated.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected to reduce to Unlikely once the mitigation measures are implemented.				

Impact		Road Traffic Inconvenience, Safety Concerns, and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions			
	Impact Significance	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Medium.			

6.2.4.2 ALTERED RURAL CHARACTER (VISUAL AMENITY)

Where multiple projects exist near one another there is the possibility that cumulative visual impacts may occur. One project may not be of lesser concern or impact, but when viewed together, visual impacts can be magnified.

Given the number of renewable energy projects within the New England region there is a perception amongst a few stakeholders that the rural character of the New England Tablelands may be diminished, with the resultant potential to reduce the connection of the local community to the landscape and generational history, and in doing so, negatively impact upon the community's sense of place. This sentiment was expressed by one submitter who stated:

> *"There is an unquestionable cumulative impact for Bendemeer as this project will be highly visible from many locations especially Bendemeer village itself and some severely impacted landholders who reside with their families beside this proposed major industrial development. Bendemeer is impacted severely by the Thunderbolt wind project to the north, Bendemeer wind project north, south and east of the village and current location maps showing the expected 250m high turbines (Crown Sydney Barangaroo 271m) within 4-5kms of Bendemeer, closer to many family farms some of 7 generations." (Submission ID: SE-61429209)*

The LVIA and Amendment Report (Moir Landscape Architecture 2023) identified that the visual impact of the Project would generally be limited to the Immediate Neighbours, but this will be mitigated by existing landscape features and this, coupled with proposed vegetative screening will reduce visual exposure to the solar arrays. The LVIA (Moir Landscape Architecture 2023) also considered cumulative impacts of the SSD projects and concluded that only the Thunderbolt Wind Farm and Bendemeer Wind Farm have the potential for cumulative visual impacts. To that end, Moir Landscape Architecture (2023) concluded that given the distance from the Project Area, Thunderbolt Wind Farm was unlikely to contribute to a cumulative visual impact given the horizontal scale of the Project, combined with undulating topography and intervening vegetation. Accordingly, only the Bendemeer Wind Farm would have the potential to be visible at the same time as the Project, however as the Project is only in early development and the Scoping Report has not yeet been submitted, the site layout and potential visual impacts have not been determined.

A potential cumulative visual impact of both the Project and the Bendemeer Wind Farm is possible dependent upon the elevated positioning of the turbines associated with the Bendemeer Wind Farm, however the specific turbine layout is currently unknown. Despite this however, given the generally low visibility of the Project it is unlikely that the Project will contribute to cumulative impacts from public viewpoints and private dwellings and therefore will have a limited impact on the rural character of the New England Tablelands.

Management and Mitigation

To address the potential negative changes in rural character associated with cumulative visual impact, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Continue to engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that suitable landscaping solutions are implemented to minimize visual impact of the Project, where required;
- Work with Local/Regional Businesses and groups to supply, plant, and maintain (for an initial establishment period) landscape screening;
- Develop and implement a SEP; and
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment for the cumulative change in social amenity (visual amenity) is provided in **Table 6-30**.

TABLE 6-30 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS: ALTERED RURAL CHARACTER (VISUAL AMENITY)

Impact		**Altered Rural Character (Visual Amenity)**				
Potential Impact		Cumulative visual amenity impacts from other renewable energy projects within the Social Locality and New England REZ have the potential to diminish local community connection to the landscape and sense of place.				
Social Impact Category		Surroundings				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The LVIA (Moir Landscape Architecture 2023) identified that the Project will only be able to be seen simultaneously with the Bendemeer Wind Farm within a localised area.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The Operation Phase of the Project is 30 years.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The LVIA (Moir Landscape Architecture 2023) identified that there is low visibility of the Project from public viewpoints and private dwellings for the Project. Accordingly, the degree of change to the Social Locality as a result of the Project's development, in the context of the other SSD projects, is minimal.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The cumulative impact on visual amenity has the potential to change the rural character of the Social Locality, however the contribution of the Project is limited. No specific vulnerable groups were identified as being impacted disproportionately.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The impact is of concern for a number of projects within the New England REZ, however concerns were primarily voiced by stakeholders located in the immediate surrounds of the Project Area.				

Impact		Altered Rural Character (Visual Amenity)				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Moderate.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The perception of this impact pre-mitigation is Possible despite the LVIA identifying a minimal visual impact contribution of the Project and limited SSD projects that can contribute to cumulative visual impacts, given the perception of local stakeholders.				
	Impact Significance	Low	**Medium**	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is Medium.				
Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities		• Continue to engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that suitable landscaping solutions are implemented to minimize visual impact of the Project, where required. • Develop and implement a SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon.				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		The magnitude is expected to decrease to Minor through implementation of the mitigation measures and reducing community perceptions about the Project's visual impact.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of this impact is expected to reduce to Unlikely, once the mitigation measures are implemented and stakeholder perception of the Project in the context of other Projects in the Social Locality is managed.				
	Impact Significance	**Low**	Medium	High	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Minor and the likelihood of this impact occurring being Unlikely, the significance of this impact is Low.				

6.2.4.3 ACCOMMODATION AND WORKER INFLUX

As discussed in **Section 6.2.1.4**, the Construction Phase of the Project is predicted to have a peak workforce of approximately 307 FTE (some additional contractor personnel) and average annual workforce of 250 FTE for the peak 12-month of construction. As a 70% local workforce target has been proposed by the Applicant, the number of local workers proposed to be employed by the Project is approximately 215 FTE. Accordingly, if this target is met, a minimum of 92 workers would need to be employed on FIFO/DIDO arrangements, and be housed within the Social Locality, contributing to a temporary increase in the total population of the Social Locality (principally, Tamworth). If the 70% local workforce target is not met, this temporary population increase within the Social Locality will be more pronounced with a greater number of FIFI/DIDO workers required to construct the Project.

Based on a review of the anticipated construction timeframes, the following SSD projects have the potential to overlap with the Project and be seeking employees from within the Social Locality or wider New England REZ: Oxley Solar Farm, Tilbuster Solar Farm, Thunderbolt Wind Farm, Doughboy Wind Farm, Rangoon Wind Farm, Winterbourne Wind Farm, Bendemeer Wind Farm, and Earthorpe BESS. Whilst it is considered unlikely that these projects would source all their workers from outside the Social Locality or New England REZ, the potential for these projects to employ large construction workforces (i.e. 200-350 workers) that may comprise both local and non-local workers, is likely.

It should be noted however, that dependent upon the actualised construction timeframes of these projects, there may also the possibility for workers to transition from one project to the next, meaning that part of the large construction workforce may already be present in the Social Locality or wider region, which will reduce temporary worker in-migration.

Regardless, the influx of workers into the Social Locality (and New England REZ), does present potential cumulative impacts for the communities of the townships and reginal centres located therein. In particular, the issues of primary importance include accommodation shortages (refer to **Section 6.2.3.1**) and reduced access to essential services and recreational facilities (refer to **Section 6.2.3.2**).

Increased Demand for Short and Long-Term Accommodation

Where non-local workers are employed by the SSD projects in the New England REZ they will need to be accommodated within the surrounding towns and/or in project-specific accommodation camps, dependent upon the accommodation strategies employed by each project. This cumulative worker influx has the potential to place additional temporary pressure on the short and long-term accommodation markets within the Bendemeer township, Tamworth and Armidale (within the Social Locality), as well as Walcha and Uralla.

The impact of this accommodation pressure will have varying degrees of impact on the way of life for residents of these townships and regional centres, including the intensification of accommodation shortages and cost of living pressures, and disruptions to potential tourist accommodation options, which in turn may have subsequent implications for festivals and events (e.g. Tamworth Music Festival). A reduction in tourist accommodation availabilities can lead to a loss of revenue for Local/Regional Businesses that heavily depend on the tourism sector.

Vulnerable groups within Bendemeer township, Tamworth and Armidale will be most at risk if population influx is not managed appropriately. Those facing financial hardship, housing instability, or with lesser disposable incomes, may not be able to afford long-term or short-term accommodation, as they become 'priced-out' of the already limited housing market by renewable energy proponent workforces. The existing housing situation within the Social Locality is already a concern to stakeholders, with one submitter stating that, *"Housing all these construction workers needs to be addressed. The region is already facing a housing crisis." (Submission ID: SE-61588494)*

Management and Mitigation

To address the cumulative increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation as a result of worker influx, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement a LEP for the Project. The LEP is to include measures to encourage and set targets for local employment for the EPC Contractor;
- Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and accommodation;
- Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding as to their construction periods and potential options to manage population influx and pressures on short and long-term housing and accommodation within the wider region;
- Develop and implement a Workforce Accommodation Strategy (WAS) for the Project;
- Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the various stakeholders identified in the WAS; and
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment related to the cumulative increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation is provided in **Table 6-31**.

TABLE 6-31 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS: INCREASED DEMAND FOR SHORT AND LONG-TERM ACCOMMODATION

Impact		**Increased Demand for Short and Long-Term Accommodation**				
Potential Impact		Cumulative increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation caused by the influx of workers associated with other SSD projects in the Social Locality and New England REZ.				
Social Impact Category		Way of Life				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Local/Regional Businesses, Visitors to the Region, Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Impacts would extend to short and long-term accommodation markets across the Social Locality and New England REZ.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The extent of Project involvement is limited to the construction period (18 months with peak period of 12 months), however given the pipeline on renewable energy projects, the timeframe for the impact is anticipated to be far longer.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Despite current accommodation capacity in regional centres, cumulative worker influx would likely outstrip supply and result in a higher degree of change in these locations.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Impact</th><th colspan="5">Increased Demand for Short and Long-Term Accommodation</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="5">The ability for the local community to adapt to the increase in demand for short and/or long-term accommodation will be difficult and impact their ability to afford, rent and/or own housing. In addition, vulnerable groups will be most impacted, including those facing financial hardship, housing instability, or with lesser disposable incomes.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Level of Concern / Interest</td><td>Very Low</td><td>Low</td><td>Medium</td><td>High</td><td>Very High</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="5">During engagement stakeholders did not raise this as a primary issue. Despite this however, accommodation pressure due to the influx of construction workers is a growing concern within the Social Locality and New England REZ. Concern about accommodation pressure is typically greater in scenarios where large FIFO/DIDO workforces are required – which may be required dependent upon project local employment targets / achievements.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement</td><td>Magnitude</td><td>Minimal</td><td>Minor</td><td>Moderate</td><td>Major</td><td>Transformational</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Major.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Likelihood</td><td>Very Unlikely</td><td>Unlikely</td><td>Possible</td><td>Likely</td><td>Almost Certain</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Based on publicly available information, the construction timeframes for nine renewable energy projects are to be commensurate with one another, and therefore a construction workforce including non-local workers will be required, and accommodation sought within the townships and/or regional centres within the Social Locality.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Impact Significance</td><td colspan="2">Low</td><td>Medium</td><td>High</td><td>Very High</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities</td><td colspan="5">• Develop and implement a LEP for the Project. The LEP is to include measures to encourage and set targets for local employment for the EPC Contractor.
• Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and accommodation.
• Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding as to their construction periods and potential options to manage population influx and pressures on short and long-term housing and accommodation within the wider region.
• Develop and implement a Workforce Accommodation Strategy (WAS) for the Project.
• Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the various stakeholders identified in the WAS.
• Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.</td></tr>
</table>

Impact		Increased Demand for Short and Long-Term Accommodation				
Post-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	**Moderate**	Major	Transformational
		If the various mitigation and management measures are implemented, the magnitude will be Moderate as the severity and intensity will be reduced.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	**Likely**	Almost Certain
		The likelihood of the impact is expected remain as Likely, given it is unclear as to the extent that non-local workers required to support the various SSD projects, but regardless, the non-local workforce will need to be housed within the Social Locality or wider New England REZ.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	**High**	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood of this impact being Possible, the significance of this impact is considered to be Medium.				

Increased Demand for Services and Recreational Facilities

The temporary increase in the population of the townships and regional centres within the Social Locality, due to the cumulative construction worker influx, will place pressure on local services and recreational facilities as due to an increased demand for social and community services.

As outlined in **Section 6.2.1.4**, the public and private health services within the Social Locality will be used by Project workers during the Construction Phase, when required. If an additional nine renewable energy projects are to occur in proximity to the Project, there is the potential for additional strain to be placed on these health services, and in doing so, reduce accessibility for community members (including vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, youth and Indigenous peoples) within the Social Locality.

The cumulative extent of worker influx may also increase demand on recreational facilities within the Social Locality, and in doing so, negatively impact recreational experiences due to overcrowding and limitations of accessibility. These negative experiences will ultimately impact on the health and well-being of local residents.

Management and Mitigation

To address the increased demand for services and recreation facilities as a result of cumulative worker influx, the Project will adopt a suite of management measures comprising:

- Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and local resources;
- Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding as to their construction periods and potential options to manage population influx and pressures on social infrastructure, services and recreational facilities within the wider region;
- Continue to engage with relevant health (e.g. hospitals, medical clinics, etc.) and emergency services (e.g. ambulance, police, fire brigade, SES, etc.) to discuss management of temporary workers;
- Develop and implement a SEP; and
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment related to the cumulative increase in demand for services and recreational facilities is provided in **Table 6-32**.

TABLE 6-32 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS: INCREASED DEMAND FOR SERVICES AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Impact		**Increased Demand for Services and Recreational Facilities**				
Potential Impact		Cumulative increase in demand for services and recreational facilities caused by the influx of workers associated with other SSD projects in the Social Locality and New England REZ.				
Social Impact Category		Access				
Affected Stakeholder/s		Surrounding Community				
Magnitude Characteristics	*Extent*	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Impacts would extend to townships and regional centres across the Social Locality and New England REZ.				
	Duration	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		The extent of Project involvement is limited to the construction period (18 months with peak period of 12 months), however given the pipeline on renewable energy projects, the timeframe for the impact is anticipated to be far longer.				
	Severity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Despite current service provision in regional centres, cumulative worker influx would likely place additional pressure and result in a higher degree of change in accessibility for local residents.				
	Intensity	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		Vulnerable groups will be most impacted, including those requiring access to medical services, social infrastructure, and recreational opportunities.				
	Level of Concern / Interest	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
		During engagement stakeholders did not raise this as a primary issue. Despite this however, pressure on services due to the influx of construction workers is a growing concern within the Social Locality and New England REZ.				
Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement	**Magnitude**	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
		Based on the previous five (5) categories the pre-mitigation magnitude is ranked as Major.				
	Likelihood	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
		Based on publicly available information, the construction timeframes for nine renewable energy projects are to be commensurate with one another, and therefore a construction workforce including non-local workers will be required, and therefore increased pressure to services and recreational facilities within nearby townships and/or regional centres within the Social Locality will Likely result.				
	Impact Significance	Low	Medium	**High**	Very High	
		With the magnitude being Major and the likelihood of this impact being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.				

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Impact</th><th colspan="5">Increased Demand for Services and Recreational Facilities</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities</td><td colspan="5">• Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and local resources.
• Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding as to their construction periods and potential options to manage population influx and pressures on social infrastructure, services and recreational facilities within the wider region.
• Continue to engage with relevant health (e.g. hospitals, medical clinics, etc.) and emergency services (e.g. ambulance, police, fire brigade, SES, etc.) to discuss management of temporary workers.
• Develop and implement a SEP.
• Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Post-Mitigation / Enhancement</td><td>Magnitude</td><td>Minimal</td><td>Minor</td><td>Moderate</td><td>Major</td><td>Transformational</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">If the various mitigation and management measures are implemented, the magnitude will be Moderate as the severity and intensity will be reduced.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Likelihood</td><td>Very Unlikely</td><td>Unlikely</td><td>Possible</td><td>Likely</td><td>Almost Certain</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The likelihood of the impact is expected remain as Likely, given it is unclear as to the extent that non-local workers required to support the various SSD projects, but regardless, the non-local workforce will need to utilise services and facilities within the Social Locality or wider New England REZ.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Impact Significance</td><td colspan="2">Low</td><td>Medium</td><td>High</td><td>Very High</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">With the magnitude being Moderate and the likelihood of this impact being Likely, the significance of this impact is High.</td></tr>
</table>

6.3 SUMMARY OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Table 6-33 provides an overall summary of the potential social impacts for the Project and their associated mitigation measures or enhancement opportunities identified in the proceeding sections. Key Performance Indicators related to each of the social impact topic areas and management measures are outlined as part of the monitoring framework in **Table 7-1.**

TABLE 6-33 SUMMARY OF PROJECT IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Construction Phase														
Stakeholder and Community														
Reduced community cohesion and increased social tensions due to divergent opinions related to the desirability of the Project and the resultant negative mental health and wellbeing impacts to the local community.	Health and Wellbeing	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Communities	Medium	Low	High	High	Medium	Major	Almost Certain	**Very High**	• Develop and implement a SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism. • The Project will apply all Construction Phase mitigation measures outlined in **Section 6.2.1** to reduce the secondary impacts to community cohesion. • If deemed necessary during stakeholder engagement, the Project will consider alternative engagement options to reduce stakeholder fatigue.	Moderate	Likely	**High**
Community engagement for the Project is ineffective with stakeholders feeling as though they have not been heard or are unable to influence Project decisions and management outcomes.	Decision-making Systems	Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Communities	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Moderate	Unlikely	**Medium**	• Develop and implement a SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints are identified and acted upon.	Moderate	Unlikely	**Medium**
Perceived impacts on the Macdonald River which is regarded by the local community as a place of local community significance. Impacts have the potential to cause mental and/or	Health and Wellbeing, Livelihoods	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Communities, Aboriginal Communities	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Very High	Moderate	Possible	**Medium**	• Develop and implement a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which provides specific environmental controls and/or measures to address runoff, protect local	Minor	Unlikely	**Low**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
emotional impacts on stakeholders, as well as restrict usage by nearby agricultural landowners.											aquatic environments and maintain the water quality of the Macdonald River. • Develop and implement a SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.			
Employment and Procurement														
Increased demand for labour creates direct and indirect employment opportunities for the local community.	Livelihoods	Local Workforce	Medium	Low	High	High	High	Major	Possible	**High**	• Develop and implement a Local Employment Plan (LEP) for the Project. The LEP is to include measures to encourage and set targets for local employment for the EPC Contractor. • Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council Tamworth Business Chamber, and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA. • Work with the EPC Contractor during the Construction Phase to achieve maximum local employment targets set.	Major	Likely	**High**
Increased demand for goods and	Livelihoods	Local/Regional businesses	High	Low	High	High	High	Major	Possible	**High**	• Develop and implement local	Major	Likely	**High**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
services helps to stimulate the local economies. Businesses within the Social Locality benefit from increased economic activity associated with the construction workforce and Project material requirements.											• content initiatives which includes measures to encourage local procurement for the EPC Contractor. • Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council Tamworth Business Chamber, and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA. • Work with the EPC Contractor during the Construction Phase to track and report on the local content used for the Project in order to demonstrate the extent to which local content is being accessed. • Assist respective local/regional businesses in becoming 'job ready' by: ° ensuring lead contractors are encouraged to hire regional residents where they have the required skills and experience and are able to demonstrate a cultural fit with the organisation; ° participation in business group meetings, events			

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											◦ or programs in the regional community in order to increase transparency in relation to upcoming opportunities; and ◦ encouraging lead contractors to purchase local non-labour inputs to production, where local producers can be cost and quality competitive, to support local industries.			
Increased demand for labour contributes to skills shortages	Livelihoods	Local Workforce	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Moderate	Possible	**Medium**	• Develop and implement the LEP for the Project, including the proposed mitigation and management measures contained therein. • Monitor for skills shortages within the region and take this into consideration with EPC Contractor recruitment objectives. • Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement to maintain ongoing communication with Tamworth Regional Council and local/regional business groups. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders, including in relation to skills shortages and local/regional business impacts, are identified and acted upon.	Minor	Unlikely	**Low**
Local Disruptions														

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Construction impacts including noise, vibration, dust, visual amenity, and increased risk of fire which influence social amenity and potentially cause an impact on community health and wellbeing.	Health and Wellbeing	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Community	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Moderate	Likely	**High**	• Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours and the Surrounding Community. • Continue to engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that suitable landscaping solutions are implemented to minimize visual impact, where required. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon. • Develop and implement a CEMP that will include specific mitigations for construction phase impacts, including: ◦ Dust management; ◦ Construction hours align with statutory requirements / approvals; ◦ Conduct Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) awareness training where appropriate; ◦ Bushfire risk management; and ◦ Biosecurity risk management.	Moderate	Possible	**Medium**
Transportation of materials and equipment to the Project Area has	Way of Life, Health and Wellbeing	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours,	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Major	Possible	**High**	• Develop and implement a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) which draws	Major	Unlikely	**Medium**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
the potential to cause wear and tear on roads, road traffic congestion and community safety impacts for road users along the haulage routes and on local roads. Risk of traffic injury or in the worst case a fatality, resulting from increased vehicle movements during the transportation of goods and workers to and from the Project Area.		Surrounding Community, Local Workforce, Visitors to the Region									on the Project TIA. The TMP should include the following measures to manage the social dimension of the impact: ◦ Ensure drivers observe road traffic rules and speed limits; ◦ Ensure all vehicle drivers have a relevant licence and training before mobilisation; ◦ Use road signs at strategic points, sirens and public announcements where necessary to warn people of oncoming heavy vehicles; ◦ Ensure all vehicles are certified roadworthy and well maintained; ◦ Avoid night driving to the extent possible; and ◦ Heavy vehicle movements should avoid peak school bus times to limit the interaction with these larger vehicles and vulnerable road users. • Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours and the Surrounding Community. • Continue to engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that matters raised in relation to traffic concerns, including			

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											school bus routes, are appropriately considered and incorporated into construction management processes and procedures. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon.			
Accommodation and Worker Influx														
Potential increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation, where the 70% local employment target is met (Scenario #1).	Way of Life	Local/Regional Businesses, Visitors to the Region, Surrounding Community	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Unlikely	**Medium**	• Develop and implement a LEP for the Project. The LEP is to include measures to encourage and set targets for local employment for the EPC Contractor. • Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and accommodation. • Develop and implement a Workforce Accommodation Strategy (WAS) for the Project, that will: ◦ Explore available accommodation options in Tamworth, Uralla, Walcha and Armidale; ◦ Prioritise local accommodation	Minor	Unlikely	**Low**
Potential increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation, where the 70% local employment target is not met (Scenario #2).	Way of Life	Local/Regional Businesses, Visitors to the Region, Surrounding Community	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Likely	**High**		Moderate	Possible	**Medium**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											options, where available; ◦ Investigate local and regional community social media options to disseminate information to local accommodation operators and rental property owners, such as construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements; ◦ Require ongoing contact with local accommodation operators to provide Project information such as construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements; ◦ Provide a register of local accommodation options and contact details to contractors and subcontractors; ◦ Provide and maintain register of local property owners who have expressed interest in offering dwellings for rent, with the intent to provide to the EPC Contractors and subcontractors; ◦ Include a requirement to review workforce predictions during construction to ensure that accommodation requirements are met; ◦ Identify any overlaps with peak demand periods for accommodation			

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											and engage with key stakeholders; and ◦ Stipulate ongoing consultation with local property owners and accommodation providers to manage occupancy and maximise use of local accommodation, without preventing its use for major event and holiday purposes. • Develop and implement a Worker Code of Conduct to mitigate the potential for increased anti-social behaviour or crime that may potential arise from an increased number of FIFO/DIDO workers. The Worker Code of Conduct should include, at a minimum: ◦ Principles of behaviour: Guideline for appropriate behaviour that apply to interactions with all workers whether at work or out of work. ◦ Anti-harassment, bullying and discrimination: Sets out the provisions for appropriate conduct, and outlines potential consequences of breech to these provisions. ◦ Work health and safety: Requires that all workers understand their obligations to comply with the relevant work			

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											health and safety procedures and legislative requirements. • Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the various stakeholders identified in the WAS. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.			
Increased demand for social and emergency services and recreational facilities, where the 70% local employment target is met (Scenario #1).	Access	Surrounding Community	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Minor	Possible	**Medium**	• Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and local resources. • Continue to engage with relevant health (e.g. hospitals, medical clinics, etc.) and emergency services (e.g. ambulance, police, fire brigade, State Emergency Service (SES), etc.). • Develop and implement a SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.	Minor	Unlikely	**Low**
Increased demand for social and emergency services and recreational facilities, where the 70% local employment target is not met (Scenario #2).	Access	Surrounding Community	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Likely	**High**		Moderate	Possible	**Medium**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Operation Phase														
Stakeholder and Community														
Development and implementation of the Bendemeer CBF, a Project-specific community benefit sharing scheme.	Community	Surrounding Community	Low	Very High	High	High	Very High	Major	Almost Certain	**Very High**	• Develop and implement the Bendemeer CBF, consulting with key stakeholders and potential partners (e.g., Tamworth Regional LGA, community groups, etc.) • Publish the Bendemeer CBF to the Surrounding Community via community newsletters and other communications channels as per an Operation Phase SEP.	Major	Almost Certain	**Very High**
Reduced community cohesion and increased social tensions due to divergent opinions related to the desirability of the Project and the resultant negative impacts on the local community.	Health and Wellbeing	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Community	Medium	Low	High	High	Medium	Major	Likely	**High**	• The implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. • The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities. • Develop and implement the Bendemeer CBF, consulting with key stakeholders and potential partners (e.g., Tamworth Regional LGA, community groups, etc.) • Publish the Bendemeer CBF to the Surrounding Community via community newsletters and other communications	Major	Possible	**High**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											channels as per the Operation Phase SEP.			
Real or perceived adverse potential health impacts associated with solar farms and exposure to low-level EMF, noise emissions, and the polluting of the Macdonald River.	Health and Wellbeing	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Community	Low	High	Low	Low	Medium	Minor	Possible	**Low**	• Implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. • The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities. • Communicate the outcomes of relevant assessments such as electromagnetic interference, and operational noise assessments and proposed technical mitigation measures (if required). • Develop and implement an Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) which will include specific Operation Phase mitigations for the Project, and may include: ◦ System and operational monitoring; ◦ Site management and maintenance responsibilities; ◦ Biosecurity management (including pest control and weed management); ◦ Emergency Response Plan; and ◦ Waste Management Plan.	Minimal	Unlikely	**Low**
Employment and Procurement														

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Increased demand for labour creates direct and indirect employment opportunities for the local community.	Livelihoods	Local Workforce	Low	High	Low	High	High	Major	Possible	**High**	• Develop and implement local content initiatives which include local employment goals for the Operation Phase. These initiatives are to be aimed at livelihoods, including people's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business. • Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council Tamworth Business Chamber, and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA.	Major	Likely	**High**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Demand for locally procured goods and services during the Operation Phase of the Project. There is strong interest in the local economic opportunities associated with Project procurement.	Livelihoods	Local/Regional businesses	Medium	High	Medium	High	High	Major	Possible	**High**	• Develop and implement local content initiatives which include local procurement goals for the Operation Phase. • Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council Tamworth Business Chamber, and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA.	Major	Likely	**High**
Land Use and Landscape														
Perceived potential impacts to neighbouring land values resulting from altered rural character and amenity.	Livelihoods	Immediate Neighbours	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Possible	**Medium**	• Implement visual impact mitigations for sensitive receptors as identified in the Land Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (Moir Landscape, 2023). • Develop and implement the Bendemeer CBF. • Publish the Bendemeer CBF to the Surrounding Community via community newsletters and other communications channels as per an Operation Phase SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism, so that community concerns	Minor	Unlikely	**Low**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											can be identified and actively managed.			
Altered rural character as a result of the Project has the potential to cause stress and anxiety amongst the local community.	Surroundings	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Community, Visitors to the Region	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Minor	Likely	**Medium**	• Ongoing consultation with Immediate Neighbours to provide screen planning to manage the visual impact from neighbouring properties. This work may include completion of a localised visual impact assessment where merited. • Work with local/regional businesses and groups to supply, plant, and maintain (for an initial establishment period) landscape screening. • The implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. • The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities.	Minimal	Unlikely	**Low**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Altered landscapes have the potential to impact tangible and intangible Aboriginal heritage.	Culture	Aboriginal Communities	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low	Moderate	Possible	**Medium**	• Develop and Implement a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) which includes but is not limited to: ◦ Cultural awareness inductions for workers; ◦ Surface collection of artefact scatters ◦ Staged salvage excavation; ◦ Archaeological monitoring; ◦ Chance finds procedure; ◦ Repatriation of archaeological material post-construction; and ◦ Consultation with the local Aboriginal community. • The implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. • The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities.	Moderate	Unlikely	**Medium**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Decommissioning Phase														
Intergeneration inequity may occur if the current stakeholders receive the benefits of the Project, and future generations inherit the waste and environmental issues generated by an improperly decommissioned Project.	Livelihoods	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours and Surrounding Community	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Possible	**Medium**	• Development and Implementation of a DRP which will outline how waste streams derived from decommissioning activities will be appropriately managed, including ensuring adherence to a waste hierarchy that considers recycling before general waste disposal. • Engagement with community groups and/or organisations within the Social Locality regarding the potential donation of materials salvaged through decommissioning works for reuse on community projects. • Engagement with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understand the potential options to dispose of materials through licenced Council refuse facilities. • Maintenance of the grievance mechanism throughout the Decommissioning Phase in order to manage concerns that may arise during decommissioning activities.	Minor	Unlikely	**Low**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Short-term increased in the demand for labour and local goods and services, creates employment and procurement opportunities for the local community.	Livelihoods	Local Workforce	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Minor	Likely	**Medium**	• Develop and implement local content initiatives and local employment targets for the Decommissioning Phase. • Work with the contractor engaged to undertake the decommissioning to achieve maximum local employment targets set, and report on the local content used. • Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA.	Minor	Almost Certain	**Medium**
Decommissioning of the Project will require the retrenchment of the operational workforce.	Livelihoods	Local Workforce	Low	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Possible	**Medium**	• Development and Implementation of a DRP which will outline the priority for workforce transition, and provide additional detail as to the retrenchment process, and the potential opportunities for employees to transition into new roles. • Create awareness within the local community as the availability of a skilled workforce and provide opportunities to connect the	Minor	Unlikely	**Low**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											• operational workforce with other local employment opportunities within the Social Locality. • Engagement with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to discuss opportunities to support workers in finding new jobs that match their acquired skillsets. • Maintenance of the grievance mechanism throughout the Decommissioning Phase in order to manage concerns that may arise, including issues associated with workforce transition.			
Transportation of materials and equipment to has the potential to cause wear and tear on roads, road traffic congestion and community safety impacts for road users along the routes and on local roads. Risk of traffic injury or in the worst case a fatality, resulting from increased vehicle movements during the transportation of goods and workers from the Project Area.	Way of Life, Health and Wellbeing	Host Landowners, Immediate Neighbours, Surrounding Community, Local Workforce, Visitors to the Region	Medium	Low	High	High	Medium	Major	Possible	**High**	• Develop and implement a Decommissioning TMP which should include the following measures to manage the social dimension of the impact: ◦ Ensure drivers observe road traffic rules and speed limits; ◦ Ensure all vehicle drivers have a relevant licence and training before mobilisation; ◦ Use road signs at strategic points, sirens and public announcements where necessary to warn people of oncoming heavy vehicles; ◦ Ensure all vehicles are certified roadworthy and well maintained; and	Major	Unlikely	**Medium**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											◦ Avoid night driving to the extent possible; and ◦ Limit heavy vehicle movements during peak school bus times to limit the interaction of larger vehicles and vulnerable road users. • Engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that matters raised in relation to traffic concerns, including school bus routes, are appropriately considered and incorporated into the DRP. • Repair damaged Council roads and/or upgrade roads as required in accordance with Council Engineering Standards. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during decommissioning are identified and acted upon.			

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Loss of the Bendemeer CBF which will result in a change to how local organisations and community groups are able to source funding opportunities.	Community	Surrounding Community	Low	Very High	Medium	Medium	High	Major	Possible	**High**	• Ensure that the Bendemeer CBF prioritises local initiatives that foster long-term social, economic and environmental benefits. • Prior to decommissioning the Project, the Project will engage with the Tamworth Regional Council to consider ways to transition the Bendemeer community to provide an opportunity for social infrastructure funded through the Bendemeer CBF to be maintained post-decommissioning. • Ongoing engagement with Tamworth Regional Council in relation to Bendemeer CBF spendings in order to facilitate a seamless transition of funding and/or spending (dependent upon initiatives funded).	Moderate	Unlikely	**Medium**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Cumulative Impacts														
Cumulative impacts arising from the transportation of materials and equipment has the potential to cause wear and tear on roads, increase road traffic congestion and impose community safety impacts for road users along the haulage routes and local roads. Risk of traffic injury or in the worst case a fatality, resulting from increased vehicle movements during the transportation of goods and workers to and from the respective project areas.	Surroundings	Surrounding Community	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	Major	Possible	**High**	• Develop and implement a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) which draws on the Project Traffic Impact Assessment's analysis (Amber 2023). The TMP should be prepared and implemented in accordance with Australian Standard 1742.3 and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017. • Heavy vehicle movements should avoid peak school bus times to limit the interaction of larger vehicles and vulnerable road users. • Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to those within the surrounding community. • Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding as any particular periods of intense road use by transport vehicles and/or oversized or over dimensioned vehicles. This information can then be disseminated to Project stakeholders as considered relevant. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism	Major	Unlikely	**Medium**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.			
Cumulative visual amenity impacts from other renewable energy projects within the Social Locality and New England REZ have the potential to diminish local community connection to the landscape and sense of place.	Surroundings	Surrounding Community	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Minor	Possible	**Medium**	• Continue to engage with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that suitable landscaping solutions are implemented to minimize visual impact of the Project, where required. • Develop and implement a SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon.	Minor	Unlikely	**Low**
Cumulative increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation caused by the influx of workers associated with other SSD projects in the Social Locality and New England REZ.	Way of Life	Local/Regional Businesses, Visitors to the Region, Surrounding Community	High	Medium	High	Very High	Medium	Major	Likely	**High**	• Develop and implement a LEP for the Project. The LEP is to include measures to encourage and set targets for local employment for the EPC Contractor. • Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and accommodation. • Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an	Moderate	Likely	**High**

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
											understanding as to their construction periods and potential options to manage population influx and pressures on short and long-term housing and accommodation within the wider region. • Develop and implement a Workforce Accommodation Strategy (WAS) for the Project. • Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the various stakeholders identified in the WAS. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.			

Topic Areas and Potential Impacts	Impact Category	Stakeholders Affected	Magnitude Characteristics					Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement Ratings			Mitigation Measures / Enhancement Opportunities	Post-Mitigation / Enhancement (Residual Rating)		
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Intensity	Level of Concern/ Interest	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance		Residual Magnitude	Residual Likelihood	Residual Impact Significance
Cumulative increase in demand for services and recreational facilities caused by the influx of workers associated with other SSD projects in the Social Locality and New England REZ.	Access	Surrounding Community	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	Major	Likely	**High**	• Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council, Walcha Council and Armidale Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by Tamworth, Armidale, Walcha and Uralla in relation to worker influx and local resources. • Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding as to their construction periods and potential options to manage population influx and pressures on social infrastructure, services and recreational facilities within the wider region. • Continue to engage with relevant health (e.g. hospitals, medical clinics, etc.) and emergency services (e.g. ambulance, police, fire brigade, SES, etc.) to discuss management of temporary workers. • Develop and implement a SEP. • Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.	Moderate	Likely	**High**

7. MONITORING FRAMEWORK

This section provides an overview of the recommended monitoring framework for the social impact management and mitigations measures put in place during the Construction and Operation Phases of the Project. The framework provided will help to form the basis for developing a SIMP as part of Project post-approval requirements.

For the post-mitigation impact significant levels to be achieved, as outlined in **Section 6**, the social impact management measures and mitigations will need to be monitored in accordance with the framework plan outlined in **Table 7-**.

The objectives of monitoring are to:

- Verify the predicted impacts and identify any other impacts that may arise;
- Verify that management measures are being implemented as planned;
- Assess the effectiveness of the management measures; and
- Provide data for any necessary regulatory reporting to the State Government or other internal compliance reporting.

Accordingly, **Table 7-** identifies the following:

- **Management Goals:** The overarching objective is to minimise the negative social impacts associated with the Project and enhance the positive impacts. As such, specific goals corresponding to each impact topic have been provided. These can be used to determine whether the management measures have been effectively implemented.
- **Proposed Monitoring Activities:** The monitoring activities proposed will ensure that relevant data is collected (e.g., the performance indicators) during the various phases of the Project to ensure the effectiveness of the management measures.
- **Performance Indicators:** The indicators provide a mechanism to determine whether the goals have been met.
- **Monitoring Frequency:** Outlines the period for data collection.
- **Responsible Person:** Assigns the relevant person and/or entity to take charge of the proposed monitoring in order achieve the management goal.

TABLE 7-1 PROPOSED MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Management Goals	Proposed Monitoring Activities	Desired Social Outcome	Performance Indicator(s)	Target	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Role
Construction Phase						
Stakeholder and Community						
Reduced Community Cohesion	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Foster trust and transparency by ensuring stakeholders feel heard and that their concerns are addressed promptly and effectively.	• Number of complaints relating to reduced community cohesion • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved	50% of complaints resolved	Ongoing	Applicant
Ineffective engagement			• Number of complaints relating to reduced community cohesion • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved	70% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Ongoing	Applicant
Perceived impacts on the Macdonald River			• Number of complaints relating to impacts to the Macdonald River • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved	90% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Ongoing	Applicant
Employment and Procurement						
Maximise local employment	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Ensure major contractors report on local employment • Record the number of training programs undertaken	• Enhance local economic development and community well-being by increasing job opportunities, retain local skills, and building workforce capacity.	• Percentage of people from the Region employed by the Project (including contractors) • Number of training programs delivered • Number of apprenticeships involved	70% regional employment	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Maximise local procurement	• Report on number of, and value of contracts with local and regional businesses	• Stimulate regional economic growth by increasing procurement from local suppliers (notably Tamworth and Armidale).	• Percentage of local and regional businesses involved in the Project • Percentage of total value of relevant Project expenditure awarded to local and regional businesses	50% local procurement	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Skills shortages	• Record queries and complaints received from businesses	• Support local business by monitoring skill gaps, particularly those related to the Project.	• Number of local job vacancies in construction-related roles in the Social Locality. • Number of applicants for construction roles in the Social Locality.	50-70% of roles to be filled by local or regional workers,	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Local Disruptions						
Minimise potential environmental and social amenity impacts (i.e. noise, vibration, dust) on community members.	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Protect the health and well-being and way of life of the local community by proactively managing and addressing environmental and social amenity concerns.	• Number of complaints	90% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor

Management Goals	Proposed Monitoring Activities	Desired Social Outcome	Performance Indicator(s)	Target	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Role
Minimise potential traffic inconveniences, safety concerns and contributions to road deterioration.	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Ensure community safety and convenience by addressing traffic disruptions, improving road conditions, and responding to related stakeholder concerns.	• Number of complaints	90% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Accommodation and Worker Influx						
Maximise local employment and minimise potential impacts on accommodation availability, community and emergency services, and community wellbeing.	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Monitor annualised occupancy rates in short-term accommodation through consultation with local council.	• Balance local economic opportunities with accessibility and availability of both short and long-term accommodation to support both workers, businesses and residents.	• Percentage of people from the Region employed by the Project	70% regional employment	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Operation Phase						
Stakeholder and Community						
Distribute benefits from the Project among the Surrounding Community.	• Record and publish detailed information on funds available and payments made through the Bendemeer CBF	• Promote equity and transparency by ensuring surrounding communities receive clear understanding and access to community benefits from the Project.	• Number and value of grants and payments made	90% of grants and payments given to local initiatives.	Annually	Applicant
Employment and Procurement						
Maximise local employment and procurement.	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Report on number of, and value of contracts with local and regional businesses	• Enhance local economic growth and community well-being by creating job opportunities and supporting local businesses.	• Percentage of people from the Region employed by the Project • Percentage of local and regional businesses involved in the Project • Percentage of total value of relevant Project expenditure awarded to local and regional businesses	100% of regional employment	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Land Use and Landscape						
Perceived Impacts to Land Values	• Track property sales data within a 5km radius and within the Bendemeer township. • Record number of complaints	• Ensure equitable treatment of surrounding landowners by mitigating negative perceptions. • Demonstrate real impacts on land values.	• Annualised percentage change in average property values using standardized criteria for comparable properties.	No decrease in property prices	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Minimise impacts to visual amenity and rural character.	• Record number of trees planted to fulfil required screening planting mitigations	• Preserve the aesthetic and rural character of the landscape.	• Percentage survival rate of trees planted • Reduce complaints about visual impacts by 50%	100% survival rate. 50% reduction in complaints	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Impact on Tangible and Intangible Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	• Record number of tangible cultural heritage chance finds. • Number of project-related impacts to tangible cultural heritage items. • Record number of complaints received about impacts to intangible heritage.	• Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage by appropriately managing tangible heritage finds and addressing concerns about intangible heritage impacts.	• Percentage of chance finds comply with CHMP. • Number of project-related impacts to tangible cultural heritage items.	100% compliance with CHMP. No impacts to known cultural heritage items.	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor

Management Goals	Proposed Monitoring Activities	Desired Social Outcome	Performance Indicator(s)	Target	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Role
Decommissioning Phase						
Intergenerational Equity and Waste Management	• Record a list of project components that are disposed, recycled and reused. • Record the approximate weight of project materials that are disposed and recycled.	• Ensure sustainable waste management practices to minimize intergenerational equity associated with long-term environmental impacts	• Percentage of project materials recycled by approximate weight: panels, metals, cables, inverters and batteries. • Percentage of project materials reused recorded by percentage of units.	80% of project components recycled. 100% of mounting infrastructure to be reused.	Quarterly	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Short-Term Increase in Employment and Procurement Opportunities	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Ensure major contractors report on local employment • Record the number of training programs undertaken	• Enhance local economic development and community well-being by increasing job opportunities, retain local skills, and building workforce capacity.	• Percentage of people from the Region employed by the Project (including contractors) • Number of training programs delivered • Number of apprenticeships involved	70% regional employment. 10% of the total project workforce hours to be completed by apprentices, trainees or cadets.	Quarterly	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Retrenchment of Operational Workforce	• Monitor the number of retrenched workers • Number of queries and complaints about unfair dismissals	• Support affected workers by providing fair retrenchment processes	• Percentage of compliance with redundancy entitlements under the Fair Work Act 2009.	100% compliance	Quarterly	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Traffic Congestion, Community Safety Concerns, and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Ensure community safety and convenience by addressing traffic disruptions, improving road conditions, and responding to related stakeholder concerns.	• Number of complaints	70% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Quarterly	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Loss of the Bendemeer Community Benefit Fund	• Record and publish detailed information on the total amount of funds delivered and payments made through the Bendemeer CBF	• Promote equity and transparency by ensuring surrounding communities receive clear, documented, and accessible benefits from the project.	• Number and value of grants and payments made	90% of grants and payments given to local initiatives.	Quarterly	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Cumulative						
Cumulative impacts arising from the transportation of materials and equipment during Construction Phase.	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders about cumulative traffic congestion, road safety, and wear and tear.	Ensure community safety and convenience by addressing traffic disruptions, improving road conditions, and responding to related stakeholder concerns.	• Number of complaints	Resolve 100% of complaints	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Cumulative visual amenity impacts from other renewable energy projects during Operational Phase.	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders about visual amenity impacts.	• Preserve the aesthetic and rural character of the landscape.	• Number of complaints	100% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Cumulative increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation during Construction Phase.	• Monitor annualised occupancy rates in short-term accommodation through consultation with local council.	Balance local economic opportunities with accessibility and availability of both short and long-term accommodation to support both workers, businesses and residents.	• Percentage of workforce accommodated in short-term accommodation, rental and privately.	Occupancy rates in short-term accommodation remain below 90% annually.	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor

Management Goals	Proposed Monitoring Activities	Desired Social Outcome	Performance Indicator(s)	Target	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Role
Construction Phase						
Stakeholder and Community						
Reduced Community Cohesion	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Foster trust and transparency by ensuring stakeholders feel heard and that their concerns are addressed promptly and effectively.	• Number of complaints relating to reduced community cohesion • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved	50% of complaints resolved	Ongoing	Applicant
Ineffective engagement			• Number of complaints relating to reduced community cohesion • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved	70% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Ongoing	Applicant
Perceived impacts on the Macdonald River			• Number of complaints relating to impacts to the Macdonald River • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved	90% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Ongoing	Applicant
Employment and Procurement						
Maximise local employment	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Ensure major contractors report on local employment • Record the number of training programs undertaken	• Enhance local economic development and community well-being by increasing job opportunities, retain local skills, and building workforce capacity.	• Percentage of people from the Region employed by the Project (including contractors) • Number of training programs delivered • Number of apprenticeships involved	70% regional employment	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Maximise local procurement	• Report on number of, and value of contracts with local and regional businesses	• Stimulate regional economic growth by increasing procurement from local suppliers (notably Tamworth and Armidale).	• Percentage of local and regional businesses involved in the Project • Percentage of total value of relevant Project expenditure awarded to local and regional businesses	50% local procurement	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Skills shortages	• Record queries and complaints received from businesses	• Support local business by monitoring skill gaps, particularly those related to the Project.	• Number of local job vacancies in construction-related roles in the Social Locality. • Number of applicants for construction roles in the Social Locality.	50-70% of roles to be filled by local or regional workers,	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Local Disruptions						
Minimise potential environmental and social amenity impacts (i.e. noise, vibration, dust) on community members.	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Protect the health and well-being and way of life of the local community by proactively managing and addressing environmental and social amenity concerns.	• Number of complaints	90% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Minimise potential traffic inconveniences, safety concerns and contributions to road deterioration.	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Ensure community safety and convenience by addressing traffic disruptions, improving road conditions, and responding to related stakeholder concerns.	• Number of complaints	90% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor

Management Goals	Proposed Monitoring Activities	Desired Social Outcome	Performance Indicator(s)	Target	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Role
Accommodation and Worker Influx						
Maximise local employment and minimise potential impacts on accommodation availability, community and emergency services, and community wellbeing.	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Monitor annualised occupancy rates in short-term accommodation through consultation with local council.	• Balance local economic opportunities with accessibility and availability of both short and long-term accommodation to support both workers, businesses and residents.	• Percentage of people from the Region employed by the Project	70% regional employment	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Operation Phase						
Stakeholder and Community						
Distribute benefits from the Project among the Surrounding Community.	• Record and publish detailed information on funds available and payments made through the Bendemeer CBF	• Promote equity and transparency by ensuring surrounding communities receive clear understanding and access to community benefits from the Project.	• Number and value of grants and payments made	90% of grants and payments given to local initiatives.	Annually	Applicant
Employment and Procurement						
Maximise local employment and procurement.	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Report on number of, and value of contracts with local and regional businesses	• Enhance local economic growth and community well-being by creating job opportunities and supporting local businesses.	• Percentage of people from the Region employed by the Project • Percentage of local and regional businesses involved in the Project • Percentage of total value of relevant Project expenditure awarded to local and regional businesses	100% of regional employment	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Land Use and Landscape						
Perceived Impacts to Land Values	• Track property sales data within a 5km radius and within the Bendemeer township. • Record number of complaints	• Ensure equitable treatment of surrounding landowners by mitigating negative perceptions. • Demonstrate real impacts on land values.	• Annualised percentage change in average property values using standardized criteria for comparable properties.	No decrease in property prices	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Minimise impacts to visual amenity and rural character.	• Record number of trees planted to fulfil required screening planting mitigations	• Preserve the aesthetic and rural character of the landscape.	• Percentage survival rate of trees planted • Reduce complaints about visual impacts by 50%	100% survival rate. 50% reduction in complaints	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Impact on Tangible and Intangible Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	• Record number of tangible cultural heritage chance finds. • Number of project-related impacts to tangible cultural heritage items. • Record number of complaints received about impacts to intangible heritage.	• Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage by appropriately managing tangible heritage finds and addressing concerns about intangible heritage impacts.	• Percentage of chance finds comply with CHMP. • Number of project-related impacts to tangible cultural heritage items.	100% compliance with CHMP. No impacts to known cultural heritage items.	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor

Management Goals	Proposed Monitoring Activities	Desired Social Outcome	Performance Indicator(s)	Target	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Role
Decommissioning Phase						
Intergenerational Equity and Waste Management	• Record a list of project components that are disposed, recycled and reused. • Record the approximate weight of project materials that are disposed and recycled.	• Ensure sustainable waste management practices to minimize intergenerational equity associated with long-term environmental impacts	• Percentage of project materials recycled by approximate weight: panels, metals, cables, inverters and batteries. • Percentage of project materials reused recorded by percentage of units.	80% of project components recycled. 100% of mounting infrastructure to be reused.	Quarterly	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Short-Term Increase in Employment and Procurement Opportunities	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Ensure major contractors report on local employment • Record the number of training programs undertaken	• Enhance local economic development and community well-being by increasing job opportunities, retain local skills, and building workforce capacity.	• Percentage of people from the Region employed by the Project (including contractors) • Number of training programs delivered • Number of apprenticeships involved	70% regional employment. 10% of the total project workforce hours to be completed by apprentices, trainees or cadets.	Quarterly	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Retrenchment of Operational Workforce	• Monitor the number of retrenched workers • Number of queries and complaints about unfair dismissals	• Support affected workers by providing fair retrenchment processes	• Percentage of compliance with redundancy entitlements under the Fair Work Act 2009.	100% compliance	Quarterly	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Traffic Congestion, Community Safety Concerns, and Deterioration of Road Surface Conditions	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Ensure community safety and convenience by addressing traffic disruptions, improving road conditions, and responding to related stakeholder concerns.	• Number of complaints	70% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Quarterly	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Loss of the Bendemeer Community Benefit Fund	• Record and publish detailed information on the total amount of funds delivered and payments made through the Bendemeer CBF	• Promote equity and transparency by ensuring surrounding communities receive clear, documented, and accessible benefits from the project.	• Number and value of grants and payments made	90% of grants and payments given to local initiatives.	Quarterly	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Cumulative						
Cumulative impacts arising from the transportation of materials and equipment during Construction Phase.	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders about cumulative traffic congestion, road safety, and wear and tear.	Ensure community safety and convenience by addressing traffic disruptions, improving road conditions, and responding to related stakeholder concerns.	• Number of complaints	Resolve 100% of complaints	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Cumulative visual amenity impacts from other renewable energy projects during Operational Phase.	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders about visual amenity impacts.	• Preserve the aesthetic and rural character of the landscape.	• Number of complaints	100% of complaints requiring a clear resolution from the project are effectively addressed	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Cumulative increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation during Construction Phase.	• Monitor annualised occupancy rates in short-term accommodation through consultation with local council.	Balance local economic opportunities with accessibility and availability of both short and long-term accommodation to support both workers, businesses and residents.	• Percentage of workforce accommodated in short-term accommodation, rental and privately.	Occupancy rates in short-term accommodation remain below 90% annually.	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor

7.1 REPORTING AND AUDITING

Audits to be conducted throughout the construction and operation phases of the Project will be informed by the outcomes of the EIS process and DPE's conditions of approval included as part of the Development Consent.

Unless otherwise specified as part of the Development Consent, audit findings will be reviewed, and where corrective actions are deemed necessary, specific actions (with designated responsibility and timing) will be developed. The focus of these actions will be on achieving the objectives set out in **Table 7-**, as well as continuous improvement in performance.

7.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Project will be principally responsible for implementation of the management measures and the monitoring activities carried out for the Project. However, there will be instances where data will need to be obtained from a third party, or implementation will require cooperation and involvement of others (e.g., contractors and relevant local stakeholders).

8. REFERENCES

Abashidze, N. and Taylor, L.O. 2022. Utility-scale solar farms and agricultural land values. Land Economics.

ABS 2018a, *Socio-Economic Indexes for Australia (SEIFA)*, 2016: https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2033.0.55.001Main+Features12016?OpenDocument, accessed 10 June 2022.

ABS 2018b, *Technical Paper: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)*, Australian Bureau of Statistics: https://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/756EE3DBEFA869EFCA258259000BA746/$File/SEIFA%202016%20Technical%20Paper.pdf, accessed 10 June 2022.

ABS 2022a, QuickStats: https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats, accessed 4 July 2022.

ABS 2022b, *Housing*, https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/survey-income-and-housing-user-guide-australia/2019-20/housing, accessed 10 June 2022.

ABS 2023a, Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/latest-release#data-downloads accessed 2 May 2023

ABS. 2023b. *Independent contractors*. Retrieved from https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/working-arrangements/latest-release#independent-contractors

ACEN Australia and Green Light Elecnor Group (GLEC), New England Solar Farm: Accommodation and Employment Strategy, https://newenglandsolar.com.au/documents/196/NESF-OWD-EN-00GRL-accommodation_231222.pdf, accessed 30 June 2023

AIHW 2022, Housing affordability, https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/housing-affordability, accessed 10 June 2022.

Amber 2025, Traffic Impact Assessment: Bendemeer Solar Farm Oxley Highway, Bendemeer. Amber Traffic and Transportation Direction Organisation Pty Ltd.

Brinkley, C. and Leach, A., 2019. Energy next door: A meta-analysis of energy infrastructure impact on housing value. *Energy Research & Social Science*, *50*, pp.51-65.

CAE, 2023. Civil Aviation Tamworth, available at: https://www.cae.com/civil-aviation/locations/cae-tamworth/, accessed on 22 February 2023

Department of Regional NSW (2023) "A home away from home": New accommodation delights health workers in regional areas. NSW Public Works. available at: https://www.publicworks.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/a-home-away-from-home-new-accommodation-delights-health-workers-in-regional-areas

DPE 2016, *Revised Large-Scale Solar Energy Guidelines*, Department of Planning and Environment, Sydney. https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/solar-guidelines

DPE 2017a, *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Mining, Petroleum, and Extractive Industry Development*, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Sydney.

DPE 2018, NSW Transmission Infrastructure Strategy. Department of Planning and Environment.

DPE 2022a, *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects*, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Sydney.

DPE 2022b, *New England North West Regional Plan 2041*, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Sydney.

DPE 2023a, *Social Impact Assessment Guideline: For State-significant Projects*, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Sydney.

DPE 2023b, *Technical Supplement: Technical Supplement to Support the Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State-significant Projects*, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Sydney.

DPE 2023c, *Scoping Tool*, XLS file available at: https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Other/social-impact-assessment-scoping-tool-xls-2017-09.xlsm?la=en, accessed 12 August 2021.

Energy NSW 2022, 'New England Renewable Energy Zone Geographical Area', https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/final-web-accessible-new-england-rez-boundary.pdf, accessed 13 April 2022.

ERM 2025, *Bendemeer Solar Farm: Noise Impact Assessment*, Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Limited, Sydney.

ERM 2025, *Bendemeer Solar Farm Amendment Report*, Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Limited, Sydney.

Gillespie Economics 2025, *Bendemeer Solar Farm: Economic Assessment*. Gillespie Economics.

https://sqmresearch.com.au/graph_vacancy.php?postcode=2340&t=1 Accessed on 2 February 2023

https://sqmresearch.com.au/graph_vacancy.php?postcode=2355&t=1 Accessed on 2 February 2023

Hawes, J. 2023. The Northern Daily Leader, available at: https://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/8057877/the-numbers-are-in-festival-deemed-a-big-success/

Lawrie, M., Tonts, M., and Plummer, P. 2011, 'Boomtowns, Resource Dependence and Socioeconomic Well-being', *Australian Geographer*, 42(2), 139–164.

Metis Energy 2022, Global Projects Australia, available at: https://metisenergy.com/global-projects/#australia accessed 4th April 2023

Metis Energy 2023, Bendemeer Renewable Energy Hub, available at: https://bendemeerenergyhub.com.au/ accessed 4th April 2023.

Moir Landscape Architecture 2023, *Bendemeer Solar Farm: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Moir Landscape Architecture Pty Ltd, Islington.

Moir Landscape Architecture 2025, *Bendemeer Solar Farm: Addendum to Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Moir Landscape Architecture Pty Ltd, Islington.

Muthoora, T., 2017. *Social Impact Assessment: Social Acceptance for Onshore Windfarms in England*. The University of Liverpool: United Kingdom.

NSW Government 2019, 'NSW Electricity Strategy', available at: https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-11/NSW%20Electricity%20Strategy%20-%20Final%20detailed%20strategy_0.pdf, accessed 12 August 2021.

NSW Government 2020, 'Net Zero Plan Stage 1 2020-2030', available at: https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-

Site/Documents/Climate-change/net-zero-plan-2020-2030-200057.pdf?la=en&hash=D65AA226F83B8113382956470EF649A31C74AAA7 , accessed 28 March 2022.

NSW Government 2021, 'Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap', available at: https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/government-and-regulation/electricity-infrastructure-roadmap, accessed 12 August 2021.

Ozark 2025, *Bendemeer Solar farm: Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment report*. OzArk Environment & Heritage, Dubbo.

Parliament of Australia, 2013, *Chapter 4: Property values, employment opportunities and farm income. Completed inquires and report 2010-2013*. Parliament of Australia.

SGS 2022, 'Rental Affordability Index: research', https://www.sgsep.com.au/projects/rental-affordability-index, accessed 27 February 2023.

SQM Research 2022, 'Residential Vacancy Rates: Postcode 2340,

SQM Research 2022, 'Residential Vacancy Rates: Postcode 2355,

Tamworth Regional Council 2023a, Live: Environment and Sustainability, https://www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/live/environment-and-sustainability, accessed on 27 February 2023.

Tamworth Regional Council 2023b, Major Projects, https://www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/explore/major-projects, accessed on 27 February 2023.

Vanclay, F., 2003. International principles for social impact assessment. *Impact assessment and project appraisal*, *21*(1), pp.5-12.

Vanclay, F., Esteves, A.M., Auscamp, I., and Franks, D.M. 2015, *Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for Assessing and Managing the Social Impacts of Projects*, International Association for Impact Assessment.

World Health Organisation, 2023, Electromagnetic Fields, https://www.who.int/health-topics/electromagnetic-fields#tab=tab_1. Accessed on 2 February 2023.

ERM HAS OVER 160 OFFICES ACROSS THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES WORLDWIDE

Argentina
Australia
Belgium
Brazil
Canada
China
Colombia
France
Germany
Ghana
Guyana
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Ireland
Italy
Japan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Malaysia
Mexico
Mozambique
The Netherlands
New Zealand
Peru
Poland
Portugal
Puerto Rico
Romania
Senegal
Singapore
South Africa
South Korea
Spain
Switzerland
Taiwan
Tanzania
Thailand
UAE
UK
US
Vietnam

ERM's Sydney office
Level 14 207 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

T: +61 2 8584 8888

www.erm.com